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# Articles





# Emotions and early modern diplomacy: The case of Iberian ambassadors at the Elizabethan court\*

Susana P. Magalhães Oliveira  
*Universidade Aberta; CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal*

## ABSTRACT

Emotions underlie world politics and are essential to state actors' strategies and exchanges. Considering the complexities of the early modern Anglo-Iberian relations and the diplomatic sources, it is possible to pursue a line of enquiry which analyzes emotions in foreign affairs policies. This paper explores the Iberian diplomatic missions to the Elizabethan court, applying the current research on emotions in diplomacy to the sixteenth century diplomatic practice and its conventions regarding emotional display. Early modern Iberian diplomatic correspondence reveals a collective dimension, conveying an official – rather than personal – emotional strategy on foreign affairs. Spain's dominant geopolitical and economic circumstances favored a more aggressive diplomatic approach. At the same time, Portugal's more delicate strategic position and the maintenance of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance determined a diplomacy of appeasement. Sovereigns selected their envoys based on how their diplomatic skills and emotional behavior would suit the kingdom's agenda. This diplomatic strategy allowed a collaborative and synchronized emotional behavior amongst state actors to emerge.

KEYWORDS: emotions, diplomacy, early modern era, Anglo-Iberian relations.

**Emociones y diplomacia en la edad moderna temprana: el caso de los embajadores ibéricos en la corte isabelina\*\***

RESUMEN: Las emociones subyacen a la política mundial y son esenciales para las estrategias e intercambios de los agentes estatales. Teniendo en cuenta las complejidades de las relaciones anglobéricas en la edad moderna temprana y las fuentes diplomáticas, es posible

**Emoções e diplomacia na era pré-moderna: o caso dos embaixadores ibéricos na corte isabelina**

RESUMO: As emoções encontram-se subjacentes à política mundial e são essenciais ao desenvolvimento de estratégias e de intercâmbios entre os vários atores políticos. Considerando as complexidades das relações Anglo-Ibéricas do período pré-moderno, bem como as diversas fontes

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\*\* Translation into Spanish by Tamara Pérez-Fernández.

seguir una línea de investigación que analice las emociones en las políticas de asuntos exteriores. Este artículo explora las misiones diplomáticas ibéricas en la corte isabelina, aplicando investigaciones actuales sobre las emociones en la diplomacia a la práctica diplomática en el siglo XVI y a sus convenciones en lo referente a la manifestación de las emociones. La correspondencia diplomática ibérica al inicio de la era moderna revela una dimensión colectiva, lo que sugiere que, en materia de política exterior, se seguía una estrategia emocional oficial —en lugar de personal. Las circunstancias geopolíticas y económicas dominantes de España favorecieron una estrategia diplomática más agresiva. Al mismo tiempo, la posición estratégica de Portugal, más delicada que la española, así como el mantenimiento de la Alianza Angloportuguesa dictaron una diplomacia conciliatoria. Los soberanos elegían a sus enviados según se ajustaran sus habilidades diplomáticas y su conducta emocional se a las intenciones del reino. Esta estrategia diplomática permitió la aparición de un comportamiento emocional colaborativo y sincronizado entre los distintos agentes estatales.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** emociones, diplomacia, modernidad temprana, relaciones angloibéricas.

diplomáticas, é possível adotar uma linha de investigação cujo foco remete para as emoções na política internacional. Este artigo explora as missões diplomáticas Ibéricas à corte de Isabel I, numa tentativa de aplicar a recente investigação sobre emoções na Diplomacia à prática diplomática do século XVI e às convenções da época sobre a demonstração de emoções. A correspondência diplomática Ibérica do início da era moderna revela uma dimensão coletiva, evidenciando a existência de uma estratégia oficial, e não pessoal, quanto ao uso de emoções em contexto de relações internacionais. Por um lado, as circunstâncias geopolíticas e económicas dominantes de Espanha favoreceram que desenvolvesse uma abordagem diplomática mais agressiva. Por outro lado, a posição estratégica mais delicada de Portugal assim como o interesse na manutenção da Aliança Anglo-Portuguesa determinaram uma diplomacia de apaziguamento. Soberanos selecionavam embaixadores com base não só nas competências diplomáticas, mas também na forma como o seu perfil emocional se adequaria à agenda do reino. Essa estratégia diplomática permitiu o surgimento de um comportamento em relação às emoções colaborativo e sincronizado entre os diversos atores políticos.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** emoções, diplomacia, era pré-moderna, relações Anglo-Ibéricas.

Over the past few years, emotions have been the focus of scholarly work on international relations and public diplomacy in what has become known as the “emotional turn” (Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014; Barclay, 2021). The deep-rooted belief in the dichotomy of emotion versus reason has come under scrutiny, and emotions are emerging as intrinsic to world politics, international relations, and public diplomacy research. On an interpersonal level, our emotional behavior is essential to communicate what matters to us and helps define the type of individuals we are (Hall 2015, 2). At an interstate level, emotions and emotional display can also play an essential

role in state actors' strategies and interactions (Hall 2015, 2; Graham 2014, 522).

Bearing in mind the primary sources on diplomacy (Hotman 1603; Vera y Figueroa 1620; Wicquefort 1689; Callières 1716), I propose to analyze the Iberian diplomatic missions to the Elizabethan court in an attempt to apply current knowledge on emotions in diplomacy to the sixteenth century diplomatic practice as well as its conventions on emotional display (Hall 2015; Hutchison and Bleiker 2014; Koschut 2020). Although emotions, or passions as they were known in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Flor 2005), "were portrayed in early modern literature on diplomacy as a dangerous manifestation" (Lemée 2021, 1), there are several situations that may help us shed some light on the subject.

In a historical context in which diplomacy was still just emerging, Sowerby and Hennings observe that analyzing the sociocultural practices that constituted political relationships is crucial to understanding the nature of early modern diplomacy (2017, 2). Therefore, as an exploratory line of inquiry, I intend to examine the Iberian diplomatic missions to the Elizabethan court with the aid of two significant recent concepts: emotional diplomacy and soft power. I suggest that both the Spanish ambassadors' display and the Portuguese ambassadors' concealment of emotions might have pertained to their sovereigns' designed diplomatic strategy and should therefore be studied from a state-level perspective rather than a personal, private one. Similarly, I suggest that the concept of soft power may help explain the Portuguese ambassadors' non-confrontational attitude and the Portuguese diplomacy of appeasement, since Portugal's geopolitical position dictated the need for a different tactic than its Iberian counterpart and therefore a distinct emotional demeanor, constructed and devised as a script intended to be performed by its ambassadors.

Emotions are at the very core of human existence, but it is perhaps worth noting that the term "emotion" is recent—in English since the seventeenth century—, adapted from the French *émotion*, from the Latin *e + movere* (Averill 1996, 206; Dixon 2012, 338). Originally, and up to the emergence of the term "emotion," its meaning was associated with a transfer from one place to another, although it was also used to refer to a state of physical or psychological perturbation, as can

be confirmed in early modern Portuguese and Spanish dictionaries (Covarrubias 1674, 135; Cardoso 1592, 320). According to the *English Oxford Dictionary*, “emotion” is primarily the action of experiencing a sensation in response to a (physical or mental) stimulus. Bradberry and Greaves point out that before the electric signals triggered by our five senses enter the brain at the spinal cord and reach the parts responsible for rational and logical thinking and speech, they must first go through the limbic system, where emotions occur (2017, 6–7). This physical journey ensures we experience things emotionally before we can reason and communicate about them.

However, “emotion” is also defined in the *English Oxford Dictionary* as the part of a person’s character that consists of feelings. According to Crawford, “feelings are internally experienced, but the meaning attached to those feelings, the behaviors associated with them, and the recognition of emotions in others are cognitively and culturally construed and constructed” (2000, 125). Barclay adds to this idea and points out that emotions vary across time and place and are culturally distinctive, i.e. they are an agent in shaping human behavior and social relationships; furthermore, emotions must be analyzed according to their role in political life, determining group dynamics and the operation of power (2021, 456–66).

This would make it crucial to scrutinize emotions, their display, and their instrumentalization in light of Reddy’s proposition that emotions are “culturally [...] shaped, to a significant degree, by the environment in which the individual lives” (2001, 34). The concepts and the processes of language associated with identifying, experiencing, and displaying emotions vary across time and individuals, which means that investigating emotions in early modern times involves adjusting to the frameworks and standpoints of the era.

In the context of world politics, international relations, and diplomacy, we can draw on Crawford’s definition of emotions as “inner states, subjective experiences that have psychological, intersubjective, and cultural components” (2000, 125). Nussbaum points out that cognitive appraisals and value-laden perceptions are imbued with emotions (2001, 17). Graham emphasizes that emotions are inescapable in political judgement, in the context of argument and persuasion, and constitute belonging and identity (Graham 2014, 523–24). Emotions are part of our most private sphere, central to cognition,

discourse, values, and individuality. Hence Damásio's reformulation of "I feel; therefore I am" (1994, 245–52).

Diplomacy incorporates the private scope of emotions while operating in public, transnational, and political dimensions. These different spheres, inner and external, private and public, are combined in the ambassadors' missions and transmissions; their emotions and emotional behavior constitute the bonds of political judgement, intellectual appraisal, rhetoric approaches, and soft power resources.

Joseph Nye's concept of soft power is crucial to this analysis because it offers the notions of attraction and acquiescence to explain the dynamic forces underlying diplomatic missions. For Nye, soft power is attractive power that transcends influence and surpasses the ability to move people by argument or persuasion (2004, 6). Graham notes that soft power resources—legitimacy, leadership, and attraction—enable state actors to guide and shape the preferences of others (2014, 523; Nye 2008, 95), which implies that the latter internalize new beliefs (Krebs and Jackson 2007, 39), confirming that the process of charting mindscapes, or shaping preferences, is part of the diplomat's mission and transmissions. Within this framework, I propose that diplomatic transmissions are perceived as ideology, values, and moral foundations, opinions, and behavior, much in line with Graham's reflection, that is, as ways of communicating different cultural traditions and, as such, other collective expressions and experiences (2014, 524).

Although the concept of soft power was not operative in early modern times and state actors and diplomats did not conceive of their role that way, it is a valuable tool with which to understand early modern diplomacy, especially considering the employment of cooperative tactics.

Although soft power is a relatively new concept in international relations [...], its essence and its use have long been involved in diplomatic endeavours of peacemaking and peacekeeping [...]. In the early modern context, the concept of soft power proves to be interesting in terms of the importance of cooperative tactics and methods favouring political and confessional appeasement. (Carles 2016, 4)

The relevance of the confessional and religious divide in the diplomatic affairs of the period should also be considered and confessional

diplomacy regarded as a form of soft power. Religion played a key role in “defining not only the collective identity of international actors, but also their foreign policies, choice of alliances, and more generally their international outlook” (Anderson and Backerra 2021, 1).

Both Spain and Portugal sent ambassadors to Elizabeth I’s court.<sup>1</sup> These Iberian envoys shared identical religious principles, representing two devoted Catholic kingdoms. They also stood for similar economic and political interests, forwarding their sovereigns’ maritime expansion and commercial claims. Moreover, they were the political agents acting on behalf of two royal dynasties with long-established matrimonial alliances and blood ties.<sup>2</sup> Portugal’s and Spain’s common ground is made clear in Barbosa de Machado’s words which paraphrase the Portuguese king’s letter to the then-Spanish ambassador in England, Guzmán de Silva.<sup>3</sup>

Por cartas de Joaõ Pereira Dantas meu Embaixador [...] tenho entendido o defejo, e afeiçao, que mostraes para todas as coufas de meu ferviço, e como os avifaes de tudo [...] muito vos rogo, que o

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<sup>1</sup> I will focus on the period from the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign, in 1558, up to 1584, when the last representative of the united Iberian crowns under Philip II of Spain, I of Portugal, left England. During that period, Portugal sent six ambassadors to the English court, João Pereira Dantas (1559; 1562–1563), Manoel d’Araújo (1560–1561), Ayres Cardoso (1564), Manuel d’Álvares (1567–1568), Francisco Giraldes (1571–1578), and António de Castilho (1579–1581). Spain sent five ambassadors to the Elizabethan court: Gómez Suárez de Figueroa y Córdoba, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Feria (1558–1561), Álvaro de la Quadra, Bishop of Aquila (1561–1563), Diego Guzmán de Silva (1564–1568), Guerau de Espés (1568–1571), and Bernardino de Mendoza (1578–1584).

<sup>2</sup> That juxtaposition became too real when the Portuguese king, Sebastião, died in 1578, and the consequences of three generations of marriages between the House of Avis and the Habsburgs forced the Iberian Union (Cunha 465). (1) Afonso of Portugal (João II’s son) and (2) Manuel I marry Isabel of Aragon (daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, Fernando II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile); (3) Manuel I later marries Maria of Aragon, sister of his deceased wife, and, (4) his last wife is Leonor of Austria, daughter of the Castilian king and queen Philip I and Joanna of Castile; (5) João III marries Catherine of Austria, also a daughter of the Castilian king and queen (Philip I and Joanna of Castile); (6) Isabel of Portugal, João III’s sister, marries Charles V; (7) Maria Manuela, João III’s daughter, marries Philip II; (8) João Manuel, João III’s son and Sebastião’s father, marries Joanna of Austria (Charles V’s and Isabel of Portugal’s daughter).

<sup>3</sup> The king’s letter has not survived the multiple events that ravaged the Portuguese archives, namely the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and the French Invasions in the context of the Napoleonic Wars. Barbosa de Machado’s works were published before those events and include references to a number of manuscripts that have been lost.

queiraes affim sempre continuar, porque além del Rey meu tio fe haver diſſo por muito ſervido de vós por as ſuas couſas, e as minhas ſerem humas meſmas, naõ me eſquecerey eu da obrigação em que vos por iſſo fico [...] porque confio, que affi o tratareis, e o ajudareis como fe fora proprio del Rey meu tio. [By letters from João Pereira Dantas, my ambassador [...], I have understood your affection and desire to do all the things of my service, and how you inform me about everything [...]. I beg you that you continue to do so because your King, my uncle, has benefited greatly from your service and my matters and my uncle's are the same. I will not forget how I will be indebted to you [...] because I trust that you will deal with and assist with my matters as if they were my uncle's, your King's.] (1737, 406-7)<sup>4</sup>

The Portuguese kingdom relied not only on the Portuguese ambassadors' missions but also on the support of the Spanish ambassadors, since both Iberian kings shared the same political and financial concerns, ones in contradiction to the queen of England's, namely the plunder of the Iberian ships. Information flows can also be tracked through the vast network of correspondents.

Notwithstanding what they had in common, Portugal was not a threat or competitor to Protestant England, especially considering the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance of the fourteenth century standing out as one of the oldest recognized coalitions in the history of Europe.<sup>5</sup> Spain, however, was perceived as such in terms of political, economic, and military hegemony in Europe and overseas. Therefore, the two Iberian diplomatic missions in England had quite different outcomes. The ambassadors' correspondence provides several examples of the friendly relationship between Elizabeth I and the Portuguese envoys while the same English queen invited three of the five Spanish ambassadors to leave her court and country: Álvaro de la Quadra in 1563, Guerau de Espés in 1571, and Bernardino de Mendoza in 1584. These distinct results can perhaps be understood in light of the geopolitical differences between the Iberian kingdoms.

Portugal's strategic position was not a strong one. Spain, its neighboring kingdom on the northern and eastern land borders, was substantially more extensive and powerful. Spain was both a maritime and a continental power, whereas Portugal could only

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations are mine.

<sup>5</sup> With the Iberian Union (1580-1640), the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance fell into abeyance.

expand seaward and did not possess any claims in continental Europe territories. Manuel I's wish for Portugal to gain the upper hand in the matrimonial alliances with Castile saw a bitter end with the premature death of Prince Miguel da Paz.<sup>6</sup> Recognizing the ever-present ever-potential threat that Spain represented as a neighboring kingdom, Portugal maintained peace and a vigilant and cordial understanding with Castile while simultaneously avoiding a hegemony that the Catholic Monarchs and their successors did not fail to attempt to secure (Magalhães 1993, 447). The Portuguese sovereigns also realized the importance of keeping their neutrality in the European conflicts and forging alliances and compromises with other monarchies.

These differences are perceived in the Iberian diplomatic correspondence and may indicate a collective dimension. According to Todd Hall, "official emotion happens when a concerted, institutional actor such as a state displays the behaviour associated with an emotional response in explicit, outwardly directed behaviour" (2015, 16). Diplomacy, like drama, depends on actors and audiences; it is scripted and choreographed, much in agreement with Goffman's concept of a "performance team" or a group of individuals cooperating to project a particular image (Hall 2015, 3; Hutchings 2021, 208; Goffman 1959, 79).

In the introductions to volumes 1, 2, and 3 of the *Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas*, Martin Hume comments on the numerous occasions when Álvaro de la Quadra's arrogance and intolerance was on display (Hume 1894, xiii), of Guerau de Espés's "rough words and haughty demeanour" (Hume 1894, xiv), and of Mendoza's "haughty Castilian temper" (Hume 1896, xliii).<sup>7</sup> However, based on emotional diplomacy research, I would propose that the diplomats' pathos

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<sup>6</sup> Prince Miguel was born on August 24, 1498 and died on July 19, 1500. He was the son of Manuel I of Portugal and Isabel, the eldest daughter of the Catholic Monarchs. Prince Miguel da Paz was proclaimed in Zaragoza as prince heir of Portugal, Castile, Aragon, Leon, and Sicily.

<sup>7</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning that John Man, the last English resident ambassador at the Spanish court, also had his diplomatic mission ostensibly terminated for religious reasons (Bell 1976, 75) and was detained and expelled from Madrid (Mattingly 1955, 192). In Philip II's own words, he was "a heretic," "pernicious and evil-minded," someone who "in many things exceeded the limits of his position [...in] insolence and boldness" ("Extract from the Instruction given to Don Guerau De Spes," on August 9, 1568; Hume 1894, 66).



analysis should be focused not on the private sphere of the individual's personal or responsive emotional attitude but rather on the collective dimension of the state's emotional behavior towards foreign affairs. The ambassadors adopted a collective level of discourse, expressions, and conduct that suited Spain's particular emotional state; the emotions they conveyed were first and foremost official rather than personal (Hall 2015, 16). As England's antagonist, Spain's rhetoric of power and supremacy transcended discourse and was performed by the actors on the political stage of diplomacy (Hall 2015, 3).

In his recent article entitled "Harnessing Anger and Shame: Emotional Diplomacy in Early Modern Context," Emmanuel Lemée proposes that Hall's concept of emotional diplomacy, i.e., "a coordinated state-level behavior that explicitly and officially projects the image of a particular emotional response toward other states" (2021, 2), cannot apply to ambassadors. The reasons for this proposition are threefold. Firstly, ambassadors were strongly discouraged from showing their emotions in the normative literature on diplomacy since it imperiled their credibility as political agents. Emotional displays were thought too delicate and strategic as a tool and should only be used by the sovereign. Secondly, ambassadors' emotional displays were perceived as a serious mistake that should be dismissed, accepted only if rare or occasional. Thirdly, ambassadors' show of emotions would be seen with skepticism once they were construed as personal and not official, therefore, "not to be trusted and acted upon" (Lemée 2021, 20-22).

Despite the significance and validity of these interrelated reasons, other elements should be taken into account in this debate. The Iberian sovereigns' selection of diplomats to send the Elizabethan court must have considered each ambassador's particular emotional behavior and profile, as Gary Bell points out in his analysis of the last Elizabethan resident ambassador in Spain.

John Man's story alerts us to the importance of knowing the individual men who served as diplomats, for in an age of poor communications, new and often still experimental diplomatic conventions, and relatively isolated ambassadors, the roles and personalities of these men were crucial, and we must know them to fully understand the course of international relations. (1976, 93)

That how Philip chose his ambassadors was a diplomatic strategy and not a result of a default option, or a narrow choice of gentlemen

of good standing wanting to become ambassadors, becomes evident in one of his chief ministers Count de Feria's appointment to the Elizabethan court.

The choice was a judicious one, for of all his agents Feria was the least likely to alarm the prejudices of the English. He had already spent some time in this country, and having married one of the Queen's maids of honour was regarded as half an Englishman. He understood the manners and prejudices of the country, and had fathomed the intrigues of the several political factions into which the Court was divided. He possessed Philip's entire confidence. (Stevenson 1865, xii)

Monarchs were also familiar with their ambassadors' inclination for, for example, angry explosions or displays of self-importance. The Iberian sovereigns' appointment of diplomats to the Elizabethan court had a certain continuity, as can be seen by the replacement of an outspoken ambassador with an equally unreserved one or a collected envoy with an identically poised one. The exceptions to this line of continuity become apparent whenever there was a change in the objectives of the diplomatic assignments, as will be observed later in the case of Guzmán de Silva's mission.

Drawing on Lemée's suggestion that it is possible to address the concept of emotional diplomacy in early modern times "due to the confusion between the state and the person of the monarch" (2021, 21), I suggest that it is essential to examine the ambassadors' role in this context. A diplomat echoed his sovereign's emotions as a kind of mimesis in artistic creation (Oliveira 2021, 51) and was chosen according to how his skills, experience, and emotional profile suited the state's political agenda.

Several instances from the diplomatic correspondence substantiate this assertion. In his comment on Guerau de Espés's expulsion from England, Hume observes that

a fiery Catalan knight called Guerau de Spes, as haughty and intolerant as Feria himself, a man [...] entirely wanting in discretion [...] embittered the relations of the two governments to the last degree. (Hume 1894, xiii-xv)

Vera y Figueroa would later theorize on the importance of caution and prudence, speaking and keeping silent in diplomatic practice,

particularly in the second speech of his work (fols. 85–151). Still, Guerau de Espés’s emotional behavior was in line with his sovereign’s, as the representative of his king, in body and personality: “it was not in Philip’s nature to refrain from retaliation when he had it in his power” (Hume 1894, l).

Guzmán de Silva, however, was appointed to England to advance his sovereign’s interests in the context of the interruption of Anglo-Spanish commerce: “an ambassador of rank should again reside in London and endeavour by diplomacy and soft words to compass what threats and retaliation had failed to bring about” (Hume 1894, l-li). Such an ambassador was needed in light of the mission, which was essentially to ask for money: “to ask for a redress of grievances, not to impose a policy” (Hume 1894, li). Philip’s diplomatic strategy regarding the choice of Guzmán de Silva proved successful, as Víctor Fernández’s recent article demonstrates, emphasizing the significance of the ambassador’s distinctive skills, morals, and personality in establishing Silva’s positive example in the context of diplomatic emotionology as opposed to his successors and the different outcomes of their diplomatic missions (2022, 83). Hume’s comment on Guzmán de Silva’s replacement, Guerau de Espés, is another example of how each ambassador’s emotional profile suited Philip’s diplomatic strategy.

Philip [...] may have thought that a rougher tongued representative than Guzman would be more likely to serve his purpose [...]and] appointed as his successor a man diametrically opposite to him. (Hume 1894, xiii)<sup>8</sup>

It is also worth noting how the language of emotions is included in the political rhetoric of the early modern diplomatic correspondence, in which Guzmán de Silva mentions feelings of sorrow, grief, or pleasantness, or as he refers to the blushing queen in his report to Philip II.

She showed more sorrow than I expected, and, changing colour, told me that she was grieved from the bottom of her heart that your

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<sup>8</sup> Philip wrote to Guzmán de Silva, on May 13, 1568, telling him that Guerau de Espés, a Catalan knight of the Order of Calatrava had been appointed to England to replace him (Hume 1896, 30–31).

Majesty should make any change, as she was so greatly pleased with my mode of procedure in affairs. (August 9, 1568; Hume 1894, 64)

These non-verbal cues in Elizabeth's emotional reaction to Guzmán de Silva's departure from England by the end of his mission in 1568 confirm the success of the Spanish diplomat's mission and, as such, of Philip's diplomatic tactic.

Diplomatic emotional discourse and display can also be found in Glajon's report of his mission to the Elizabethan court in 1560. Although Philip II kept a resident ambassador, Álvaro de la Quadra, in England, he sent one of his councillors, the Flemish Philip de Stavèles, Seigneur de Glajon, to ask the queen not to aid the Scottish rebels to maintain peace with France. However, when Glajon arrived in England, Elizabeth's forces had already entered Scotland to join the rebels, and as Glajon's instructions did not include provisions for that eventuality, he did not know how to proceed with his commission. In his letter to the Spanish king, Glajon remarks he knew that wasting time would be prejudicial and contrary to his sovereign's intention, so he was forced to improvise. That agency relied heavily on the envoy's experience, skills, personality, and emotional traits, i.e., the features that I argue also determine the political agent's recruitment as part of the sovereign's diplomatic strategy or official emotion. Glajon devised a plan to carry out his orders and push for reconciliation with the English queen. However, he presented his case too firmly in his first audience, angering Elizabeth. Glajon does not euphemize or soften the queen's enraged reaction to his exposition and explicitly tells his sovereign that "the Queen answered with some anger that it was too late to withdraw her troops or to talk about reconciliation except sword in hand" (April 7, 1560; Hume 1894, 143).

Álvaro de la Quadra's letter to Philip II, prior to Glajon's audience with the queen, elucidates the ambassadors' use of emotions in their diplomatic assignments while it also helps explain Elizabeth's reaction to Glajon.

I venture to say that the way to ensure our business [...] was to keep her in doubt as to your friendship, and even in a state of fear and alarm. (February 3, 1560; Hume 1892, 123)

Except for Guzmán de Silva's mission, these instances indicate that Spain's political, economic, and religious agenda necessitated a

more aggressive diplomatic policy, notwithstanding the numerous exceptional qualities of the ambassadors mentioned here. Hume notes, for instance, that Bernardino de Mendoza was a “brilliant soldier, diplomatist, and historian” (Hume 1896, xliii). Therefore, ambassadors played a role in emotional diplomacy in the sense that their emotional traits were used to project and advance their sovereign’s emotions towards a kingdom seen as a threat to Spain’s economic and political interest on the continent and abroad, along with preserving the Catholic faith.

Another factor that should be noted is the unique challenges Elizabeth was facing as a female monarch in a predominantly patriarchal society. From the time of her ascension to the throne, Elizabeth knew what it was like not to be supported by many due to her gender. However, throughout her reign, she skillfully navigated the political landscape to establish her authority and assert her legitimacy. When Portugal faced the succession crisis that preceded the Iberian Union in 1580, one of the claimants to the Portuguese throne, António Prior do Crato, sent an envoy to England to ask for the queen’s favor.

What Don Antonio asks of her Majesty is, first, to take him under her protection, and that she will be pleased to favour his cause and right, because [...] he is a man and descended from a man, and never since Portugal was a kingdom have women or the descendants of women succeeded. (Butler 1907, 192)

The envoy’s approach to the English queen may seem counterproductive precisely because Elizabeth was a woman. Whenever the preestablished order was questioned regarding succession, the tenet provided by the Salic Law was considered, namely the agnatic principle, which excluded women from inheriting the throne. However, Elizabeth’s protection was imperative for the Portuguese claimant and his envoy, regardless of her gender. After 22 years, Elizabeth had already established herself as a strong and capable ruler, emphasizing her connection to her father, Henry VIII, and promoting an image of imperial power.

Additionally, marriage was perceived as a way to secure alliances and succession as well as gender hierarchy and social order (Bell 2010, 3; Daybell and Norrhem 2017, 16). This made Elizabeth’s unmarried status a central issue during her reign. From the very beginning of

Elizabeth's reign, finding her a suitable husband was a geopolitical matter juxtaposed with patriarchal and religious considerations. However, Elizabeth promptly excluded the possibility of marrying her sister's widower, probably stirring up feelings of rejection in the powerful Spanish king.

Elizabeth was sensible that not only had she wounded his pride by rejecting his hand, but further that she had offended his dignity by intimating her resolution of adopting an independent line of action, while she shocked his orthodoxy by adhering to the Protestant form of worship. (Stevenson 1865, lxxvii)

The Spanish ambassador in England at the time, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa y Córdoba, 1st Duke of Feria, wrote to his king on November 21, 1558: "The more I think over this business, the more certain I am that everything depends upon the husband this woman may take" (Hume 1892, 3). In the Spanish ambassador's words, England was a country governed by "a young lass, who, although sharp, [was] without prudence," a "kingdom [...] entirely in the hands of young folks, heretics and traitors" (Hume 1892, 7). Later, Álvaro de la Quadra reported that negotiating with Elizabeth was challenging, as she was a woman and therefore "naturally changeable," "passionate [and] ill-advised" (Hume 1892, 63, 101). Bernardino de Mendoza informed Philip of his "bold front to the Queen on many occasions" and how his "smart answers" had "been of advantage in making her more modest" (Hume 1896, 113).

The Spanish ambassadors' observations illustrate the echoes of scholasticism and medieval tradition that prevailed in early modern minds. Women were perceived as "the weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7), confined to the archetypes of *mala mulier* or *bona mulier*, expected to adopt a submissive role in society, taking their place in the *oikos* sphere, and required to conform to the biblical virtue of modesty. Elizabeth's queenship and determination to reign without a husband confronted the established order of things. The concept of "The King's Two Bodies," with which sixteenth-century English society was familiar, offered a renewed legal and political perspective on the matter of a woman monarch. The "Body politic" is not subject to the fragilities and limitations of the "Body natural" (Kantorowicz 1957, 7-23). The notion of Elizabeth's two bodies (the woman's and

the queen's) becomes apparent in her famous 1588 speech to the troops assembled to defend England against the Spanish Armada.

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too. (Harley 6798, fol. 87)

As a woman monarch, Elizabeth personified the changes being undergone in the early modern period: on the one hand, the legacy that she chose to maintain and on the other the innovative interpretation of the role of women on the political stage. Despite the restrictions and struggles particular to their gender, early modern women also “found many ways to exercise authority, enact resistance, express themselves [...] or effect change” (Dolan 2003, 8). Elizabeth's patronage of female intellectuals, such as poets and writers, helped women to flourish in a male-dominated society and challenge traditional gender roles. James Daybell and Svante Norrhem point out that unlike other European courts filled with aristocratic women from the ruling dynasty, like the Medici in Florence, the Elizabethan court had one royal woman, the queen herself (2017, 16). However, throughout her reign, Elizabeth confronted patriarchal observations and gender prejudice with determination, providing opportunities for women and their work to gain recognition, as in the case of Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke.

Elizabeth's determination was also directed at intimidating ambassadors, as Joseph Stevenson observes in his comment on the Glajon's episode mentioned earlier.

He [Glajon] pushed her [Elizabeth] too closely, and she turned upon him with a firmness which he had not expected. [...] This unexpected firmness upon the part of Elizabeth surprised and disconcerted the Spanish envoy; he had come to intimidate, and he was intimidated. (Stevenson 1865, xvi, xvii)

Elizabeth's ruling and diplomatic relations style display her discernment in navigating the political challenges posed by her gender. She carefully cultivated relationships with ambassadors and foreign leaders, using her charm, wit, and intelligence to win their respect and secure alliances, but she also asserted her authority with bravery and determination whenever needed.

The patriarchal discourse that emerges from the Spanish diplomatic correspondence may be because the Spanish ambassadors

were encouraged to write detailed reports. In 1559, Philip wrote to his resident ambassador in England, Álvaro de la Quadra: “I thank you for informing me so minutely of all that occurs, and desire you to continue to do so” (Hume 1892, 82). In the context of this analysis, Philip’s demand for his ambassadors’ feelings concerning Elizabeth and her government, as expressed in a letter to Guzmán de Silva in 1568, is noteworthy: “tell me what you feel about it in full detail” (Hume 1894, 3). Álvaro de la Quadra’s words may perhaps encapsulate how the Spanish ambassadors construed their king’s request.

I thought that we who are on the spot are bound to say all we feel, even though we may be called imprudent, and thereafter strictly to obey and fulfil the orders we receive. (February 3, 1560; Hume 1892, 123)

Portugal saw England from a different standpoint due to its geopolitical and economic position. Despite the trade conflicts between England and Portugal, the sustained diplomacy of appeasement pursued by the Portuguese sovereigns and ambassadors points to the use of soft power resources to achieve a goal—that of the delicate balance of the established alliances with the rivals Spain and England—embodied by the Portuguese diplomats’ composure and conciliatory rhetoric. That could be the reason for the Portuguese ambassadors’ lack of angry emotional outbursts or harshness towards the queen, even when facing home invasions due to the Catholic Mass celebrations.<sup>9</sup>

Non-verbal cues and symbols may also illustrate the Portuguese ambassadors’ cordial relationship with the English queen. João Pereira Dantas sent her a gift from Paris, in 1563.

Je ne diray autre chose qui de supplier tres humblement votre Amitié, m’excuser si des dix paires de gantez que je vous presente ne sont si bons [...]. Sil y a MADAME autre chose en laquelle je puisse faire très humble service à votre Maté, je le feray de si bon coeur, que pour le Roy Monseigneur. [I won’t say anything other than to very humbly implore your friendship and apologize if the ten pairs of gloves that I present you with are not so fine [...]. If there is any other way, Madame, in which I can do very humble service to your

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<sup>9</sup> In 1568, with Manoel d’Alvares (Nicholson 1843, 300); in 1576, with Francisco Giraldes (London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 23.58 fols. 121, 122). For further information on the Portuguese diplomats’ home invasions, see Oliveira 2016, 159–74.



Majesty, I will do so with as good a heart as only for the King My lord.] (London, The National Archives, SP 70/58, fol. 52)

Another instance is the episode of the ship that Elizabeth lent Francisco Giraldes so that his wife could join him in London.

Pero Vaz espero cada dia de Flandres, onde o mandei, por se achar presente quando recebi minha mulher por procuração [...]. E por a Rainha levar gosto que esta Dama venha aqui e me oferecer uma das suas naus, para poder passar o mar debaixo de sua protecção. [I await Pero Vaz's return from Flandres each day, where I sent him to be present when I received my wife by proxy [...]. The Queen [Elizabeth] insists that this Lady come here [to London] and offered me one of her ships so she can cross the sea under the Queen's protection.] (December 9, 1575; Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, MS 49-X-4, Vol IV, fol. 124)

Francisco Giraldes was then serving as Portugal's plenipotentiary on the resolution of the Anglo-Portuguese commercial interregnum but successfully maintained a friendly relationship with Elizabeth, regardless of the challenges of his diplomatic mission.

The letter Elizabeth wrote to the Iberian king, in 1581, concerning António de Castilho, the last Portuguese ambassador to the Elizabethan court, also illustrates the cordial relationship between the Portuguese ambassadors and the English queen.

He has left with us an approved character for prudence in the handling of the business entrusted to him, with a disposition inclined by all means to preserve peace and amity between princes, and in no way to foster discords, which seems to us by far the best natural disposition, and we have liked him accordingly. (Butler 1907, 721)

Considering that the Portuguese ambassadors' missions to England were mainly to present their sovereign's grievances in the context of competition for the dominion of the seas and the Anglo-Portuguese commercial interregnum, it is of note that the Portuguese diplomatic discourse relied on notions of legitimacy, control, and attraction to bring about the cooperation or acquiescence of governments (Graham 2014, 523).

That exercise of contention must have been difficult to sustain at times, especially considering the English plunder of Portuguese ships and commerce in the Portuguese Northern African territories. It points

to Hall's concept of "official emotion" in the sense that the Portuguese ambassadors displayed an identical emotional response to adversity, suggesting a concerted, institutional diplomatic strategy (2015, 16). Portuguese diplomats could express their feelings more freely when communicating with one another, as in the case of Francisco Pereira's letter to Ruy Gomes da Silva, stating that the Portuguese would be better served if they were more threatening to the French and English.

Por amor de Deus que não peçamos sempre esmola, porque [...] nunca outra cousa fiz senão pedir cartas de favor para ofensas recebidas [...]. Se lhes mostrássemos os dentes, um dia a franceses e a ingleses, por ventura que seríamos melhor louvados. [For the love of God, let us not always beg, because [...] I have never done anything else but to ask for letters of favour for offenses received [...]. If one day we bared our teeth to the French and the English, perhaps we would be better praised.] (April 4, 1559; Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, PT/TT/CC/1/103/61)

The Portuguese ambassador advocated for a harsher foreign policy approach, much in line with the Iberian counterparts, although Portugal never implemented this course of action.

Taking into account the complexities of the early modern Anglo-Iberian historical-cultural context and the insights gained from diplomatic sources, a line of enquiry may be pursued which analyzes emotions in foreign affairs policies. This analysis is significant, since ambassadors' emotions and emotional behavior underlie their political and intellectual appraisals, rhetorical styles, and soft power resources. The Iberian diplomatic correspondence reveals a collective dimension, conveying an official, rather than personal, emotional policy in foreign affairs, in which the diplomats' emotional profiles were to serve the sovereign's interests.

The Iberian diplomatic missions in the Elizabethan court had distinctive configurations and outcomes, which can be explained if we consider the geopolitical differences between the Iberian kingdoms. Spain's dominant geopolitical and economic circumstances favored a more aggressive diplomatic strategy. Spanish ambassadors were encouraged to be outspoken, like their king, and to write about how they felt in regard to the information they reported. The Portuguese diplomatic correspondence, uninformative with regards to their authors' emotions, conforms to the Portuguese ambassadors' absence

of angry emotional outbursts or hostility. Portuguese ambassadors enacted and furthered their kingdom's diplomacy of appeasement even when circumstances made it hard to maintain decorum, working collectively to preserve amicable alliances with Spain and England, which is relevant when considering Portugal's more delicate strategic position.

Examining the Iberian emotional diplomatic strategy towards England and the outcomes that resulted from their negotiations may also help explain the short- and long-term effects of diplomatic efforts, namely the decline of Anglo-Spanish relations that culminated in the Spanish Armada, the end of the Anglo-Portuguese commercial interregnum, and the endurance of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance.

Analyzing diplomatic language and rhetoric used in Anglo-Iberian diplomatic sources sheds light on the hidden meanings, diplomatic protocols, and maneuvers employed by the actors and reveals their underlying motivations, strategies, and power dynamics. Simultaneously, the non-verbal cues and symbols in the Anglo-Iberian diplomatic interactions exemplify early modern cultural values, hierarchical relationships, and diplomatic etiquette.

In light of the evidence presented, it might be assumed that the sovereigns selected their envoys not only based on their diplomatic skills but also by envisioning how their diplomats' emotional behavior would suit the kingdom's agenda. This diplomatic strategy meant collaborative and synchronized emotional behavior amongst state actors could emerge. Rather than emphasizing the individual's display of emotions, or lack thereof, early modern Anglo-Iberian diplomacy points to the ambassadors' significant role in emotional diplomacy.

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*Author's contact:* [susana.oliveira@uab.pt](mailto:susana.oliveira@uab.pt)

*Postal address:* Rua da Escola Politécnica, 147, 1269-001, Lisbon, Portugal.

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# William Godolphin and Francisco de la Torre's *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674): Patronage, diplomacy, and confessionalism\*

Alejandro Sell Maestro  
*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

## ABSTRACT

Aragonese poet Francisco de la Torre y Sevil (1625–1681) dedicated his *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674) to William Godolphin (1635–1696), English ambassador to Madrid (1671–1678). Examination of the rich paratextual matter suggests that the bond of patronage between Spanish poet and English diplomat was forged at the convergence of two factors: the problematic nature of Owen's text, a collection of epigrams expurgated by the Holy Office whose publication in Spanish, although permitted, required avoiding inquisitorial censorship; and Godolphin's profile as a foreign ambassador converted to Catholicism and owner of an extensive library.

KEYWORDS: Francisco de la Torre, *Agudezas de Juan Owen*, Sir William Godolphin, confessionalism, patronage.

**William Godolphin y las *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674) de Francisco de la Torre: mecenazgo, diplomacia y confesionalismo**

RESUMEN: El poeta aragonés Francisco de la Torre y Sevil (1625-1681) dedicó a Sir William Godolphin (1635-96), embajador de Inglaterra en Madrid (1671-1678), sus *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674). Se argumentará que el vínculo de mecenazgo entre el diplomático inglés y el poeta español emanó de dos factores: por un lado, los condicionantes ofrecidos por el texto de Owen, una colección de epigramas expurgados por el Santo Oficio cuya publicación en castellano pasaba por esquivar la censura inquisitorial; por el

**William Godolphin e as *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674) de Francisco de la Torre: mecenato, diplomacia e confesionalismo**

RESUMO: O poeta aragonés Francisco de la Torre y Sevil (1625-1681) dedicou a sua *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674) a Sir William Godolphin (1635-1696), embaixador inglês em Madrid (1671-78). Argumentar-se-á que o elo de mecenato entre o diplomata inglês e o poeta espanhol emanou de dois factores: por um lado, as condições oferecidas pelo texto de Owen, uma coleção de epigramas expurgados pelo Santo Ofício cuja publicação em espanhol implicava evitar a censura inquisitorial; por outro, o perfil de Godolphin

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otro, el perfil de Godolphin como embajador extranjero converso al catolicismo y propietario de una extensa biblioteca.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Francisco de la Torre, *Agudezas de Juan Owen*, Sir William Godolphin, confesionalismo, mecenazgo.

como embaixador estrangeiro convertido ao catolicismo e proprietário de uma extensa biblioteca.

PALABRAS-CHAVE: Francisco de la Torre, *Agudezas de Juan Owen*, Sir William Godolphin, confessionalismo, mecenato.

## Introduction

Aragonese poet Francisco de la Torre y Sevil (1625–1681) had his translation *Agudezas de Juan Owen* published in Madrid in 1674.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, it would seem to be one more instance of the boom in epigrammatic literature in seventeenth-century Spain that intellectuals in Aragon were eager to contribute to as proud fellow-countrymen and literary heirs of “el agudo Marcial bilbilitano” [witty Bilbilitan Martial] (“Alcudia, Soneto”).<sup>2</sup> Latin poet Martial had been translated into Spanish by Aragonese intellectuals close to the translator of the *Agudezas*, such as Baltasar Gracián, José de Pellicer, Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, and Jerónimo de San José. De la Torre’s interest in *Epigrammata* exemplifies the remarkable reception John Owen’s work had enjoyed since its publication within the Europe-wide vogue for epigrams on the model of Martial. It ran to eleven editions in London, four in France, eleven in Amsterdam, and nine in Bratislava throughout the seventeenth century, as well as translations into English (1617), Dutch (1638), and German (1651); there were no editions in Spain. The epigrammatic subgenre as a whole was flourishing: de la Torre himself also planned to translate the works of other authors such as Ausonius, Jacob Bidermann, Jacobus Falcon, and pope Urban VIII (Alvar 1987, 10; “Al lector”; Ravasini 1996, 457–58; Rothberg 1981, 82–83). However, this composition is worth studying for two very specific reasons. One, it is considered the only work printed in seventeenth-century Spain to be dedicated to an Englishman (Hillgarth 2000, 273). And two, it is the translation

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations are from the copy of de la Torre’s *Agudezas* held by the Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), call number U/4086. As the preliminary pages are unnumbered, the paratextual materials will be referred to by the corresponding headings as they appear in the text: “Dedicatoria,” “Agropoli, Censura,” “El autor a Solís,” “Solís, Censura,” “Al lector,” “Alcudia, Soneto,” “Calderón, Décima,” “Salazar, Décima,” “Polo de Medina, Décima.” All translations from Spanish texts are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Bilbilitan: from Bilbilis (Calatayud, Aragon, Spain).

of a Protestant author whose literary output had been vetoed by the Holy Office. In what follows I will argue that the *Agudezas* underwent a twofold shielding, intellectual and confessional, to ensure its publication by avoiding inquisitorial censorship. The patron-client bond forged between translator and dedicatee will be analyzed within the courtly intellectual context and from the perspective of confessionalism. In the process, de la Torre's translation of Owen's work will emerge as a metaphor and a plea for an idealized reunion of England with the Roman Church. Direct evidence is scarce of how de la Torre and Godolphin built their relationship, but the copious paratextual material affords some impression of its origins and causes from the vantage not only of de la Torre himself but also of the other contributors of prefatory matter to this Spanish version of what was at first sight a politically – more accurately, confessionally – incorrect work.

*Agudezas de Juan Owen* is de la Torre's Spanish translation of the first three books of *Epigrammata* (1606), a collection of Latin epigrams composed by Welsh poet John Owen (c. 1564–c. 1622). Owen belonged to an affluent landed family from Caernarfonshire and, after obtaining a degree in Law at Oxford's New College (1590), he became headmaster of the King's New School of Warwick (1595). He was noted from a young age both for his outstanding wit and mastery of poetry and for his leading role as a promoter of religious reformation in his home country (Martyn 1979, 250–51). His staunch advocacy of Protestantism as Wales' national religion and his criticism of Roman orthodoxy permeated his work, resulting in his entire output ending up being listed in the various pontifical and Castilian editions of the *Index librorum prohibitorum*. The position of the Spanish Inquisition regarding the *Epigrammata* was somewhat more permissive than Rome's and allowed its publication subject to some purging; however, on April 23, 1654, the Sacred Congregation of the Index included it in a decree with a list of works that were to be banned altogether (Rothberg 1981, 83; Zapata 1632, 612; Alexander VII 1667, 261). As a result, de la Torre was compelled to indulge in some rhetorical special pleading in his epistle to the reader: “desde mis verdes años [...] me entregué enteramente a todos los libros de este autor” and “casi pisaban ya la orilla de la prensa [...] cuando suspendí el intento: parecióme que sacaba a plaza la esterilidad de mi ingenio” [since my green years [...] I devoted myself entirely to all the books of this author and they were

almost on the verge of publication [...] when I suspended the attempt: it seemed to me that I was bringing the barrenness of my wit out into the open] (“Al lector”). His initial interest in Owen’s epigrams was the fault of youthful immaturity, and just before going to press with a first translation, he had second thoughts and pulled back for fear of publicizing his own lack of ingenuity. If the latter claim smacks of the false modesty topos, the former aligns him with other translators who feared being attributed the faults of those they translated (Peña 2015, 230–37), a case in point being Paul Rycaut, whose almost exactly contemporary translation (1681) of Gracian’s *El Criticón* into English also played on the greenness of youth to distance the now mature author from potentially dubious content (Sell 2021, 64–67) at a time of rampant anti-Catholicism in England. De la Torre adds that “esta consideración me motivó el escribir adiciones a todos los asuntos para tener también mi propia parte en ellos” [this led me to write additions to all the issues in order to have my own part in them as well] (“Al lector”). In other words, he implies that he translated the *Epigrammata* in two stages with a kind of intellectual awakening separating an earlier more passive and “sterile” version bereft of wit from a second version in which he took a more active or creative role by making his own additions.

De la Torre links this defense of his originality with his conception of the art of translation, which found authority in Sebastián de Covarrubia’s *Tesoro* and which prevailed at the time: “yo entiendo que las traducciones, para comprobarse, han de leerse dos veces; una, ajustándolas al texto, y otra, como independiente de él” [I understand that translations, in order to be tested, have to be read twice; once, adjusting them to the text, and once, as independent of the text] (“Al lector”).<sup>3</sup> In his first version he limited himself to translating the original literally whereas, in his second, he aimed to “conseguir casi un imposible, que es copiar el aire” [achieve the nearly impossible, which is to copy air] by moving away from the “estrechez” [narrowness] of the text, since “el que no atiende a esta gala, construye gramático,

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<sup>3</sup> Lexicographer Sebastián de Covarrubias had already established this hierarchy between translations *ad verbum* and translations *ad sensum* in his *Tesoro*: if a translation was not made “conforme a la letra, pero según el sentido, sería lo que dijo un hombre sabio y crítico [Horacio] que aquello era verter, tomándolo en significación de derramar y echar a perder” [according to the word, but according to the sense, it would be what a wise and judicious man [Horace] said: that that was to pour in the sense of to spill and to spoil] (1611, fol. 652v).

no traductor elocuente” [he who does not follow this rule, becomes a grammarian, not an eloquent translator] (“Al lector”). The standard mode of de la Torre’s translation, then, is *ad verbum* with looser *ad sensum* renderings reserved for certain controversial passages. By this means and by the frequent insertion of additions, whether in the form of explanatory notes, reworkings of poems or his own compositions, he gave his version the personal hallmark he desired while at the same time distancing it from the content of Owen’s original (Ravasini 1996, 459–65).

Some of the additions inserted by de la Torre are intended to clarify certain passages of the text to reconcile them with Catholic views or to provide them with a meaning more in line with Roman orthodoxy. They are frequently introduced by way of an explanatory title, so that the reader knows where the translator intervened. In the following extract, for example, de la Torre invests Owen’s secular wisdom regarding life, death and health with an overtly Christian significance, identifying health with God.

MALUM INFINITUM

Mille modis morimur mortales, nascimur uno;  
sunt hominum morbi mille, sed una Salus.

EL MAL ES INFINITO

Morimos de muchos modos  
y a uno el nacer se ajusta;  
hay para el hombre mil males,  
y la salud sola es una.

ADD. MORAL Y CHRISTIANA QUE TRADUCE LO MISMO A  
MEJOR INTENTO

Morimos de mil maneras,  
de una nacemos, y son  
nuestros males infinitos,  
y una la salud, que es Dios. (Torre 1674, 334–35)<sup>4</sup>

Otherwise, when the aim of de la Torre was to explain more thoroughly and directly certain controversial terms, concepts, or people mentioned by Owen, he brought in his additions by means of prose comments

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<sup>4</sup> EVIL IS INFINITE | We die in many ways | and each one has a fit birth; | there are a thousand evils for man, | whereas health is only one. | ADD. MORAL AND CHRISTIAN WHICH TRANSLATES THE SAME INTO BETTER INTENT | We die in a thousand ways, | and we are born in one, | and our evils are infinite, | and health one, which is God.

independent from the main text, in the way of modern-day footnotes. For instance, in the following passage, the translator felt the need to illustrate with further detail the Welsh poet's derision of physician William Gilbert's Copernican views.

AD GILBERTUM

Stare negas terram; nobis miracula narras:

Haec cum scribebas in rate fersan eras.

A GILBERTO

Dices la tierra se mueve,

Gilberto, prodigio raro

sin duda al escribir esto,

estabas en algún barco.

¶ Búrlase Owen de Guillermo Gilberto, autor inglés, que en su tratado *De Magnete*, lib. 6, cap. 3, sigue la condenada opinión de Copérnico, que quiso asegurar una inconstancia, dando movimiento a la estabilidad de la Tierra; y para ejemplar de no conocerse este movimiento cuando advertimos el del Sol, hace argumento de que va en un barco, que no percibe el moverse; y le parece que caminan los montes, según el Poeta: *Terraeque urbesque; recedunt*. Por esto haciendo chanza Owen, dice que estaría moviéndose en algún barco Gilberto al proponer tal maravilla. (Torre 1674, 15–16)<sup>5</sup>

In addition to these more literary and traductological considerations,<sup>6</sup> themselves bound up with de la Torre's attested perfectionism and self-effacing character, his two-stage production of *Agudezas* may also have been due to more practical reasons.<sup>7</sup> As mentioned, Owen's

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<sup>5</sup> TO GILBERT | You say the earth moves, | Gilbert, rare prodigy | no doubt when you wrote this, | you were in some vessel | ¶ Owen mocks William Gilbert, English author, who in his treatise *De Magnete*, lib. 6, cap. 3, adheres to the condemned opinion of Copernicus, who wished to assert an inconstancy by giving motion to the stability of the Earth; and to exemplify that that motion is not noticed when we notice the Sun's, he argues that when he is aboard a vessel, he does not notice it moving and it seems to him that the mountains walk, according to the poet: *Terraeque urbesque; recedunt* [Lands and cities return; Virgil, *Aeneid*]. For that reason, Owen joking says that Gilbert must have been travelling aboard a vessel when he proposed such a marvel.

<sup>6</sup> For further specific examples of de la Torre's interventions in Owen's text, see Rothberg (1981, 85–101).

<sup>7</sup> Aragonese author Jorge Laborda stated in the address he gave at a literary academy held at the home of the Count of Lemos in Zaragoza around 1650 that Francisco de la Torre "tenía muy buen pico, pero su boca era tal que no sabía disimular aun sus faltas" [he was an able speaker, but his tongue was such that he could not even conceal his own faults] (Biblioteca Lázaro Galdiano, MS M 2-6-11, fol. 17v).

original text was recorded in the pontifical decree of 1654. De la Torre, still a young man, might have begun working on the *Epigrammata* before then, only to put aside all thought of publication not on account of his alleged lack of ingenuity but, more pressingly, because his translation was of a text forbidden by Rome. On publication twenty years later, “el temor con que empecé a imprimir estos tres libros” [the fear with which I began to translate these three books] (“Al lector”) in his own words, is not, therefore, surprising and may allude to more urgent fears despite having included additions and modified certain passages, perhaps not so much with the aim of conferring originality on the work as to prevent inquisitorial intervention. This would explain the author’s continued resort to the cliché of false modesty: according to him, it was an imperfect work because his impatience had forced him to conclude it hastily “negados al beneficio y elegancia que infunde en los escritos la senectud del tiempo, con la sutil premeditada lima que escribe más con lo que borra que la pluma con lo que escribe” [denied the benefit and elegance that the senescence of time bestows on writings, with the subtle premeditated file that writes more with what it erases than the pen writes with what it writes] (“Al lector”). Thus, as well as by presenting the *Agudezas* as a product of his youth, he would be exempting himself from any negative interpretation that could be extracted from the text once published.

### The courtly literary context

Francisco de la Torre interfered with the content of John Owen’s *Epigrammata* to ensure its publication. However, those textual adaptations to a different market had to be coupled with a further strategy to overcome any barriers placed in its way by the authorities responsible for approving and censoring the work. Here, the ability of the author to take advantage of his network of contacts played a key role. De la Torre’s social context was unusual. Knight of the Order of Calatrava and deputy of the Generalidad de Valencia, where he resided for some fifteen years, he was settled in Madrid by the early 1670s (Querol 2013, 157–58; 2004, 442–61). At the time of publication, therefore, he was very much a newcomer at court and finding his way around its entrenched clientelist structures. That said, he had been well integrated among Aragon’s elite, and his connections there appear to have favored his assimilation into the Madrid scene. He had

enjoyed the protection of viceregal power both in Aragon and Valencia where he had been a client of two viceroys, the Count of Lemos and the Marquis of Astorga. His relationship with them had been limited to literary patronage, attending the *academias*, or salons for local wits, that the former hosted in his house in Zaragoza in the early 1650s and dedicating several works to the latter during his term as Viceroy of Valencia (1664–1666).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the Marquis of Aytona, another prominent aristocrat, had, in his capacity as commander of the Order of Calatrava, promoted the candidacy of Francisco de la Torre for the post of deputy in the Generalidad in 1661 (Querol 2004, 453). Lack of evidence makes it difficult to ascertain the particular benefits the poet derived from his contact with these noblemen once he had settled in Madrid. Nonetheless, the proximity of Astorga and Aytona to Queen-Regent Mariana of Austria's party (Crespí de Valldaura 2013, 33–34, 51–54, 197–99, 212–16, 246–54; *Hispania Illustrata*. 1703, 243; London, The National Archives [TNA], SP 94/55, fols. 173v-74), as well as his own impeccable history of services to the Crown, surely made his integration at court easier.

More decisive than his contacts with the political elite were those established by the author with the intellectual circles of Aragon. De la Torre arrived in Madrid at the height of his maturity with a rich network of literary friendships accumulated from his youth in Zaragoza and Huesca thanks to his affable character, his frequent participation in literary *academias* and the fame of his compositions. Both his uncle Jerónimo de la Torre, governor of the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Gracia in the Aragonese capital, and the chronicler Francisco Andrés de Uztarroz, were aware of his literary potential and introduced him to local literary gatherings (BNE, MS 8391, fol. 368; Querol 2004, 440–47). As a result, he began to earn a reputation, so that by the mid-1650s, he had become friends with several veteran and prestigious writers and scholars such as Baltasar Gracián, Vicencio Juan de Lastanosa or Ana Francisca Abarca de Bolea. In fact, one of his biographers has

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<sup>8</sup> At the request of the Marquis of Astorga, in 1665 Francisco de la Torre wrote a narrative on the festivities and poetical contests held that year in Valencia in honor of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. They were published under the title of *Luces de la aurora, días de sol. En fiestas de la que es sol de los días y aurora de las luces, María Santísima* (Querol 2004, 516–17). Shortly after, he dedicated a laudatory romance to him, then viceroy of Valencia, on being appointed Spanish ambassador to Rome (c. 1669) (BNE, MS VE/174/20). On the Count of Lemos's *academias*, see note 6.



described him at that period as a “fashionable character” (Querol 2004, 447) due to the abundance of literary engagements he undertook by commission. He was, for instance, commissioned to write a eulogy for Abarca de Bolea’s *Catorce vidas de santas de la orden del Cister* and a laudatory *décima* for Gracián’s *El Comulgatorio* (both printed in Zaragoza in 1655). But his rise to prominence owed most to the recent publication of his first work, *El Entretenimiento de las Musas* (1654), whose license was signed by Gracián himself (Alvar 1987, 11; Querol 2004, 447–48). His success would continue during his time in Valencia owing to his leading role as informal narrator of the city’s poetical contests (Querol 2004, 452–61). In short, despite his novelty in the courtly networks, when he arrived in Madrid in the early 1670s, Francisco de la Torre already enjoyed wide recognition in his facets as a playwright, poet, and translator.

His literary renown would have brought him to the attention of the leading lights of Madrid’s cultural elite, some of whom made significant contributions to the front matter of the *Agudezas*, which in turn implies that they may have played some role or other in the publication process. The licenses were signed by: José Zaragozá and Manuel de Nájera, professors, the first, of Mathematics and, the second, of Politics at the Imperial College of the Society of Jesus; the censures, by the Marquis of Agropoli and Antonio de Solís, chronicler of the Indies; and the laudatory poems, by the Count of Alcudia, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Agustín de Salazar and Jacinto Polo de Medina, well-known literati. Most of them lived at court, so it is unlikely that the translator had had personal contact with them before his arrival there. Only Alcudia and Polo de Medina were alien to this context. It may be that the former, active in Valencia in the 1660s, had met Francisco de la Torre there, while the latter, based in Alcantarilla, Murcia, had kept up written correspondence with him. However, it is difficult to trace the course of these contacts before their materialization in the preliminaries of the translation; after all, oral communication was the chief means of cementing links between actors in a relatively small local sphere such as Madrid. Nevertheless, the preliminary material itself together with other more indirect sources allow two complementary hypotheses to be formulated in this connection: firstly, that the Aragonese poet was already well enough known in courtly literary circles; secondly, that English ambassador Sir William Godolphin, recipient and patron of

the *Agudezas*, acted as an intermediary between de la Torre and the circle of court literati.

Two factors, one courtly literary, the other confessional, explain why de la Torre addressed his translation to this diplomat, although the former was more instrumental in gathering that cast of intellectuals around his *Agudezas*. Godolphin (1635–1696), resident in Madrid since 1669, had earned himself a scholarly reputation, to the extent that in the dedication (transcribed in the Appendix) the poet praised

el digno empleo que en los ocios dedica V.E. al continuado estudio de las facultades y de las lenguas le mereciera el mayor aplauso entre los doctos, tratando V.E. siempre con los que lo son; digo, con los libros, pues estudioso y favorecedor de los más selectos, cuando su elección y su desvelo les acredita lector, ya les ilustra mecenas. (“Dedicatoria”)<sup>9</sup>

The author gives a reason for his patronage relationship with the English ambassador: he was a well-known bibliophile. He had begun collecting books while studying at Oxford and during his stay in Madrid he pursued his interest further, acquiring in 1668 the library of the recently deceased Duke of Medina de las Torres (Miola 1918–1919, 81–93) and, between c.1671 and 1691, regularly supplying himself with batches of books on various subjects through his friend, John Luke, in England (TNA, Chancery Records, 5/618/88, n/fol.). As a result, he accumulated hundreds of titles and built up one of the largest nobiliary libraries in seventeenth-century Madrid.<sup>10</sup> De la Torre’s friend Lastanosa, also a bibliophile, admitted that Godolphin “ha hecho numerosa librería” [has gathered an extensive library] after visiting him in 1676 and defined him much as de la Torre had done as “un caballero que su mucha nobleza la realza la universalidad de las buenas letras” [a gentleman whose great nobility is enhanced by the universality of good literature] (Arco 1934, 301). Not surprisingly, it is

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<sup>9</sup> The worthy employment that you devote in your free time to the continued study of the faculties and languages deserves you the greatest applause among the learned, always dealing as you do with those who are; I mean, with books, because as a scholar and patron of the most select books, when your choice and your devotion makes you their reader, you enlighten them as their patron.

<sup>10</sup> Even though a complete inventory of Godolphin’s library does not seem to exist, some thousand books or so (most of them his) were recorded to have been bequeathed by his nephew to Oxford’s Wadham College upon the latter’s death in 1726 (Taunton, Somerset Heritage Centre, MS DD.SF.2.118.2, n/fol.).

significant that Lastanosa first met Godolphin in the library of Gaspar Ibáñez de Segovia, Marquis of Agropoli, where he found him reading works by Jesuit polemicist Juan Cortés Osorio and mathematician Juan Martínez Silíceo (Arco 1934, 301). Besides revealing the ambassador's erudition, this account confirms his connection with one of the censors of the *Agudezas*, aristocrat, bibliophile and genealogist Ibáñez de Segovia, whom Godolphin met for the first time while the Marquis was making preparations for his intended journey to London as Spanish ambassador to England in early 1670. Agropoli gave Godolphin a copy of Jerónimo de Salcedo's *Commentarii et dissertationes philo-theo-historico-politicae* (1655), as the diplomat noted on the title page.<sup>11</sup>

The diplomat's connections with the rest of the authors of prefatory material are more difficult to trace. One could only link him indirectly with José Zaragoza, who wrote one of the licenses, as Godolphin owned six of his works in nine volumes, which made Zaragoza the most frequent author in his collection. However, as these items are not listed as personal gifts, it is not possible to confirm the connection between the two. It is not even safe to say that de la Torre's contact with the aristocrat and the Jesuit mathematician was not prior to his first acquaintance with Godolphin given that Agropoli already corresponded with the Aragonese cultural elite and that Zaragoza had also lived in Valencia during the 1660s.<sup>12</sup> As for Calderón and playwrights of his circle such as Solís and Salazar, it is not unlikely that Godolphin's immense library would have been a magnet for them as for other courtly wits who would, in turn, have been familiar with the work of de la Torre and his growing prestige. In short, the relationship of patronage between de la Torre and Godolphin was almost certainly the outcome of the combination of both the translator's literary renown and the pull of his patron's library.

Regardless of the means, what is certain is that de la Torre secured the publication of his *Agudezas* by ensuring that the authorities in charge of licensing it were trustworthy individuals of acknowledged intellectual prestige who were willing to defend the merits of his

<sup>11</sup> Godolphin's copy held by Wadham College Library (WCL), G 10.24.

<sup>12</sup> Agropoli corresponded with Aragonese intellectuals that were close acquaintances of Francisco de la Torre, such as chroniclers Diego Vicencio de Vidania and Diego José Dormer (BNE, MS 9881, fols. 166r-67v; BNE, MS 8383). Zaragoza had been Professor of Theology in Valencia in the 1660s, but his relationship with literary circles is unknown.

translation by praising his scholarly efforts. The power of the author to choose the censors of his work was limited because this had been a matter entrusted to the Council of Castile ever since Philip II's pragmatic decree on the printing and circulation of books issued on September 7, 1558, in response to an increase in the flow of Protestant literature (Peña 2015, 39–43). However, de la Torre may well have benefited from the influence of his contacts in two ways. The Count of Villaumbrosa, president of the Council of Castile and, like Astorga and Aytona (see above), another leading supporter of the Austrian party at court, was married to the Countess of Villaumbrosa, to whom Father Zaragoza would dedicate his *Esfera en Común Terrestre y Terráquea* (1675), a copy of which Godolphin also possessed.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the appointment of the Jesuit academic as censor of the *Agudezas* would not be surprising on the assumption he had had previous contact with de la Torre. De la Torre himself was actively involved in the choice of another of his censors, the chronicler Antonio de Solís, to whom he presented himself as “servidor suyo” [your servant] on January 4, 1673, before submitting his *Agudezas* “al dictamen de su elevado parecer y prudente lima” [to the judgement of your high opinion and prudent file] (“El autor a Solís”); he obtained a favorable reply from Solís on November 30 (“Solís, Censura”). The reasons for de la Torre's choice of Solís are unknown, but he was part of the Calderonian circle of authors and corresponded with Aragonese intellectuals (Serralta 1986, 111–13).

In line with the justifications provided in the epistle to the reader, the authorities in charge of licensing and censoring the *Agudezas* supported its publication by stressing its originality, the difficulty of translating a work so complex in its style as Owen's *Epigrammata*, and the combination of translations *ad verbum* and *ad sensum*. Both Solís and Agropoli praised de la Torre's ability to free himself from the narrowness of translations, which “aprisionan al ingenio en una cárcel muy pequeña” [imprison the wit in a very small jail] (“Solís, Censura”) or “como vestido prestado que, hecho para otro cuerpo, no conviene tan ajustadamente al que se aplica” [like a borrowed dress that, made for another body, does not fit so tightly to the one to which it is applied] (“Agropoli, Censura”). Translators, according to Solís, “obliganse a prohijar el discurso ajeno, buscando palabras adecuadas

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<sup>13</sup> Godolphin's copy held by WCL, G 20.2.

para tratarle como propio y producir (en cierta manera), lo que no concibieron” [they are obliged to adopt the speech of others, looking for suitable words to treat it as their own and produce (in a certain way), what they did not conceive] and this risk “se hace mayor en los poetas: porque son nuevas ataduras el metro y la consonancia: y de los poetas crece la dificultad en los epigramas por ser otra prisión la brevedad” [becomes greater in poets: because meter and consonance are new constraints: and among poets difficulties increase with epigrams because brevity is another prison] (“Solís, Censura”). Despite the difficulties entailed by epigrammatic meter, consonance and brevity, de la Torre has, according to Agropoli, given Owen

nueva vida, puliendo la incultura del estilo, evitando la impropiedad de algunas voces y elevando lo lánguido de los versos [...] conservando siempre que lo permiten las palabras su puntualísima traducción y mejorándola muchas veces con el periphras o paraphrasis, que deja más hermosos y perceptibles los conceptos que, de ordinario, se realzan con mayor primor y agudezas en las adiciones. (“Agropoli, Censura”)<sup>14</sup>

In other words, the poet had succeeded in breathing new life into Owen’s work by polishing its style and clarifying its concepts through periphrasis, paraphrase, and additions. Both the censors and the authors of the laudatory poems gave prominence to the additions because they considered them to be the utmost expression of de la Torre’s creativity and, therefore, the main device for hiving off the new content of the *Agudezas* from that of the *Epigrammata*. As Agustín de Salazar remarked to de la Torre in his *décima*: “consigues traducir | con tanta adición felice | no solo lo que Owen dice | sino lo que dejó de decir” [you manage to translate | with so many happy additions | not only what Owen says | but what he failed to say] (“Salazar, Décima”). This definition of the additions as the felicitous interpolation of what the original author had failed to say is echoed by Calderón— “no solo en ti considero | todo lo que él [Owen] dijo | sino lo que dejó de

<sup>14</sup> [Francisco de la Torre has given Owen] new life, polishing the uncultured style, avoiding the impropriety of some terms and elevating the languidness of the verses [...] preserving, as long as the words allow, their very precise translation and often improving it with the periphras or paraphrasis, which makes more beautiful and perceptible the concepts that, as a matter of course, are enhanced with greater beauty and acuties in the additions.

decir" [not only do I consider in you | all that he [Owen] said | but what he left unsaid] ("Décima")—and Polo de Medina— "se pondera | tu agudeza la primera, | pues le añade tu primor | lo que él dijera mejor | si como tú lo dijera" [your acuity is the first to be pondered | for your wit adds to it | what he would say better | if he said it like you do] ("Décima"). These testimonies by Salazar, Calderón, and Polo de Medina confirm that act of self-censorship or "prevenido cuidado" [cautious care] which de la Torre admitted to in the epistle to the reader ("Al lector"). That said, de la Torre's additions not only respond to the stylistic, thematic, and metrical criteria alluded to in the paratextual materials, but also to the need to lend the *Agudezas* a confessional shielding which would complement its courtly literary protection and enhance its chances of passing the censor.

### Confessionalism

The *Agudezas* deserved to be published because of their confessional significance. This factor, together with the courtly literary one, explains why de la Torre chose William Godolphin as its dedicatee. A priori, the diplomat represented an ideal patron for a work of this kind because he solved the potential problem of finding a benefactor who would accept the task of financing its printing and ensuring its protection. Godolphin, who only undertook the patronage of this single work, was naturally an outsider to the clientelist networks of Madrid and, as the official representative of a foreign sovereign, he was exempt from any reprisals that the Holy Office might take against him. As far as the author's interests were concerned the ambassador would have been wealthy enough to fund the work and his Roman Catholicism was beyond all doubt in view of his conversion, when seriously ill with erysipelas in 1671, with the Inquisitor General's consent (London, British Library, Egerton MS 1509, fols. 281–82). In other words, Godolphin's ambivalent status as English outsider and confessional insider made him perfect to be patron of an alien and confessionally controversial text like de la Torre's *Agudezas*. Moreover, as an individual devoted to the conciliation of the two opposing political and confessional spheres of Spain and England, Godolphin's activity in some way paralleled that of Francisco de la Torre, whose aim was none other than to find, by means of translation, common ground between a

confessionally incompatible text and the target culture for which he had translated it.

De la Torre's dedication to Godolphin illustrates the parallels that the poet seeks to establish between himself and his patron and between the latter and the translation in order to give almost providential justification to the bond of patronage. De la Torre developed two rhetorical arguments to show the correlation between the translation and its recipient. First, as was usual in dedications, particularly to strangers or foreigners whose origins and family ties were alien to local clientele structures (Martínez 2010, 48–50), he praised Godolphin's distinguished pedigree, which he had read about in Camden's *Britannia* (1586), to emphasize the ambassador's own translated identity. That praise was of the two heads of the Godolphin family heraldic device and of his personal condition. As to the former, the image on the coat of arms was a two-headed eagle symbolizing the ambassador's innate capacity to mediate. Just as, as ambassador to Madrid, he was "medio entre la voz y el oído de un Segundo Carlos y de otro Carlos Segundo," [intermediary between the speech and the hearing of a Second Charles and of another Charles the Second] in his role as patron of the *Agudezas*, Francisco de la Torre asked him now as "el águila de dos cabezas" [the two-headed eagle] to "favorecer dos plumas [his and Owen's]" [favor two pens] ("Dedicatoria"). In the same way, the author equates the personal condition of the dedicatee with that of his work, since both share a translated identity, Owen's epigrams having now passed into Spanish and Godolphin having passed from the Spanish identity which, according to Tacitus in his *Agricola*, the original settlers of Godolphin's Cornish homeland had held. They were therefore in a loose sense his remotest ancestors: "por español implora lo traducido a V.E., cuyo antiquísimo solar es en la provincia de Cornwalia, donde fueron hispanos sus primeros pobladores" [the translation implorates you as a Spaniard, whose very ancient seat is in the province of Cornwall, the first settlers of which were Hispanic] and, consequently, "¿a quién hallaré yo más proporcionado para dedicar un inglés traducido a español [Owen] que a un español traducido a inglés [Godolphin]?" [who will I find more suitable to dedicate an Englishman translated into Spanish than a Spaniard translated into English?] ("Dedicatoria"). De la Torre's second rhetorical argument is to assert very distant blood relations between Godolphin and the original dedicatee of Owen's *Epigrammata*,

Mary Neville. His choice of patron is almost forced upon him by fate; the English ambassador is the natural, providential dedicatee.

Si Owen dedica estos tres mismos libros a la Ilustrísima Madama María Nevile, con quien tan enlazado se ofrece V.E. en repetidos vínculos de sangre; fuera apartarme del acierto a que me guía el autor que traduzco si no siguiera la luz de la protección que en V.E. invoco. ("Dedicatoria")<sup>15</sup>

Mary Neville (d. 1642) was related to Godolphin through the Killigrew lineage, to which one of the diplomat's great-grandmothers belonged. Although the ambassador may have been aware of this connection, it is more likely that it was Agropoli, a renowned genealogist, who transmitted this information to de la Torre. Godolphin himself recalled in 1670 how the Spanish nobleman "began his first visit to me with a relation of my pedigree (which he had learnt two days before from an English Jesuit in town)" (TNA, SP 94/56, fol. 77r).

As well as those sometime dubious rhetorical arguments based on heraldry and lineage, de la Torre draws a parallel between translation and Godolphin's status as both diplomat, professional translator, and convert, a personal self-translator. As for diplomacy, de la Torre asks, "quién más propio para amparar traducciones que el héroe que traduce en tranquila correspondencia con fidelísima legalidad los dictámenes de dos soberanos príncipes" [who more suitable to protect translations than the hero who translates the dictates of two sovereign princes into calm correspondence with most faithful legality] ("Dedicatoria"). Godolphin is a diplomatic "héroe" [hero] on the strength of his highly faithful renderings of the decrees of two sovereign princes, the respective monarchs of Spain and England. But, if the two sovereign princes refer to the king of England and Christ the king, Godolphin is also a religious hero due to his faithful obedience to the call of his Lord. This second reading acquires particular force within the broader confessional endeavor of reuniting England with the Church of Rome in the context of growing English anti-Catholic sentiment due to the concurrence of several factors such as the Duke

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<sup>15</sup> If Owen dedicates these same three books to the Illustrious Lady Mary Neville, with whom you are so closely linked by repeated blood ties, it would be to stray wide of the mark to which the author I translate guides me if I did not follow the light of the protection that I invoke in you.



of York's conversion and fears about increasing French influence in court politics (Hutton 1989, 297–319; Miller 1973, 124–34). During the Restoration period, the Spanish Crown gave its seal of approval to efforts to reunite the British Isles, above all, Ireland, with Roman orthodoxy (Bravo 2019, 100–152). The publication of the *Agudezas* would be responding to this background if the text is interpreted as a metaphor for religious change. On translation, the *Epigrammata* followed a dynamic of “conversion” that could easily be applied to Godolphin's personal experience and, at the same time, to the efforts of the Pope's Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to evangelize in the British Isles. It is not for nothing that Francisco de la Torre converted an English work considered heretical into the *Agudezas*, a collection of epigrams equivalent to Owen's but suitable for a Spanish Catholic public. Just as the convert changes his soul and identity while keeping his body invariable, so does the translator with his work. In Alcudia's words, de la Torre “le infunde nueva luz, vivo ser; donde | es del autor el cuerpo y tuya el alma” [provides it with new light, living being; where | the body is the author's and the soul is yours] (“Alcudia, Soneto”). De la Torre restores Owen's work to a new life by injecting the original textual body with a luminous, living soul.

Following this logic, the parallel between the *Agudezas* and Godolphin as subjects of conversion is clear, but also de la Torre's self-identification with the ambassador as promoter of that conversion in the evangelization context. The latter, as an Englishman, Catholic convert, and diplomat, embodied the ideal model of a “translator” in the author's etymological sense, i.e., that of an individual capable of “carrying” or “leading” Catholic faith to his native land. What is interesting is that de la Torre was not alone in invoking this association between Godolphin and the evangelizing venture. This link had already appeared in a contemporary panegyric dedicated to Godolphin by a certain Antonio Flórez “en ocasión de dar su embajada” [on the occasion of his public entry as ambassador] (Flórez n/d., 1) in February 1673, just as anti-Catholic sentiment was reviving in England.<sup>16</sup> With the aid of nuptial allegories, Flórez makes Godolphin a participant in the efforts to reunite England with the Church of Rome.

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<sup>16</sup> Printed copy held by the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid), 9/3499(4).

De espacios imaginarios  
se ha de hacer juicio, hasta que  
al tiempo, la realidad  
la dé Himeneo a entender.  
[...]  
Y en volviendo a vuestra casa  
quiera el cielo que imitéis  
al Único de la Arabia  
en el antes y el después  
para que a vuestra influencia  
[...] vuelva María  
por su dote, pues lo fue  
el Anglia; que el Vicecristo  
se la dio a su candidez. (Flórez n/d., 4)<sup>17</sup>

Flórez desires that when Godolphin returns to England, the Virgin Mary should do so too to reclaim her English “dote” [dowry]. Although it is difficult to confirm Godolphin’s true role during these years in the propagation of Catholicism in his native land on the strength of de la Torre’s rhetorical analogies, it is possible to conclude that the *Agudezas* were published with half an eye to the materialization of an idealized reunion of England with Rome. In fact, the translation of the *Epigrammata*’s final three books, published after de la Torre’s death, was dedicated to Savo Mellini, nuncio in Madrid who was directly engaged in the evangelizing endeavors monitored by the Holy Seal.<sup>18</sup> The scarcity of evidence prevents us from affirming that the publication of both volumes of the *Agudezas* were a response to a previous agreement between Godolphin and the papal representative to raise awareness of the diffusion of Catholicism in a context of growing confessional strife in England, although all the signs point

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<sup>17</sup> Of imaginary spaces | judgment is to be made, until | in time, reality | shall be made known by Hymenaeus | [...] And when you return to your home | God grant that you imitate | the Only One of Arabia | in the before and after | so that under your influence | [...] Mary returns | for her dowry, for it was | Anglia; that the Vice-Christ | gave to her candor.

<sup>18</sup> The last three books of *Epigrammata* were published under the title *Agudezas de Juan Owen traducidas en verso castellano, ilustradas con adiciones y notas* (BNE, U/4087). The late author had entrusted his close friend Pedro Domingo Sánchez, chaplain to the nuncio, to dedicate this last work of his to his master (“Dedicatoria a Savo Mellini”). It is difficult to tell whether Godolphin was in any way connected with the evangelization of England before his final years; even if he were, he would have tried to conceal the fact lest his conversion to Catholicism be revealed abroad.

in this direction. What is certain is that by placing his translation under the patronage of both diplomats and giving it that rhetorical significance, de la Torre managed to ensure its publication by giving it a double courtly literary and confessional shielding.

## Conclusions

The publication of *Agudezas de Juan Owen* (1674) was conditioned by the heretical nature of the original work, *Epigrammata* (1606), composed by a condemned author. To avoid inquisitorial reprisals, its translator, Francisco de la Torre, implemented a series of cautionary measures. At a textual level and as a means of self-censorship, he introduced stylistic, thematic, and metrical changes to his version, using additions to confer originality on it and to distance himself from the content of Owen's text. He also gave the *Agudezas* a double shielding, courtly literary and confessional, taking advantage of his extensive network of contacts. Through their licenses, censures, and laudatory poems, the contributors of prefatory material advocated for the work's publication on the basis of its erudite and innovative quality. The patronage link established with William Godolphin, English ambassador to Madrid, was useful in two ways. Firstly, his literary interests made him a suitable patron of the translation, while his library possibly served as a link between Francisco de la Torre and the list of censors who intervened in the paratextual material of the *Agudezas*. Secondly, Godolphin's status as an Englishman, Catholic convert and diplomat, made him an individual with a translated identity and, consequently, an ideal dedicatee of a work presented in analogous terms by its author. By associating the work of the translator with that of the diplomat, Francisco de la Torre portrayed Godolphin as a participant in an idealized reunion of England with Rome in a context of particular English anti-Catholic hostility, thereby freighting the *Agudezas* with confessional significance. In short, this study hopes to have shed light on strategies to circumvent inquisitorial censorship, with particular attention to the influence of friendship and patronage networks in the process of the publication of controversial works, and to have thrown into relief the ulterior motives that sometimes underlay translations as points of convergence between opposing political, cultural, and confessional spheres.

## APPENDIX

*Al Excelentísimo Señor Don Guillermo Godolphin, Embajador del Serenísimo Rey de la Gran Bretaña a Su Majestad Católica.*

Dedicó el antiguo culto a la luz de Apolo las flechas para que fuesen rayos y para que así se afilase el aire de la sutileza en las aras de la sabiduría. Con igual intento y proporción ofrece mi obsequio al lucimiento de V.E. en las agudezas de Oven otras flechas; bien que entorpecidas con la rudeza de mi pluma cuando se guarnecen con las puntas de mis yerros. Dirígense desde la tirante cuerda de la traducción al blanco de una sombra en las blancas felices plumas y extendidas alas de la real ave que es elevado timbre a la ilustre familia de V.E. Y si fue dichoso anuncio en la vana credulidad de los gentiles la sombra de un águila hacia la mano derecha, vuela ahora la propia en esa generosa insignia hacia la derecha mano del que escribe para que, con tan feliz auspicio, el que escribe vuela. Si es alevosa indignidad una lengua de dos corazones, sea contrapuestamente en mi obra española y latina, sino ofrecimiento un corazón de dos lenguas. Admítalas V.E., fecundo en muchas y de la fama aplaudido en todas por erudito Embajador Mercurio, que ingenioso y prudente, sabrá a dos luces medir la igualdad de los dos idiomas con la vara de las dos sierpes. ¿Quién más propio para amparar traducciones que el héroe que traduce en tranquila correspondencia con fidelísima legalidad los dictámenes de dos soberanos príncipes, siendo medio entre la voz y el oído de un Segundo Carlos y de otro Carlos Segundo? Por español implora lo traducido a V.E., cuyo antiquísimo solar es en la provincia de Cornwallia, donde fueron hispanos sus primeros pobladores, como entre otros refiere Tácito, *De vita Agricolae, capit. 9*. Y siendo V.E. por naturaleza inglés, como antiguamente hispano en su primitivo origen, ¿a quién hallaré yo más proporcionado para dedicar un inglés traducido a español que a un español traducido a inglés? Dé nombre con su protección a mi libro el que le da a su patria con su merecida celebridad: favorezca a dos plumas el águila de dos cabezas. Defienda las flores de Oven en sus tres libros el escudo de las tres flores de Lis, pues todo se encuentra en la nobilísima Casa de V.E. según testifica Guillermo Candeno en las palabras siguientes: *A la parte del Oriente se levanta Godolcan, fértil en collados y en minerales de estaño. Godolphin llaman ahora a esta tierra, célebre por sus señores del mismo nombre; y mucho más célebre porque ellos igualaron siempre lo antiguo de su sangre con lo insigne de sus virtudes. El nombre Godolphin en la lengua cornwalica quiere decir águila blanca; y por eso desde inmemorial tiempo tiene por armas esta*

*familia en escudo colorado entre tres lirios cándidos, un águila blanca de dos cuellos con las alas extendidas.* La parte de las letras influye no menos ajustadas proporciones en V.E., pues cuando la experiencia de tan importantes manejos como ha perfeccionado la primorosa sagacidad de V.E. no le acreditara de prudente político, el digno empleo que en los ocios dedica V.E. al continuado estudio de las facultades y de las lenguas le mereciera el mayor aplauso entre los doctos, tratando V.E. siempre con los que lo son; digo, con los libros; pues estudioso y favorecedor de los más selectos, cuando su elección y su desvelo les acredita lector, ya les ilustra mecenas. Finalmente, si Oven dedica estos mismos tres libros a la Ilustrísima Madama María Nevile, con quien tan enlazado se ofrece V.E. en repetidos vínculos de sangre, fuera apartarme del acierto a que me guía el autor que traduzco si no siguiera la luz de la protección que en V.E. invoco. Y ya que no sea en lo sutil semejante la traducción, sea en lo ilustre parecido, y propio el mecenas; y cuando dice Oven en su primer dístico que dedica sus libros al lector y su persona a Madama, espero mejorarle; y para que se aventaje mi obsequio, ofrezco igualmente a la sombra de V.E. no solo mi persona, sino cuanto alcanza la cortedad de mi ingenio en este libro, repitiendo con su primer autor,

*Libros dedico, meque tibi.*

Ex.<sup>mo</sup> Señor.

B. L. M. D. V. E.

Su más obligado servidor,

D. Francisco de la Torre.

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*Author's contact:* alejandro.sell@uam.es

*Postal address:* C/ Francisco Tomás y Valiente, 1, 28049, Madrid, Spain.

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# Pursuing contentment and liberation in the Forest of Arden: Hindu and Buddhist resonances in *As You Like It*\*

Marguerite Tassi  
*University of Nebraska, USA*

## ABSTRACT

This essay approaches Shakespeare's *As You Like It* through the ancient wisdom traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism. Focusing on a number of influential classic Indian texts, this study considers how distinctive features of Eastern spirituality resonate with Shakespeare's depiction of the Forest of Arden as a refuge where contentment can be fostered and liberation pursued as life's ultimate goal. Shakespeare's pastoral comedy dramatizes how virtues that lead to liberation are facilitated within the eco-religious space of Arden where the threefold Hindu concept of world forest is embodied. Such an ecumenical approach invites readers to contemplate what wisdom traditions beyond the Abrahamic religions can contribute to Shakespeare's religious afterlives.

KEYWORDS: *As You Like It*, Buddhism, contentment, Hinduism, liberation, refuge, Shakespeare.

**Persiguiendo el contenido y la liberación en el bosque de Arden: resonancias hindúes y budistas en *As You Like It*\*\***

RESUMEN: Este artículo aborda la obra *As You Like It*, de Shakespeare, a través de las tradiciones de sabiduría antigua del hinduismo y el budismo. Centrándose en una serie de influyentes textos clásicos indios, este estudio considera cómo las características distintivas de la espiritualidad oriental resuenan en

**Em busca de contentamento e libertação na floresta de Arden: ressonâncias Hindu e Budistas em *As You Like It*\*\*\***

RESUMO: Este ensaio aborda a peça *As You Like It*, de Shakespeare, através das tradições de sabedoria antiga do hinduismo e do budismo. Centrando-se numa série de textos indianos clássicos influentes, este estudo considera a forma como características marcantes da espiritualidade oriental ressoam na representação

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\*\* Translation into Spanish by Tamara Pérez-Fernández.

\*\*\* Translation into Portuguese by Miguel Ramalhete.

la descripción que hace Shakespeare del bosque de Arden como un refugio donde alimentar el contento y perseguir la liberación como fin último de la vida. La comedia pastoral de Shakespeare dramatiza cómo el espacio eco-religioso de Arden, donde se encarna el triple concepto hindú del bosque mundial, es conducente a las virtudes que llevan a la liberación. Este acercamiento ecuménico invita a los lectores a contemplar lo que las tradiciones de sabiduría más allá de las religiones abrahámicas pueden contribuir a la posteridad de Shakespeare en clave religiosa.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *As You Like It*, budismo, contento, hinduismo, liberación, refugio, Shakespeare.

que Shakespeare faz da Floresta de Arden como um refúgio no qual se pode fomentar o contentamento e procurar a libertação como objetivo último da vida. A comédia pastoril de Shakespeare dramatiza a forma como as virtudes que conduzem à libertação são facilitadas no espaço eco-religioso de Arden, onde se corporiza o conceito hindu tríplice de floresta do mundo. Esta abordagem ecuménica convida os leitores a contemplar as tradições de sabedoria que, para lá das religiões abraâmicas, podem contribuir para as sobrevidas religiosas de Shakespeare.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *As You Like It*, Budismo, contentamento, Hinduísmo, libertação, refúgio, Shakespeare.

Now go we in content,  
To liberty, and not to banishment. (*As You Like It*, 1.3.131–132)<sup>1</sup>

When beings and the world are filled with evil,  
transform adversity into the path of liberation.<sup>2</sup>

One of the remarkable characteristics of *As You Like It* is its optimism. Shakespeare's pastoral comedy presents the natural world as an eco-religious space of reimagined communal bonds, spiritual transformation, and open inquiry into questions that matter profoundly—how to live well, how to love genuinely, and how to cultivate a mind free of suffering. The Forest of Arden is capacious, offering refuge and blessings for travelers, holy men, and exiles. In leaving behind the sociopolitical world of court and household, the exiles in Arden are freed from the entanglements of destructive relationships, afflictive passions, and political pressures. Celia's exuberant lines quoted above serve as the play's keynote, expressing

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from *As You Like It* are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Greenblatt, et al. (1997).

<sup>2</sup> This aphorism is one of fifty-nine distillations of Buddhist wisdom (known as *lojong* or "mind training" in Tibetan Buddhism) originating from the Indian scholar-monk Atisa Dipankara Srijana (982–1054 CE). See Kyabgon (2007, 82–119).

the mind's capacity to transform adversity and to imagine liberty within reach, not only as a geographic and physical possibility, but as a spiritual and natural end. The word *content* in Shakespeare's age meant not only satisfaction, pleasure, and delight, but a condition and frame of mind, a capacity, space, and extent of something.<sup>3</sup> These sensate, cognitive aspects of contentment point to the mind's capacity and readiness for the pursuit of liberty and spiritual fullness. Indeed, *As You Like It* treats contentment and liberation as endowments of the mind in harmonious relationship with itself, others, and nature. With this view, Shakespeare reveals an ecumenism that reaches back to ancient wisdom literatures,<sup>4</sup> particularly from Hindu and Buddhist traditions,<sup>5</sup> which emphasize the spiritual jewels of mind training and the goal of liberation as an enlightened state attained through knowing and seeing "good in everything" (2.1.17).

In the spirit of "sapiential pluralism" (Lupton 2022, 568), this essay brings to light surprising resonances between Shakespeare's comedy and archetypal tropes, motifs, and views central to Indian wisdom traditions. The retreat to Arden gains spiritual purpose when seen as a ritual movement away from the urban world conditioned by hatred, greed, and envy to a natural place where conditions are favorable for the realization of contentment and liberation. This pattern resembles the renunciant's path taken by Indian sages and spiritual aspirants since antiquity. For millennia, wandering sadhus, rishis, and yogis have meditated in mountain caves in the Himalayas and gathered in forest ashrams (religious communities) along the banks of the Ganges River. Celia's "[n]ow go we in content" echoes the literal and figurative "going forth" of liberation seekers, celebrated most famously in the archetypal story of Siddhartha Gautama (sixth or fifth century BCE), who left his royal family's palace and a life of supreme comfort in

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<sup>3</sup> *OED*, "content," n. 1.II, and n. 2; also "contented," adj. 2, "willing, ready."

<sup>4</sup> For ecumenical readings of Shakespeare, see, for example, Lupton (2022) and the scholarly essays in Langis and Lupton (forthcoming), which explore Shakespeare's plays in the context of global wisdom literatures. While Lupton views *As You Like It*'s ecumenism as inclusive of Catholic sensibilities, Hebraism, and Pythagorean cosmopolitanism (2022, 569), this essay uncovers the comedy's resonances with dominant religious traditions of the Indian subcontinent.

<sup>5</sup> A number of scholars have published foundational studies on Buddhism and Shakespeare: Knight (1980), Howe (1994), Sterne (2007), Freinkel (2011), Langis (2022, 2023), and Shufron (2022).

search of an end to suffering. Under the bodhi tree, he finally achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha (“Awakened One”). Going forth became a trope in Indian religious scriptures, reflecting a stage in life in which one renounced worldly attachments—social status, family, lands, and ties—and sought refuge in the natural world, a guru’s wisdom, and a spiritual community. The Great Forest Upanisad (*Brhadaranyaka*),<sup>6</sup> to cite another example, opens with the sage Yajnavalkya announcing to his wife that he must “go forth from the worldly life” to pursue Self-Realization (Easwaran 2007b, 99). Some renunciants would return home to reclaim their former lives after gaining spiritual realization, as Duke Senior, Orlando, and Rosalind intend to do in Shakespeare’s play, while others remained apart from society in forests, caves, and simple dwellings, as Jaques, Oliver, and Celia will do.

Seen in this light, Arden functions as outer and inner sanctuary, recalling the ancient Hindu view of forest (*vana*) as refuge and threefold world: *srivana*, a protected agrarian area for cultivation and communal wealth; *tapovana*, a penetrable forest space conducive for the ascetic practices and contemplation of monks and sages; and *mahavana*, the great natural forest which shelters all species in biodiversity and ecological interdependence (Prime 1992, 10; Prasad 2018, 5–6). In most Indian languages, a synonym for *vana* is *aranya*, meaning “no war,” indicating that the forest is a place where violence is forbidden (Prasad 2018, 6). In ancient India, Kiran Prasad explains, “forests symbolized the culture of asceticism, sacrifice and self-restraint. While pursuing economic goals in the cities, the people were encouraged to pursue spiritual values and peace by retiring periodically to forests” (2018, 6). Some Shakespeare scholars regard Arden in a similar vein: as a place of “sacred refuge and spiritual illumination” (Duncan 2013, 121) far from worldly business; as a welcoming abode where “new possibilities for communal flourishing” can be found, free from social strictures and predetermined hierarchies (Degenhardt 2023, 342); and as a hospitable home “for grace received through mindful attention to ancient traditions and the enviroing world” (Lupton 2022, 579). Like the wisdom seekers in Hindu and Buddhist forest ashrams

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<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Indian terms appear in Sanskrit. Ancient Hindu scriptures known as the Vedas and Upanisads (c. 1500–c. 200 BCE) contain devotional texts, wisdom teachings, and philosophical interpretations of rituals.

and caves, *As You Like It*'s characters leave "public haunt" (2.1.15) and worldly enterprise for the "forest world" where they pursue contentment and liberation from afflictive passions and attachments. Resonant with the natural world, their spiritual paths tap into a font of "relational virtues," as Julia Lupton observes, "including hospitality, kindness, gentleness, and care" (2022, 583). Above all, Lupton argues, magnanimity ("greatness of soul") is "the disposition affirmed by the play as a whole" (2022, 584). An Indian approach to magnanimity might translate "animus" as "mind," "Self," or "heart," inviting consideration of how greatness is already present in the mind and heart as a natural aspect of *buddha-nature* ("awakened mind") or *atman* ("true self"). In Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, magnanimity is the nectar of immeasurable compassion and generosity that sweetens the taste of life's ultimate state, liberation.

In Indian wisdom traditions, the last stage of the spiritual path (*vanaprastha asrama*) leads directly to the forest, where aspirants seek peace (*santi*) and liberation (*moksa*). Similar to *nirvana*, *moksa* is freedom from the suffering of conditioned life in *samsara* ("wandering through"), meaning the endlessly repeating cycle of birth and death, perpetuated by the afflictive passions of ego-clinging. The Buddha famously diagnosed the human condition as *dukkha* (pain, suffering, discontentedness) and prescribed the noble eightfold path as the cure.<sup>7</sup> His teachings in the *Dhammapada* (Pali, *The Path of Dharma*) illuminate the mind's capacity to apply the healing balm of virtues such as equanimity, patience, and wisdom: "They are wise whose thoughts are steady and minds serene, unaffected by good and bad. They are awake and free from fear" (Easwaran 2007a, 3:39). Later Indian sages integrated the Buddha's teachings on liberation with ancient Vedic and non-dual Hindu scriptures. In the influential syncretic text the *Yoga Vasistha* (attributed to Maharishi Valmiki, c. sixth–fourteenth CE), for example, the revered wisdom teacher Vasistha vividly imagines the path to *moksa* through the metaphor of the four gatekeepers whom the spiritual seeker must befriend in order to pass

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<sup>7</sup> The Buddha's first teaching, known as the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* (Pali, *The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dharma*), presents the four noble truths: the truths of *dukkha*, its causes, its cessation, and the path to the cessation of suffering through the practice of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The Buddha's discourses were preserved in the Pali Canon in five *Nikayas* ("collections").

from painful worldly attachments to a state of inner freedom (1993, 2:11). The gatekeepers are noble qualities as familiar to Hindus and Buddhists as they are to inhabitants of Shakespeare's Arden: peace, tranquility and mental self-control (*santi*), contentment (*santosa*), the spirit of inquiry (*vichara*), and virtuous company (*satsanga*).

This essay explores similarities between ancient Indian wisdom and Shakespeare's *As You Like It* by first considering how the unsociable urban world appears as samsara, an unreliable refuge teeming with the egoic passions and discontented aggressions of its human occupants. It then turns to Arden's forest world where sociable communities thrive based on shared virtues, contentedness, and the pursuit of liberation. The essay concludes by affirming the play's vision of spiritual optimism, which is expressed in the final scene through a gracious staging of "at-oneness" pervading social, natural, and contemplative communities.

### **Samsara: Unreliable Refuge**

O, what a world is this, when what is comely  
Envenoms him that bears it! (*As You Like It*, 2.3.14–15)

*As You Like It* vividly depicts the dangers of the sociopolitical world of the French court and domestic household, which are environments conditioned by afflictive passions, violence, and discontent. The lives and livelihoods of the urban world's inhabitants rest on the shifting ground of constant threat and abrupt change. Buddhists and Hindus would recognize this conditioned world as samsara, an "unreliable refuge" governed by egoic poisons which cause perpetual suffering (Kongtrül 2006, 39–40). Life is not as any human in this world would like it; neither the fortunate nor the unfortunate are happy and flourishing. Envy, power-hunger, and hatred are the poisons motivating Duke Frederick, who has seized the dukedom from his older brother whom he sent into exile. The play's first scene stages fraternal conflict in a wealthy household where the elder brother, Oliver, filled with malice and envy, deprives the younger, Orlando, of a dignified place. Murderousness and disinheritance sever their bond and cause the old family servant, Adam, to lament, "This is no place, this house is but a butchery. | Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it"

(2.3.28–29). The world as unreliable refuge is captured vividly in the figure of the inhospitable house of violence, where Orlando is kept “rustically” (1.1.6), treated as an animal raised for “growth” (1.1.12) and slaughter. Adam perceives the confusion and moral perversity bred in this household where the older brother refuses care for the younger and envies his virtues: “Your virtues, gentle master,” he observes, “[a]re sanctified and holy traitors to you. | O, what a world is this, when what is comely | Envenoms him that bears it!” (2.3.12–15). The venom originates in Oliver, who confesses ignorance of how he became ill with malice: “I hope I shall see an end of him [Orlando], for my soul—yet I know not why—hates nothing more than he” (1.1.139–41). Orlando and Adam choose to seek refuge in the forest where, at least at the outset, further hardships await: homelessness, hunger, and uncertainty.

Not only Orlando and Adam, but all of the play’s characters find themselves mired in the fundamental problematic of human existence—existential suffering. Reading against “an untroubled pastoral-poetic tradition,” Paul Kottman follows W. H. Auden’s view that “exile to the forest of Arden is a suffering” (2009, 24), emphasizing the play’s investment in tragic conditions not only in the urban world, but in Arden, as well. The protagonists suffer worldly losses which drive them into exile and force them to set up “a makeshift refugee camp” (2009, 23). What they face, Kottman argues, is the dissolution of an “inherited or bequeathable world”; they are made “bereft of such a world, of social and kinship ties, of institutions and principled duties” (2009, 26). Disinheritance from a recognizable sociopolitical world leads to an existence in Arden marked by “loss of collective investment” in the future (2009, 36) and lack of meaning in human interactions. Kottman’s tragic sense of existential conditions haunting Arden is disquieting and in some sense true, but we might consider what other kinds of ontological, perceptual, relational, and spiritual experiences habitation in the forest affords. Ancient Indian wisdom sheds light on the forest world as a beneficent ecological space in which the human aspiration to grow spiritually happens through transforming adversity into a path of liberation. The forest invites humans to experience contentment within and beyond bereavement, and to poise the mind with equanimity in the face of tyranny, lost or renounced inheritance, and uncertain conditions. Following traditional patterns of going forth from society, forest-dwellers leave

institutional ties and worldly networks behind in order to foster growth in wisdom.

There is no doubt that the Forest of Arden offers refuge from “the foul body of th’infected world” (2.7.60). If court and household are “bodies” of infection, relational systems that fail to sustain human flourishing and virtue, the forest exists as an alternative agrarian, spiritual, and ecological world, where humans can see each other in kindness and kinship as “co-mates and brothers in exile” (2.1.1). This phrase reflects Duke Senior’s approach to the forest community as egalitarian and reliably hospitable to spiritual growth and social harmony. The lords and gentlemen who followed him into the forest have found their worldly inheritance unreliable, a lost refuge; they now find refuge, at least temporarily, in the natural world of the forest where relational virtues are cultivated and reciprocated. Virtue has not served them at court or in urban life, a point emphasized by the violence with which Duke Senior, Rosalind, and Orlando have been treated. When Le Beau tells Orlando of Frederick’s sudden “displeasure” and “malice” toward Rosalind for her “virtues” and the “pity” people feel for her (1.2.245–49), his parting words express hope for a “better world”: “Hereafter, in a better world than this, | I shall desire more love and knowledge of you” (1.2.251–52). All of the exiles in Arden seek “more love and knowledge” outside of the “infected world” of court and urban household. A “better world” is one in which virtues are efficacious, the play contends, facilitated by ancient spiritualities, symbolisms, and harmony with nature, rather than modern secular values of competition and material satisfaction.

For all of the exiles, there comes the realization that since externals in the conditioned world are impermanent, if one lets them go as an end, or source of happiness, then contentment can follow. Shakespeare’s inquiry into contentment, thus, surpasses Virgilian pastoralism, which tends to render contentment as a passive and self-satisfied state. Rather, Shakespeare shades this virtue with nuances resonant with ancient Indian wisdom, which views contentment as a mental disposition that emerges through contemplative inquiry and dialectic with *samsaric* realities. Celia’s high-spirited lines, the couplet ending the first act, emphasize contentment as an active quality and the notion of content as a harboring container of virtue and resilience that can be cultivated even in the midst of adversity. As



Jane Hwang Degenhardt emphasizes, “Celia’s ability to perceive exile as a means to ‘liberty’ establishes a paradigm of seeing otherwise – and often optimistically – that runs throughout the play” (2023, 341). Her words become a prologue to Duke Senior’s visionary speech of the tranquil mind, which vividly realizes the mind’s potential for perceptual transformation and optimism. Celia and Duke Senior both face contingencies in their disinherited existence outside the palace gates; they have suffered a father’s and brother’s vicious actions and political machinations, but they nonetheless cultivate an inner capacity for *santosa*, or contented acceptance of reality, that actively changes the way they see and contend with conditioned existence. Such an awakened attitude of mind, as Buddhists would call it, informs their capacity to form bonds – to keep wise company – that benefits mutual spiritual growth.

### ***Satsanga*: Wise Company in the Forest**

*Satsanga* (company of the wise, holy and enlightened persons) is [a] gate-keeper to liberation. *Satsanga* enlarges one’s intelligence, destroys one’s ignorance and one’s psychological distress. Whatever be the cost, however difficult it may be, whatever obstacles may stand in its way, *satsanga* should never be neglected. For, *satsanga* alone is one’s light on the path of life. *Satsanga* is indeed superior to all other forms of religious practice like charity, austerity, pilgrimage and the performance of religious rites. (*Vasistha’s Yoga* 1993, 2:16)

Welcome. Set down your venerable burden [.] (*As You Like It*, 2.7.166)

Arden encompasses a number of communities – agrarian, exiled, and religious. While there are landowners, shepherds, and goatherds native to the woodlands, Duke Senior’s company has become a forest-dwelling *satsanga*. This Sanskrit term from Indian spiritual traditions refers to wise company on the spiritual path, or the community of fellow truth-seekers (*sat* means “true”). As the sage Vasistha says, *satsanga* has the capacity to “enlarge[] one’s intelligence,” dispel ignorance and mental distress, and show the path to enlightenment. Equally, as the Buddha taught, “[t]he company of the wise is joyful, like reunion with one’s family. Therefore, live among the wise, who are understanding, patient, responsible, and noble” (Easwaran 2007a, 15:207–8). Early in the play, the court wrestler, Charles, reported the rumor he heard

about gentlemen seeking the company of the banished duke in the forest: "They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world" (1.1.101-3). This romanticized account, which began with a reference to Robin Hood, ignores the reality of the situation, which is that "[m]en of great worth" have renounced security and worldly accommodations to "resort[] to this forest" (5.4.144). The meanings of *resort* found in the *OED* cast a distinctive light on the motivations of the men: to seek aid or assistance; to seek the company of a person; of good or bad fortune, an inheritance; a return to oneself; to cast one's mind back; to retreat. Collectively, these definitions reveal how the Duke offers a refuge from "the envious court" (2.1.4) and an alternative inheritance to the worldly kinds these men were acquainted with in their urban roles and abodes. Lupton uses the felicitous terms "sapiential community" and Donald Wehrs's "ecosociability" to characterize the Duke's *satsanga* (2022, 568) in which he "minster[s]" to all "[u]nder the shade of [...] boughs" (2.7.125, 109). It is not difficult to imagine him sitting beneath the broad canopy of a tree, ancient Indian symbol of patience and tolerance (Prime 1992, 9), with his loyal followers gathered before him, presenting a stage image not so different from textual and iconographic representations of Indian sages and their disciples.<sup>8</sup> Wisdom and dispassion give the Duke the capacity to respond to the spiritual and practical needs of those who have "gone forth" and turned away from worldly striving and attachments.

Duke Senior's words, the first spoken in Arden, welcome his *satsanga* and the play's audience, staking a claim for the virtues of life in the forest's "better world." The "unmistakably homiletic" tone of his speech and his sense of the divine speaking through nature (Watterson 1991, 119) reflect not only Mosaic and New Testament ideas, but core virtues of Eastern spirituality and Vedic scriptures: *santi*, *santosa*, the sacredness of nature, and the interdependence of human, natural, and divine spheres. For Hindus, the forest is an image of the world inclusive of all of creation; in terms of religious pursuit, the forest is "the home of the sages" (Prime 1992, 12). Seen in this light, and after "long custom" (2.1.2) in the forest, the Duke, we might perceive,

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<sup>8</sup> Act 2, scene 5 indicates the presence of a tree onstage. Not only does Amiens sing "Under the greenwood tree," but he directs the lords to prepare a meal, saying "The Duke will drink under this tree" (26).

has undergone spiritual conversion and now has the capacity to feel “what I am,” as he says (2.1.11), and to find benefit in adversity; he has trained his mind, as it were, to remain poised in contentment. His verse has an aphoristic quality similar to the Buddhist lojong slogan on transforming adversity into enlightenment, which was cited at the opening of this essay:

Sweet are the uses of adversity  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;  
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything. (2.1.12-17)

Speaking for the satsanga, Amiens acknowledges the relationship between happiness/well-being and the mind’s capacity to “translate” adversity into good: “I would not change it. Happy is your grace | That can translate the stubbornness of fortune | Into so quiet and so sweet a style” (2.1.18-20). The qualities of mind reflected in the Duke’s “sweet [...] style” (*santi, santosa*) are recognized as well in Stoic, Epicurean, and Christian traditions as foundations of wisdom. Tapping the power of sovereign goodness, the Duke actively transforms the external into the internal, the harshness and fickleness of worldly experience into a calm disposition and language. He experiences their exiled life in the forest as “more sweet | Than that of painted pomp” (2.1.2-3), which is to say, more naturally agreeable than the court’s artificial, vainglorious ceremonies. Sweetness evokes an Epicurean pleasure, which pervades the hardships of exile, making them not simply bearable, but blissful. With a mind at peace, Hindu scriptures affirm, “this very world becomes an abode of bliss” (*Vasistha’s Yoga* 1993, 2:12).

There is an almost magical sense of the “sweet [...] uses of adversity” conveyed in the Duke’s image of the “precious jewel” in the forehead of the “ugly and venomous toad.” That jewel is the legendary toadstone, which was thought to contain an antidote to poison, including the toad’s own venom.<sup>9</sup> The Duke’s allusion to the

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<sup>9</sup> The earliest known reference to the toadstone is in Pliny the Elder’s first-century *Natural History*. Renaissance sources include Edward Fenton (1569), Thomas Lupton (1576), Thomas Nicols (1652), and Edward Topsell (1658). In his investigation into the

alchemical toadstone emphasizes the medicinal quality within the mind itself to transmute the perceptual experience of suffering into compassion and other positive attitudes. In the Indian yogic tradition, the forehead is the site of the “third eye,” or *ajna chakra*, known as a subtle realm of insight, wisdom, and truth.<sup>10</sup> Jewels signify spiritual illumination in Buddhism. Thus, the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are called the Three Jewels of refuge, and virtuous qualities such as the awakened heart-mind (*bodhicitta*) and altruism are called jewels in traditional scriptures. The Duke’s awareness of the poisons that obscure and sicken the mind is evident from his recent conflict with his brother and expulsion from society. His optimism is not born of delusion or denial. Rather, he has cultivated the jewel in his mind, a tranquil self-control and awakened attitude, which affords him a sublime view of “good in everything.” The sage Vasistha’s words shed light on the Duke’s mental fortitude as a “remedy” for all ills.

When the mind is at peace, pure, tranquil, free from delusion or hallucination, untangled and free from cravings, it does not long for anything nor does it reject anything. This is self-control or conquest of mind [*santi*]—one of the four gate-keepers to liberation [...]. All that is good and auspicious flows from self-control. All evil is dispelled by self-control. (1993, 2:13)

Santi, Vasistha proclaims, is “the best remedy for all physical and mental ills” (1993, 2:13)

While the Duke’s wisdom reflects an advanced stage on the spiritual path, Jaques’s melancholy reflects an earlier stage—or perhaps an alternate branch in the path—where the uses of adversity are bitter, rather than sweet. Yet in the non-dual aspect of ancient wisdoms, Duke Senior and Jaques are complementary parts of the same coin of spiritual aspiration. The first description of Jaques places him beneath a tree, just as we found the Duke, though Jaques is alone

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rich folklore of fossils, paleontologist Paul D. Taylor observes that the “shiny button-like teeth of the Mesozoic fish *Lepidotus* are sometimes referred to as toadstones and were once believed to have formed within the heads of toads. The notion of toads’ heads containing jewels is ancient. [...] At some stage during the evolution of the toadstone myth, fossil *Lepidotus* teeth became associated with this particular legend. Like tonguestones, toadstones were considered to have medicinal value as antidotes to poison” (1998, 143).

<sup>10</sup> The concept of subtle bodily and spiritual energies, known as the *chakras* (“wheels”), arose in ancient traditions of Hinduism and appeared in the Vedas and yogic texts.

in melancholic repose: “he lay along | Under an oak, whose antic root peeps out | Upon the brook that brawls along this wood” (2.1.30–32). Considered a sacred tree in ancient and early modern cultures, the oak characterizes the recumbent Jaques as a spiritual renunciant living in sympathy with the forest world and its animal inhabitants.<sup>11</sup> Yet his retreat to nature fails to bring contentment; in this instance he is lamenting the “misery” (2.1.51) of a wounded stag to whom he can give no aid. While Touchstone, the court fool, offers an easy dictum with his “travellers must be content” (2.4.13–14), such a stance is elusive, even unacceptable, for Jaques. He is disillusioned with *samsara*, a necessary realization on the spiritual path, yet entangled in a self-perpetuated suffering that drives him to rail against the “infected world” (2.7.60) rather than let it go. Jaques’s discontent and existential anguish alienate him from spiritual companions, yet, most poignantly, he feels the suffering and impermanence of all sentient beings and wishes that the human community would “patiently receive [his] medicine” (2.7.61).

With his insight into *samsaric* conditions, Jaques is as much a wisdom teacher as Duke Senior, yet he contrasts radically with the Duke in his skillful means, or *upaya*, as Buddhists call it. While the Duke’s “sweet” style exudes a pleasurable equanimity and tranquility, producing a circle of “contented followers” (5.2.13), Jaques’s bitter mode of expression betrays moral disgust for egoic pretensions, hypocrisies, and corruptions. His first “teaching” (reported through two lords) involves the wounded deer whom he weeps for and uses as an object lesson to moralize on the exiled court’s “usurp[ation]” of the animals’ “native dwelling place” (2.1.27, 63). Jaques “most invectively [...] pierceth through | The body of the country, city, court, | Yea, and of this our life” (2.1.58–60) with the accusation of usurpation and tyranny over deer killed for venison. This ethical and empathetic appeal strikes home, as the Duke himself expresses vexation about having to kill the “native burghers of this desert city” (2.1.23). Jaques’s critical perspective exposes the less than

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<sup>11</sup> Todd Borlik (forthcoming) argues that Shakespeare’s audiences would have perceived Jaques in light of the wandering Greek sage Pythagoras, “a prominent figure in the Renaissance revival of wisdom literature” whose philosophy bridged Eastern and Western thought and exemplified ecological virtues such as vegetarianism, non-harming (*ahimsa*), and cosmic harmony.

perfect reality of the human position in the forest—the Duke’s men choose to take life in order to sustain life, which violates the ancient wisdom principle of *ahisma*.

The occasion for Jaques’s second teaching arises after his encounter with Touchstone. Jaques arrives in the midst of Duke Senior’s satsanga, amused and inspired by the Fool’s dull wit. “O that I were a fool!” he exclaims, seeing in himself a greater capacity than the professional fool to be “deep-contemplative” and to act as a true touchstone of virtue (2.7.31, 42). “I must have liberty,” he cries, “Give me leave | To speak my mind, and I will through and through | Cleanse the foul body of th’infected world” (2.7.47, 58–60). The exuberant mockery in Jaques’s speech to the satsanga conveys an undercurrent of good will, a desire to serve the samsaric world in showing vice its face. Duke Senior undoubtedly recognizes Jaques’s intent and the truth of what he wishes to expose, yet like a Buddhist master taking aim at his student’s ego, he charges Jaques to look first to his own infection, a carnal libertinism and harmful liberty that lies in the way of spiritual advancement.

The lively exchange between Duke Senior and Jaques halts suddenly when Orlando, sword drawn, appears in the midst of the satsanga, desperately in need of food, “pity,” and “gentleness” (2.7.116, 117). Orlando’s experience of the forest as “desert inaccessible” (2.7.109) has been shaped largely by necessity, that is, his desire to care for the aged Adam, whose condition has deteriorated rapidly. The Duke responds to Orlando’s “distress” with compassion and hospitality — “Sit down and feed. Welcome to our table” (2.7.91, 104). Orlando is struck by the Duke’s “gentleness,” his natural kindness, which recalls “better days” of spiritual communion and wise company (2.7.112). The Duke, too, has cherished such memories of “holy bell,” “good man’s feasts,” “sacred pity,” and “gentleness” (2.7.120–23).<sup>12</sup> Better days might seem lost to Arden’s exiles, yet, in truth, the Duke’s forest table has preserved the spiritual essence of the old rituals and virtues. The forest satsanga has established a renewed sense of hospitality, kindness, and fellowship, the “better world” Le Beau expressly wished

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<sup>12</sup> Through the lens of Erasmian humanism, Lupton (2022) envisions “Duke Senior and Orlando build[ing] an Erasmian church in the forest through the liturgical repetitions of their speech, countering [...] the iconoclasm of Reformation with a renewed potential for grace received through mindful attention to ancient traditions” (578–79).

for back at the corrupt court. With the Duke's welcome, Orlando softens and reveals an innate maternal disposition in harmony with the natural world: "like a doe," he says, "I will go to find my faun | To give him food" (2.7.127–28). The Duke's generous hospitality and magnanimity give Orlando the means to alleviate Adam's suffering — indeed, to save his life.

The plight of Orlando and Adam inspires the Duke to pause for a moment to reflect on the pervasiveness of suffering. Through the ancient topos of *theatrum mundi*, he expresses a capacious empathy:

Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy.  
This wide and universal theatre  
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene  
Wherein we play in. (2.7.135–38)

The Duke's view subtly reflects the interdependence of all "scenes" in which no being is "all alone unhappy." Compassion would seem to arise naturally from this wise realization. Yet not all members of the Duke's audience respond in such a way. Listening attentively, Jaques picks up immediately as if on cue with the word "play" and plunges into his own elaboration of the life-as-theater topos. He recounts the "seven ages of man" as a samsaric round of existence in which humans have slavish parts to play within their "woeful pageants." In casting humans as "merely players" mindlessly "play[ing] many parts" (2.7.139, 141), Jaques illustrates each age with a stark, unpleasant caricature, which culminates in the age of senility, indignity, and total loss. Notably, Jaques mentions neither women with their life-giving and nurturing functions nor sages with their wisdom. The fifth age is that of the big-bellied, corrupt justice whose sagacity boils down to "wise saws and modern instances" and the sixth age belongs to "the lean and slippered pantaloons," a commedia dell'arte caricature of age (2.7.155, 157). Jaques's bitter reduction of life to actors' stock parts cannot help but suggest how lacking in multi-dimensionality these reified, static portrayals are. Indeed, at just the moment when Jaques envisions the human life cycle dwindling to "mere oblivion" (2.7.164), a robust Orlando enters the stage with Adam on his back, the two characters appearing as if to burst from the seams of Jaques's ill-fitting costumes. The youthful Orlando's loving-kindness and compassion do not belong to the parodic romantic lover who sighs and writes a "woeful ballad | To

his mistress's eyebrow" (2.7.147-48), and old Adam appears as a loving, cared-for elder. Duke Senior, quite unlike the Justice of the fifth age, embodies genuine wisdom and responds with hospitality and care to the needs of his guests.

Surely, though, Jaques's investigative, critical mind seeks precisely the opposite of what he has satirized. Not only does he seek a life beyond subservient bondage to conditioned roles, but secretly, too, he yearns for liberation beyond his self-appointed role of detached cynical observer. Vasistha's teaching on *vichara*, the inquiring mind, can help us see how Jaques "protects [himself] from the calamities that befall the unthinking fool [...]. They in whom the spirit of enquiry is ever awake illumine the world, enlighten all who come in contact with them, dispel the ghosts created by an ignorant mind, and realise the falsity of sense-pleasures and their objects" (1993, 2:14). This inquiring spirit "is the greatest wisdom," Vasistha proclaims (1993, 2:16). Having befriended that gatekeeper to liberation, Jaques is in search of knowledge that will bring contentment. His refusal at the end of the play to join the circle of lovers emblemizes his position as traveler and solitary seeker; he is desirous of staying in the forest to seek an alternative to the sixth and seventh ages he caricatured. Jaques's underlying intent to liberate others from the moral infections and mental suffering of *samsara* has marked him all along as a spiritual aspirant. Indeed, he realizes that his melancholy is a kind of poison "compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects," which has infected him with "rumination" that "wraps [him] in most humorous sadness" (4.1.15-16, 17-18). Such discontent, as the play demonstrates, has its antidote. The conversions of Frederick and Oliver reveal that the mind is changeable and full of potential and that Jaques's desire to purify the world of its foulness is not without merit. What he lacks is a catalyst, touchstone, or inner fire that will enable spiritual growth through his own purification.

Duke Senior has known all along what Jaques has been unable to perceive. So, too, have Celia and Rosalind, Orlando and the native forest-dweller Corin. They are aware of the "precious jewel in [the toad's] head" (2.1.14), of their innate capacity for positive mind states, such as optimism; they practice virtue, rather than rail against the unvirtuous. To choose the attitude of liberty, a free mind even "content with mine harm," as Corin can claim (3.2.66), is to show courage,



fortitude, and great mental control. Formerly a royal power in charge of a dukedom, Duke Senior now resides in a cave, patient and content, much as the sage Vasistha did above the Ganges in the Himalayas, and as many wandering yogis and wisdom-seekers have in ancient and modern times. The “cave of the heart” (*guha*) is an Upanisadic motif linking literal and figurative abodes where the supreme Self “drinks sweet and bitter | Neither liking this nor disliking that” (*Katha Upanasad* 3:1, see Easwaran 2007b). Celia’s greatness of mind lies in a non-dual sense of loving-kindness: “Thou and I are one,” she says to Rosalind (1.3.91). Willing to sacrifice her inheritance and royal social position for love of her cousin, she has found the precious jewel in adversity, and it is made of a constellation of virtues.

Most importantly, the spiritual vision of *As You Like It* extends to all humans, including Oliver and Frederick, showing how buddha-nature or atman are endowments of the mind. While suffering and poisonous passions are conditioned, as Hindus and Buddhists would say, liberation is an unconditioned state of well-being arising directly out of one’s nature. By act four, Oliver’s mental condition of suffering and the consequences of keeping bad company are made manifest when he finds himself “wretched” in a “desert place” (4.3.105, 140). Misfortune strikes suddenly when Duke Frederick seizes Oliver’s property and banishes him from home until he is able to return Orlando to court. Oliver goes forth into the forest as his brother had, yet blindly, ignorant of who he is and what he truly seeks. In time he becomes “a wretched, ragged old man, o’ergrown with hair” (4.3.105). He tells the wondrous story to Rosalind and Celia of what happened to him while he lay asleep “[u]nder an old oak, whose boughs were mossed with age | And high top bald with dry antiquity” (4.3.103–5). Recalling earlier scenes with Jaques and the Duke, Oliver’s position beneath an old tree serves as an emblem of his proximity to the seat of ancient wisdom. While he is unconscious, a snake has wreathed himself about Oliver’s neck, preparing to enter his mouth. This image is reminiscent of Vasistha’s motif of the “deadly serpent known as ignorant life,” which “gives rise to interminable suffering” (1993, 2:12). Manifesting as a threatening snake, this ignorance (*avidya*) is warded off by an encounter with Orlando. However, a lioness lies in wait to attack Oliver, and when Orlando sees her in the vicinity of his sleeping brother, he feels momentarily moved to abandon him

to a terrible fate. Yet the jewels of bodhicitta and loving-kindness shine more brightly than the instinct to revenge – “kindness, nobler ever than revenge, | And nature, stronger than his just occasion, | Made him give battle to the lioness” (4.3.127–29). Like his defeat of the court wrestler, Orlando’s triumph over the lioness is wondrous. In wrestling a predator, Orlando symbolically conquers afflictions that attack the morally undisciplined mind, both his brother’s and his own. His kind response to the suffering of his enemy brother is *dharmic* (a law of nature) and magnanimous, resonating with the Buddha’s words in the *Dhammapada*: “‘He was angry with me, he attacked me, he defeated | me, he robbed me’ – those who do not dwell on | such thoughts will surely become free from hatred. | | For hatred can never put an end to hatred; | love alone can. This is an unalterable law” (Easwaran 2007a, 1:4–5).

Oliver’s worldly losses and lonely decline in the forest lead to disillusionment with samsara. A softening of heart and change of mind become the next steps towards liberation. In his exclamation, “From miserable slumber I awaked” (4.3.131), the allegorical dimension of spiritual awakening is unmistakable, and at its root lies Orlando’s act of loving-kindness. What Oliver experiences when his brother saves his life is the liberating effect of Orlando’s virtue, his buddha-nature, which causes the spontaneous arising of his own innate goodness. He becomes aware of his former ill-will and envy as “unnatural” – “For well I know he was unnatural” (4.3.123), he acknowledges to Rosalind and Celia. With the grammar of conversion, he attests to the visceral sweetness of moral change: “‘Twas I but ‘tis not I. I do not shame | To tell you what I was, since my conversion | So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am” (4.3.134–36). Far from the “butchery” household of his own making, the welcoming abode of the forest world is where Oliver finds a reliable refuge. Given the causes and conditions of the forest, kindness and kinship are given a space in which their natural expression can arise and be efficacious.

### **“True contents”: Spiritual at-onement in the forest**

Then is there mirth in heaven  
When earthly things made even  
Atone together [...].

Peace, ho, I bar confusion.  
 'Tis I must make conclusion  
 Of these most strange events [...].  
 If truth holds true contents.

(As You Like It, 5.4.97–99, 114–16, 119)

The inhabitants of Arden ultimately seek the sweetness of “true contents.” Celia’s words, “now go we in content | To liberty, and not to banishment” (1.3.131–32), sound a high note of optimism for Arden as a refuge where the causes and conditions of liberation can be found for Rosalind and herself. Arden, as it turns out, facilitates spiritual growth and conversion for all who aspire to that height of human potential. The Duke’s satsanga is revealed onstage immediately following Celia’s words, displaying how her faith is not misplaced and finds a touchstone in a hospitable forest community dedicated to the virtues of the good life. But there is more wise company to be found in Arden, which becomes evident late in the comedy when atonement and conversion mark the paths of those who have neglected spiritual matters and failed to practice communal virtues. This proves true not only for Oliver. When Duke Frederick enters the forest with an army, intending fratricidal violence, he violates the ancient reverence for the forest as a place of peace (*aranya*). An encounter with “an old religious man” on “the skirts of this wild wood” (5.4.149, 148), however, changes his intention and his moral disposition. The presence of a religious man in a forest resonates with the Hindu vision of forest as *tapovana*, an area, as Ranchor Prime explains, “specifically set aside as a place for the practice of religion. Why should a forest be required for religion?” Prime asks, and elucidates by observing how *tapas* “means penance” (1992, 12), which ancient Vedic wisdom emphasized as necessary for spiritual purification and growth.

The life of a *rishi*, a holy person, is meant to be one of self-control and penance, through diet, simple living, renunciation of belongings and meditation. The rishi must live in a place which is apart from the bustle and passion of worldly life, a place pervaded with the presence of God [...]. If one wished to meet with such advanced souls one had to go to the forest where their *ashrams*, or hermitages, could be found. (1992, 12)

Now “apart from the bustle and passion of worldly life,” Frederick pauses to question a holy man, whose answers to life’s great questions,

one must imagine, inspire his conversion “[b]oth from his enterprise and from the world” (5.4.151). Shakespeare reveals the profound and spiritually beneficial effects of the forest environment with religious inhabitants who have the power to move the heart of even a morally hardened worldly ruler. Frederick’s conversion is surely a sign of the human potential to reorient or conclude life’s journey as a going forth in the religious sense to seek liberation from samsara.

Duke Frederick’s striking conversion “from the world” is not lost on Jaques, who has “thrown into neglect” (5.4.171) his own worldly affairs to travel an ancient wisdom path, though he has yet to savor its fruit. Jaques’s libertinism has been an obstacle and satirical melancholy a bitter physic on the spiritual path. Tapas is what he lacks, both in its penitential aspect but also in its creative fire of austerity and ardent, single-focused, self-transcending energy. He questions Jaques de Boyes, who had told the conversion story, and, when the truth of it is confirmed, he makes a decision: “To him will I. Out of these convertites | there is much matter to be heard and learned” (5.4.173–74). He desires the “matter” of wisdom and has hope in the instruction of converts and holy men. He will seek a “nook [...] monastic” (3.2.376) in Duke Senior’s “abandoned cave” (5.4.185) and stay in the tapovana. In the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Undertaking the Path to Awakening*), the learned Indian monk Śāntideva wrote of the intense spiritual yearning experienced by those who desire to become enlightened. One must “renounce the world,” he counseled, and “follow the solitary life, which is delightful and free from strife, leading to the auspicious and calming all distractions” (1995, 8:2, 38).<sup>13</sup> He described how those who seek liberation make their home “at the foot of a tree, or in caves,” to “dwell in vast regions owned by none, in their natural state” (1995, 8:27, 28). The convert’s experience offers the promise of an antidote to Jaques’s suffering and a liberating nectar that will turn his bitter words to sweet medicine. As Todd Borlik writes, “one must imagine Jaques happy. Or to use the more nuanced word the play prefers, ‘content’” (forthcoming, n.p.). Already, in the play’s final moments, Jaques speaks more freely and magnanimously and, in his leave-taking, gives blessings to others, including Duke Senior.

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<sup>13</sup> Śāntideva (c. 685–763 CE) was a Buddhist scholar and monk associated with the monastic university of Nalanda in North India, where he composed the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. This influential text is considered a great work of world spirituality.

The “[l]ast scene of all, | That ends this [wondrous], eventful history” (2.7.162–63) is a gorgeous celebratory one, archaic, festive, pastoral, and ecumenical all at once. Shakespeare’s stage becomes a gracious *srivana*, the forest space of groves and orchards reserved for festivals and feasts, where the audience witnesses the beautiful, harmonious ends of virtue expressed through matrimony and monasticism (Prasad 2018, 6; Lupton 2022, 569–70). The appearance of Hymen brings a god to Earth to make good the fulfillment of spiritual aspirations in the human community. The comedy’s vision of life is, finally, religious in its ancient sense of at-oneness (atonement, union in harmony) and in the Eastern sense of Ultimate Reality and transcendence of suffering. Hymen’s words deepen this sense of atonement and sacredness in the forest world. Hymen “from heaven brought [Rosalind]” (5.4.101), unveiling how divine love permeates the human sphere. The spiritual atmosphere harmonizes and lightens into what Hindus might perceive as *lila*, or divine “play,” a theological expression of God’s “free and joyous creativity” in the world which inspires “a spirit of religious wonder” (Hein 1995, 13, 15). As a departure from Duke Senior’s and Jaques’s visions of *theatrum mundi*, this moment in *As You Like It* resonates with Hindu devotional practices in which the world is regarded as a divine stage with human actors playing transcendent roles in at-onement with the gods.

The Anglo-Norman and Latin roots of *religion*, as indicated in the *OED*, reveal the nature of what is being staged in this final scene: reverence and awe of the gods; performance of a religious rite; respect for what is sacred; a monastic community. The loving bonds of couples in marriages overseen by a god, the Duke’s universal love, the conversion of Frederick to a “religious life” and Oliver to loving-kindness and virtue, Jaques’s yearning for spiritual knowledge and the monastic life—all human aspirations unite harmoniously in shared optimism. Like spiritual seekers who dwelt in forest ashrams, the *tapovana* of the Upanisad sages, the parks and forest groves of the Buddha and other Indian wisdom teachers, Shakespeare’s characters have gone forth in both geographic and spiritual senses. The Hindu concept of the whole world as forest, resonant with the ancient Greek idea of Earth as breathing organism, biosphere, and soul, reveals how Arden functions as an eco-religious green space of human and natural prosperity. Duke Senior, Rosalind, and Orlando will return to the urban world, resume lives as householders and rulers; their

capacity to transform harsh realities into tranquility and contentment and their predisposition to patience and loving-kindness bode well for a sustained sense of the entwinement of human, natural, and sacred realms, of the “forest world” as image of the entire world. Jaques, Frederick, Oliver, Celia, and Touchstone will remain in Arden, where we can imagine their continued pursuit of contentment in contemplative and agrarian communities.

## Epilogue

Viewing *As You Like It* through the glass of Indian wisdom traditions offers readers and audiences today a fresh encounter with Shakespeare that acknowledges his ecumenical spirit and global presence. Ancient Eastern spiritual tropes and motifs commonly found in religious literature lend new life and rich value to Shakespeare’s comedy, rendering it a drama of spiritual aspiration and at-onement. The archetypal patterns of going forth, taking refuge, and befriending spiritual gatekeepers map onto the characters’ journeys and experiences in morally productive ways. The Hindu and Buddhist metaphors of forest, tree, cave, and jewel illuminate spiritual locales and attitudes that have a surprising affinity with Shakespeare’s store of motifs. The ancient Indian image of world as forest, which for today’s audiences bespeaks ecological preservation and cultivation rather than harmful destruction and depletion of natural resources, in *As You Like It* appears as a capacious refuge where harmony, wisdom, and virtue can be cultivated. Within the forest, the symbolically rich tree, rooted deeply in the earth and branching over the spiritual community, integrates human, natural, and spiritual realms. The repeated image of wisdom-seekers under trees in Shakespeare’s play recalls the Indian spiritual tradition of forest-dwelling. The cave, too, is an ancient abode for sages where peace and tranquil self-reflection dissolve the ego’s attachments. With the mention of the Duke’s mysterious cave, unseen yet invoked as a site of contemplative conversation, the audience has a sense of inner sanctuaries within the forest. Finally, the jewel as a motif of virtue’s medicinal quality pictured by the Duke in the ugly toad’s head figures how humans find positive inner resources to transmute and overcome negative passions and discontent. Ancient Indian wisdom not only illuminates Shakespeare’s sublime comedic vision of love, contentment, and

liberation, but, strikingly, it offers to our contemporary world in crisis an understanding of how Shakespeare imagined with great optimism the virtuous qualities and spiritual reserves we humans and humanists need now more than ever to survive and flourish as a species in fellowship with each other, nature, and the cosmos.

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*Author's contact:* tassim@unk.edu

*Postal address:* English Department, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Kearney, Nebraska, 68849, USA.

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## Recommended reading for good governors: *Utopia de Thomas Moro (1637)\**

Inmaculada Ureña Asensio  
*Universidad de Jaén, Spain*

### ABSTRACT

Gerónimo de Medinilla translated Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) into Spanish in 1637, more than a century after the text was printed in Leuven. The paratexts of the translation imply that Medinilla might have published his translation with a practical and political intention, which is reminiscent of the first interpretations of the humanist's work by sixteenth-century Spanish readers. This article analyzes two textual references from the translation to discuss the hypothesis that it was offered as a manual for governors. It also proposes an original biography of Gerónimo de Medinilla. This will serve to contextualize the translator and the potential final purpose of the edition.

KEYWORDS: translation, Medinilla, *Utopia*, manual for governors, Thomas More.

**Una lectura recomendada para el buen gobierno: *Utopia de Thomas Moro* (1637)**

RESUMEN: Gerónimo de Medinilla publicó su traducción de la obra *Utopia* de Thomas More en 1637, más de un siglo después de que el humanista inglés viese su trabajo impreso en Lovaina (1516). En los paratextos de la obra, Medinilla deja entrever que la traducción tenía un fin práctico y político. Esta lectura recuerda a las primeras interpretaciones hechas por españoles en el siglo XVI. A través del análisis de dos citas del texto, este artículo debate la hipótesis de que el traductor ofrecía su *Utopia* como un manual de buen go-

**Uma leitura recomendada para bons governadores: *Utopia de Thomas Moro* (1637)\*\***

RESUMO: Gerónimo de Medinilla publicou a sua tradução de *Utopia* (1516), de Thomas More, em 1637, mais de um século após o texto ter sido impresso em Lovaina. Os paratextos da tradução sugerem que Medinilla pode ter publicado a sua tradução com uma finalidade prática e política, remanescente das primeiras interpretações do trabalho deste humanista por leitores espanhóis quinhentistas. Este artigo analisa duas referências textuais da tradução, para discutir a hipótese de que esta foi oferecida como um manual para bons governadores.

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\*\* Translation into Portuguese by Miguel Ramalhete.

bierno. Como contextualización al traductor y su posible objetivo final, este trabajo también presenta una biografía original sobre Gerónimo de Medinilla.

PALABRAS CLAVE: traducción, Medinilla, *Utopia*, manual de gobierno, Thomas More.

Propõe-se também uma biografia original de Gerónimo de Medinilla, de forma a contextualizar o tradutor e o seu possível objetivo final.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: tradução, Medinilla, *Utopia*, manual de governo, Thomas More.

Scholars and various readers have offered different interpretations for the genesis and intention of Thomas More's *Utopia* since its publication in 1516. Some believed that *Utopia* was a response to the religious doctrines emerging in Europe. With his text, Thomas More would have been launching a manifesto of reform defending the ideals of Christian Humanism (Prévost 1972, 116–17). However, other views propose that More wanted to play with the literary creation of a commonwealth, a sort of response to the first testimonies of America and native societies (More 1965, xxxi). This discussion has shaped different readings of the humanist's work.<sup>1</sup>

In Spain, the interpretations shifted according to historical and cultural circumstances. In the first half of the sixteenth century, More's text was read as a political treatise for governors in the Spanish territories overseas. Spaniards like Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of Mexico, Vasco de Quiroga, bishop of Michoacán, and Juan de Torquemada, a Franciscan missionary in Mexico, seriously considered *Utopia* for the construction and organization of their cities (Maravall 1982, 23). The second half of the sixteenth century relegated More's masterpiece to the background. Writers now paid attention to the Chancellor, focusing on exalting his figure and sanctity. Fernando de Herrera wrote *Tomás Moro* (1592)—which, according to López Estrada, was for a long time the only Spanish book fully dedicated to Thomas More (1980, 30)—; Pedro de Ribadeneyra devoted some pages to the humanist in his *Historia Eclesiástica del Cisma de Inglaterra* (1588); and Alonso de Villegas's included his biography in his 1588 *Flos Sanctorum* (1980, 27–43).<sup>2</sup>

In the seventeenth century, according to Jones, *Utopia* was no longer read as in the previous century. More's text turned into a work

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<sup>1</sup> For an updated bibliography, see Logan (1983; 2011) and Dealy (2020).

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the depiction of Thomas More in Spain, see Lillo Castañ (2021) and García García (2021).

of fiction, since it appeared more a work of imagination rather than a work for practical application (1950, 480).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, no Spanish translation was published during the sixteenth century, unlike in other European nations. The first translation of More's work published in Spain was *Utopia de Thomas Moro* (1637), by Gerónimo de Medinilla.<sup>4</sup> The work was published in 1637 in the workshop of Salvador de Cea Tea, a printer in the city of Córdoba. It is a partial translation: Medinilla only translated Book II,<sup>5</sup> removing the paratexts and the first book.<sup>6</sup> Medinilla's edition features a rich paratextual apparatus, even if he did not preserve any of the original Latin introductory materials. The edition contains a wide range of preliminaries: a title page, a dedication to Juan de Chaves, two notes by the translator, the testimonies of Francisco de Quevedo and Jiménez Patón, a recommendatory letter, nine poems, the inquisitorial approval of Jiménez Patón, four other institutional approvals, and the index of chapters—Davenport and Cabanillas count twenty-five different elements (2008, 112). This abundance was frequent in most seventeenth-century editions around Europe (Bohigas 1962, 210). These elements contextualize the work and offer the reader a brief presentation of Thomas More, *Utopia*, the translator, and the translation. The perspectives provided by the

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<sup>3</sup> López Estrada also discusses this idea. As the Renaissance text shared features with fictional literature, the utopian nature prevailed over the practical component of *Utopia* (1980, 62–63).

<sup>4</sup> However, in the sixteenth century a Spanish translation of *Utopia* already circulated in Spain: the manuscript Madrid, Real Biblioteca MS II/1087. Víctor Lillo Castañ attributes the authorship to Vasco de Quiroga, who could have rendered it circa 1535 (2020, 1). This manuscript was made known by Serrano y Sanz (1903) and commented by López Estrada in 1992, as is documented in Davenport and Cabanillas (2008, note 1, 110). This remarkable discovery has changed the understanding of reception of *Utopia* in Spain as well as in the European paradigm, as this sixteenth-century rendering is now considered the first vernacular translation of More's text. Nevertheless, Medinilla's translation can be regarded the first printed version, because Quiroga's manuscript was addressed to a group of counselors from the Consejo de Indias (Lillo 2020, 3). For further information on the description of the manuscript see Lillo Castañ (2018) and More (2021).

<sup>5</sup> The reason why this might have happened remains surprisingly unclear, considering that Book I discusses the political involvement of wise men. There are several possible explanations: Medinilla could have believed that *Utopia* focused too much on sixteenth-century English society or could have feared that the Inquisition expurgate some controversial fragments of the text. Alternatively, a shortened version of *Utopia* with just one book might have been more appealing to readers.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed account of paratexts, see Cave (2008, 278–80).

paratexts enable a complete study of *Utopia de Thomas Moro* in terms of expected audience and interpretations.

The hypothesis that Medinilla planned his translation as a manual for governors was already put forth by Davenport and Cabanillas (2008).<sup>7</sup> To prove the idea, the authors focus on the translator's environment. Medinilla was at that moment governor in Córdoba and his interest in authors like Thomas More, Nicolas Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, and Cornelius Tacitus reflected his concern with political issues (2008, 114–15). López Estrada had previously explored that possibility too. He suggested that Medinilla proposed More's text with a political purpose that was timidly reminiscent of the *arbitristas*, who advised the king on politics and economy through their writings in Spain during the sixteen and seventeen centuries (1965, 305; 1980, 83).<sup>8</sup> Likewise, Medinilla could be offering his translation as a handbook for all types of governors.

As argued, *Utopia* was dedicated to a political figure (Juan de Chaves), a feature which is also present in other vernacular translations. In 1524—More was still alive—, Claude Chansonnette rendered it into German. Printed in Basel, the translation was partial: only Book II was included. The translator, one of the most popular jurists of the time, decided to gift the text to the Town Council of Basel to acknowledge the good work of the local government (Salberg 2008, 34–35).<sup>9</sup> Then in 1551 Ralph Robinson published the first English translation of *Utopia*. This was dedicated to his patron, the English statesman William Cecil. However, there was no explicit political declaration, since Robinson aimed only to please Elizabeth I's future advisor with a work that

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<sup>7</sup> Davenport and Cabanillas declare that “we consider that Medinilla's primary purpose in communicating Utopia to his fellow countrymen is to make the praise of the ideal governance of Utopia reflect his own governance of Córdoba and its districts. Thus, in seventeenth-century Spain the function of *Utopia* as a political treatise is emphasized, marginalizing the narrative element” (2008, 125–26).

<sup>8</sup> According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, *arbitristas* are “writers who combined an economic analysis of the social ills of Spain with projects for economic recovery and social and moral regeneration” (s.v. “Spain in 1600”).

<sup>9</sup> “Harumb gnedigen und günstigen herrn wellen üwere St.E.W. diß vertütscht büchly als ein gewiß pfand mins underdien-stlichen gegen inen und einer loblichen Statt Basel” (Cave 2008, 160) [“Therefore, graceful and benevolent lords, I hope your Lordship will willingly receive and accept this little book that I have translated into German as a certain pledge of a mind that is all set humbly to serve you and the good city of Basel” (Cave 2008, 161)].

might be of his interest (Spaans and Cave 2008, 92). In 1585, a French edition was produced in Henri III's honor. Its translator was Gabriel Chappuys and he included Book II within a compilation of real and fictional forms of government titled *L'Etat, description et gouvernement des royaumes et republicques du monde, tant anciennes que modernes*.<sup>10</sup> The translator believed this set of states could broaden the king's knowledge of other governments (Boutcher 2008, 78). Finally, there is one rendering printed in the seventeenth century that preserved this same characteristic. Samuel Sorbière's French translation was presented to Count Frederik Magnus, governor of Sluis (Boutcher 2008, 84). In addition to these translations, the 1620 Latin edition of *Utopia* printed in Milan was dedicated to the president of the senate in Milan (Boutcher 2008, 137).

The premise proposed by Davenport and Cabanillas has not yet been explored in depth in other bibliographical references relevant for Thomas More studies. In fact, earlier articles like those by Lydia Hunt (1991) and R. O. Jones (1950) sidestep the issue completely and pay much more attention to the influence of Quevedo in the translation. Considering Davenport and Cabanillas's proposal as a starting point, this paper examines the context of the work and analyzes its paratexts to discuss the hypothesis that the text could have been translated to be read as a political treatise or manual for governors. The paratexts of the book reveal that there was a political intention behind it, which reminds us of previous interpretations in sixteenth-century Spain. They contain a series of elements that support the idea that Medinilla might have been an exception to those who read More's text as fictional literature in seventeenth-century Spain. For that reason, two textual references from the section "Al Lector" ["To the Reader"]<sup>11</sup>—written by the translator—are key to developing the idea that the governor aimed at presenting his *Utopia* with a political intention. The first one revisits Medinilla's way of serving the country by sharing the political content of *Utopia*. The second quote exposes how he himself could benefit from rendering its message. Before studying these intertwined references, a biography of the translator is presented, despite the lack of available data. The next lines review all official documents, biographical encyclopedias and academic publications dealing with

<sup>10</sup> Chappuys text used Sansovino's *Il Governo* as a primary source (Boutcher 2008, 79).

<sup>11</sup> My translation.

Medinilla's biography. The number of sources available is limited. Despite that, these showcase the translator's intense political career and how his public presence provides a relevant political background for the publication of *Utopia de Thomas Moro*.

### About Gerónimo de Medinilla

The dates and events in the life of the translator, Gerónimo Antonio de Medinilla y Porres, are instrumental in defining the reasons why *Utopia de Thomas Moro* fulfills a political function and how the work itself helps to build his role in public life. The first scholar to write about him was López Estrada (1965). He checked the original files of Medinilla's appointment as a knight of the *Orden de Santiago* and provided important dates from the translator's early years.<sup>12</sup> The documents confirm he was born ca. 1590 in Bocos (Burgos, Spain) and was made a knight in 1614 (López Estrada 1965, 293).<sup>13</sup> In 1621, he began his military career in Philip IV's *Caballeriza Real* – he became equerry to the King at the Crown Equerry.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to other equeries, Medinilla did not belong to the nobility. However, this did not hinder his military career under the rule of the King and the Count-Duke of Olivares, which lasted until 1644. During that time, he held several military positions: he was *proveedor del ejército*

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<sup>12</sup> See López Estrada (1965, 293, notes 7 and 8) for more information about the scholar's visit to the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN). All documents about Medinilla are contained in OM Expedientillos, n. 395 and OM Caballeros Santiago, Exp. 5061. In relation to his father, also named Gerónimo de Medinilla, there is a file proving his entrance into the *Orden de Santiago* in 1604. The signature is OM Caballeros Santiago, Exp. 5060. López Estrada also wrote a brief biography for the Real Academia de la Historia (Royal Academy of History), although it does not fully detail the life of the translator (Real Academia de la Historia, s.v. "Gerónimo Antonio de Medinilla y Porres").

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the English translations of political and military positions are from Cave (2008).

<sup>14</sup> Medinilla seemed to be interested in horses and riding, probably after becoming equerry. He writes a recommendation included in the work *El arte de Enfrenar* (1629) by Francisco Pérez de Navarrete, *corregidor* – chief magistrate, a local representative of royal power in a designated town or area – in Santiago de Guayanil and Puerto Viejo, Peru. Medinilla approved of the text, presenting it as "muy vtil, y bueno, y prouechoso, para el generoso arte de la gineta" (Pérez de Navarrete 1629, fol. IIIv) [very useful, good and helpful for the generous art of horseback riding (my translation)].

of Catalonia – main army supplier – and *veedor general de las galeras y armadas* – general inspector of the navy<sup>15</sup> (López Álvarez 2015, 951).

Medinilla's first known experience in politics dates back to 1631.<sup>16</sup> He was appointed *gobernador* – governor – of Campo de Montiel, with its headquarters in the Castilian town Villanueva de los Infantes (Ruiz Rodríguez 2005, 41).<sup>17</sup> There is every likelihood that he met two authors of the translation's paratexts in this Castilian location. Bartolomé Jiménez Patón became his master of grammar and rhetoric. Medinilla acquired his translation skills through the practical lessons of the Spanish humanist, who might have supervised the definitive version of the text as well.<sup>18</sup> The *gobernador* also probably met Francisco de Quevedo there. La Torre de Juan Abad, where Quevedo was living, was under the rule of the government of Campo de Montiel. Therefore, the governor's political decisions and rules affected Quevedo's town and ultimately the poet himself.<sup>19</sup>

After Villanueva de los Infantes, in 1636, Medinilla was named *corregidor* of the city of Córdoba.<sup>20</sup> *Utopia de Thomas Moro* was published in this period of his life, just a year after starting this new position. The

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<sup>15</sup> Both my translations.

<sup>16</sup> This information is found in the AHN, in OM Santiago 129C, fol. 131v. He had likely begun his political career before arriving in Villanueva de los Infantes. The biographical work *Hijos de Madrid*, compiled by José Antonio Álvarez y Baena, mentions Medinilla governed Baylia de Caravaca and Valderricote before Campo de Montiel (1790, 327). No other historical sources have confirmed this fact, although father Cypriano Gutierrez, in one of the paratexts of the translation, refers to Medinilla's time as governor in Murcia (Medinilla 1637, fol. XIVr).

<sup>17</sup> When he was designated *gobernador*, he was also named *juez mero oidor* – judge. Governors used to receive judicial powers in the area they ruled over too (Ruiz Rodríguez 2005, 84).

<sup>18</sup> Jiménez Patón declares that "I no quiero negar el contento que recibo de ver en ella el lucimiento de mi doctrina, que v. md. con tanta aficion se ha dignado de honrar [...]" (More 1637, fol. IXv) ["And I would not deny the contentment I receive from seeing in your translation the illustration of my own teaching, which you have deigned to honour with such devotion [...]" (Cave 2008, 243)].

<sup>19</sup> There are several letters written between 1635 and 1637 in which Medinilla is mentioned. Sánchez Sánchez does not identify Medinilla as the *gobernador*. However, due to the chronological events of Medinilla's life, the references coincide with those of the letters written in 1635 on January 19, February 12, March 13, November 13, the last Friday of November, December 11; in 1636 January 22, March 6, November 5; and in 1637, March 17 (the latter is addressed to Florencio de Vera instead of to Sancho de Sandoval). Therefore, the person Quevedo refers to is Medinilla himself.

<sup>20</sup> In the AHN, Libro de Corregimientos CONSEJOS, libro 709 fol. 89v.

dates of official approvals and permissions show that the translation was ready before he arrived, as the former are all signed in 1635. Nevertheless, the other paratexts by political, religious, and literary figures date back between September 27 and October 21 of 1637, which means that the book was not released until the end of that year. In 1640 and 1641, due to his involvement in the *caballeriza*, Medinilla participated in the Franco-Spanish War, fighting for the crown in Catalonia as main army supplier.<sup>21</sup> During that time, he kept up correspondence with the Count of Santa Coloma, *virrey* – viceroy – in Catalonia, for official purposes. Medinilla was temporarily substituted in his absence in Córdoba.<sup>22</sup>

In 1641 Medinilla officially became chief magistrate of Murcia, Cartagena, and Lorca, where he had to deal with the ongoing military conflicts as navy supervisor.<sup>23</sup> Three years later, in 1644, he left Murcia and the Crown Equerry. After that, he was named *contador de cuentas* in the Contaduría Mayor de Hacienda – royal auditor in the Spanish National Treasury –<sup>24</sup> until 1646 and then became *alcaide y guardamayor perpetuo* – governor and main guard –<sup>25</sup> to the Reales Alcázares in Seville (López Álvarez 2015, 951).<sup>26</sup> According to a Real Cédula, an official legal document, the position was temporary, and in any case he died in 1647.<sup>27</sup> Nicolás Antonio has argued, however, that Medinilla had died sometime around 1651 (1996, 567).

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<sup>21</sup> The Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES, <https://pares.culturaydeporte.gob.es/inicio.html>) displays relevant letters and documents reporting the activity of Gerónimo de Medinilla in 1640 and 1641 that are preserved in different Spanish archives. The records are the following: in Barcelona, in the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón (ACA), GENERALITAT, Correspondencia del virrey Conde de Santa Coloma, CARTA nos. 9506, 9507, 9726, 9727, 9728, 9785, 9786, 9787, 9788, 9816, 9834, 9874, 10219, 10269, 10270, 10386, 10475, 10539; CONSEJO DE ARAGÓN, Legajos 0285 no. 067, 0288 nos. 073 and 148, 0290 no. 054.; in Madrid, in the AHN, CONSEJOS, 27756, Exp.1; and in Seville, in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI), INDIFERENTE, 436, L. 13, fols. 215–17.

<sup>22</sup> In the AHN, CONSEJOS, 27756, Exp.1.

<sup>23</sup> In the AHN, Libro de Corregimientos CONSEJOS, libro 709 fols. 165v, 200v, 201r. Other files that document his ruling in Murcia as *corregidor* in the Archivo Municipal de Murcia (AMMU) are those with shelfmarks AMMU CAM 784 n. 46, 784 n. 70, 783 fols. 116–19 Doc. 76.

<sup>24</sup> My translation.

<sup>25</sup> My translation.

<sup>26</sup> The date of his appointment is unknown.

<sup>27</sup> In Madrid, Real Biblioteca, Cédulas reales II/2595, fol. 563r Cédula Real, 1647-VII-9 “Cédula de su magd. [Felipe IV] para que Alonso Alemán, [contador de los Reales



Unfortunately, there are no further records about Medinilla's private life in the archives. He was not the only Medinilla devoted to public service, however: his father was Gerónimo de Medinilla (1551–1628), magistrate and judge in the Real Chancillería de Valladolid, counsellor of the Consejo de Castilla for a decade and member of the Consejo de Órdenes.<sup>28</sup> Following in his father's footsteps, his younger brother Pedro de Velasco y Medinilla (ca. 1595–1653) became a judge in Valladolid and counsellor of Castile.<sup>29</sup> Last but not least, his grandfather was Pedro de Velasco (died 1598), who occupied a military position close to the King (López Estrada 1965, 239).<sup>30</sup>

## Serving the Country

“Esta admiracion produjo humor curioso, i desseos de servir a la Patria, haziendo comun este tesoro.” (More 1637, IIIv) [“My admiration for his work generated a strong motivation and desire to serve my country by making this treasure common property.” (Cave 2008, 239)]

This quote reveals one of the intentions of the translator. As will be presented below, Medinilla worked for his country and found in translation another way to offer his services. In the last few lines of the section “To the Reader” Medinilla mentions several translations he was already working on, although he does not specify the titles of these future renderings (More 1637, fol. Vr).<sup>31</sup> This fact suggests

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alcázares] ejerza la jurisdicción de alcaide de los reales alcázares de Sevilla por muerte de don Gerónimo de Medinilla en el interim y mientras se nombre al otro alcaide” [Royal decree of appointment as governor of the Real Alcazares of Sevilla to Alonso Alemán so that he exercises the jurisdiction after the death of Gerónimo de Medinilla in the interim and while another governor is appointed (my translation)].

<sup>28</sup> The Real Chancillería de Valladolid was a court of the Crown of Castile and the Consejo de Castilla was the main ruling body responsible for that Crown. The Consejo de Órdenes, at that time, included representatives from the Orders of Calatrava, Santiago, and Alcántara, and was in charge of the political and legal administration of territories defended by these military orders.

<sup>29</sup> Pedro de Velasco y Medinilla published a Latin text titled *Casij, et Proculi, alioumque veterum iuris authorum apertae rixae, & implacabiles concertationes* (1625) when he was a student in Salamanca.

<sup>30</sup> For more information about Medinilla's lineage, see López de Haro (1622).

<sup>31</sup> “Este tendrè por logrado, si fuere recibida con agrado mi intencion, ofreciendo en recompensa desta aceptacion algunas obras no menos utiles, que han servido de onesta

he wanted to release a set of works that might be of interest to the same audience *Utopia de Thomas Moro* was addressed to if it found approval. It is not known if he was able to finish and print them as he did with More's text, but the biographer Nicolás Antonio points out that Medinilla translated Jean Bodin's *Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem* (1566) with the title *El Metodo de la Historia de Juan Bodino* (1996, 567). From the title of this potential book, one might deduce that Medinilla is possibly following the same pattern as in *Utopia de Thomas Moro*: he shortens the complete title of the original and inserts the name of the author.<sup>32</sup> This fact is linked to what he expresses in the paratexts: Medinilla wishes to share knowledge with those people who could not read texts in Latin (More 1637, Vr).<sup>33</sup> He was likely aware that these Latin texts—*Utopia* and probably others like *Methodus*—did not enjoy a wide circulation around the country. This deliberate attempt to translate and publish a collection of practical books implies he found them, at least, useful and recommendable. The brevity of *Utopia* also suggests Medinilla opted to put out reader-friendly translations to widen the scope of the audience.<sup>34</sup> However, the difference between the topics of both texts makes the translator's final intentions unclear.

The roles and models proposed in Utopian society are presented as exemplary and, in all likelihood, Medinilla wanted to imitate them. Yet *Utopia* itself is not a manual providing guidelines, recommendations, or rules as was the case of other Spanish books published then for that explicit reason (Maravall 1997, 32). The descriptive nature of *Utopia* makes the text self-explanatory. Book II is Raphael Hythloday's detailed account of the island with the narrator's comments on different topics—all preserved in Medinilla's rendering. As a result,

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diversion a diferentes ocupaciones. No propongo estos exemplares como quien los sabe, sino como quien los desea aprender" (1637, fol. Vr) ["I present these works not as one who already possesses the knowledge they contain, but as one who wishes to learn from them" (Cave 2008, 239)].

<sup>32</sup> Later editions of *Utopia de Thomas Moro* introduce the Spanish article "La" in its title, thus becoming *La Utopia de Thomas Moro*. Nicolás Antonio also uses this version for his accounting of Medinilla's translations (1996, 567).

<sup>33</sup> "Desseè hazer comun a todo suerte de gentes, lo que en mayor volumen pudiera ser de pocos" (fol. Vr) ["I wish to make available to all varieties of people a text which in a larger volume would have been available to only a few" (Cave 2008, 239)].

<sup>34</sup> For more information about the reasons for why the translation was partial, see Jones (1950) and Hunt (1991).

the readers might reach conclusions by comparing the reality of the *Republica* with that of their own country. Nevertheless, although the translator aimed at sharing the good models of the Utopian nation, he was not naïve or unconcerned about the obvious difficulties derived from imitating Utopian society. This idea is already presented in the quote found on the front page of the translation. Extracted from book 4 chapter 33 of Cornelio Tacitus's *Annales*, it says: "dilecta ex his, et constituta Reipublicę forma, laudari facilius, quàm evenire, vel si evenit, haut diurna esse potest" [*sic*] (More 1637, fol. Ir) ["After the form of the state has been selected from these and constituted, it [already existing forms of government] can more easily be praised than it can come into existence, or if it does come into existence, it [any Utopian model] can hardly be long-lasting" (Cave 2008, 235)].<sup>35</sup> The translator recommends reading the text with caution. *Utopia de Thomas Moro* can function as a manual of good practices, but its limited practicality in seventeenth-century Spain might have jeopardized Medinilla's original goal. In the end, the work could indeed inspire governors, but all of the envisioned characteristics of the island could not be implemented. Medinilla acknowledges the fictional nature of the text and this initial quote is echoed in More's final lines in *Utopia's* Book II: "quae in nostris ciuitatibus optarim uerius, quam sperarim" (More 1965, 246).<sup>36</sup> This impracticality could have prompted the lack of further editions of Medinilla's *Utopia* in the seventeenth century – the second and third editions were published in 1790 and 1805, more than a century after the first. Many Spaniards had already read *Utopia* in Latin before Medinilla rendered the text into Spanish. As Davenport and Cabanillas argue, the publication of this translation did not directly contribute to a wider knowledge of Thomas More and his work in the country (2008, 126).

The presence of the Inquisition in seventeenth-century Spain could have been behind publishing only part of the text. Jones agrees and believes this is why a Spanish translation of the text

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<sup>35</sup> The explanatory text in the square brackets is mine.

<sup>36</sup> The last lines in Medinilla's translation are "assi confiesso llanamente, que ai muchas [cosas] en la Republica de los Vtopianos, que diziendo la verdad, mas desseo, que confio verlas en nuestras Ciudades" (1637, fol. 51v) ["But I readily admit that there are many features in the Utopia commonwealth which it is easier for me to wish for in our countries than to have any hope of seeing realized" (More 1965, 245-47)]. The explanatory text in the first square brackets is mine.

was published so late (1950, 479). *Utopia* was originally published in 1516 and the first printed translation appeared over a hundred and twenty years after. In the first inquisitional *Index* published in the Iberian Peninsula, compiled by Gaspar de Quiroga in 1583 and 1584, there was minimal censorship of Thomas More's work: two sentences were removed from Book I and a gloss in the margin added to Book II.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the prologue to the 1583 edition of the *Index* clarifies why More, despite his fervent Catholicism, had to be expurgated: those who were against the Catholic faith and the Church could misuse the words of authors like More or John Fisher or Fray Luis de Granada, who were also included (Quiroga 1583,

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<sup>37</sup> In the first volume of the *Index et Catalogus Librorum Prohibitorum* (1583), a brief sentence stating "nisi repurgetur" [unless expurgated (my translation)] appears next to the title of *Utopia*. The second volume, *Index Librorum Expurgatorum* published the following year, reads the following censorship on More (Quiroga 1584, fol. 193r):

- "In epistola Guilielmi Budaei ad Lupsetum, de Thomae Mori Utopia, fol. 3, epistolae, lin.vlt.dele. abillis verb. Quo certè instituto Christus, usq; ad, ac fata nostra regere" [in the letter from Guillaume Budé to Lupset, about Thomas More's *Utopia*, fol. 3, epistles, delete the last line from "Certainly, by this arrangement, Christ" up to "and controlling our destinies" (More 1965, 9–11)].
- "Lib. 1. Utopiae, pag. 31, lin. 7. delet. Nō Hercule magis, quàm si essem sacerdos" [Book I of *Utopia*, page 31, delete line 7: "No more, by heaven, than if I were a secular priest" (More 1965, 83)].
- "Lin. 20. eiusdem folij, deletatur ab illis verb. Nam Cardinalis, usque ad, hoc quoque dictum" [Line 20 of the same folio, delete from these words "His Eminence" up to "when the Company" (More 1965, 83)].
- "Lib. 2. Utopiae, ubi agit de religionibus Utopiensium, pag. 146. deletatur in marg. O sacerdotes nostris longè sanctiores" [Book II of *Utopia*, where it discusses the religions of the Utopians, page 146, delete in the margin "O Priests Far More Holy than Ours!" (More 1965, 231)].
- "Pag. 261. ex epigrāmate de nouo testamento verso ab Erasmo, deletatur ab illis verbis, Lex noua nam veteri, usq; ad, Christi lex noua luce nitet" [Page 261, from the epigram about the New Testament translated by Erasmus, delete from "The new law for the old", up to "The law of Christ shines with new brightness" (my translation)].
- "Pag. 524. linea 22. epistola de morte Thomae Mori, deletatur, Multò magis licuisset hic esse tacitum. Lin. 27. eiusd. paginae, deletatur, Simplici, synceraq; cōscientia errasse. Et pag. 530. lin 6. deletatur, Fortè fefellit eum persuasio" [Page 524, line 22, from the letter about the death of Thomas More, delete: "Being silent would have been much more valued here"; line 27 of the same page, delete: "But had erred with a simple and sincere conscience"; and page 530, line 6, delete: "Perhaps his conviction deceived him" (my translation)].
- "Deletatur etiam tota Apologia pro Moria Erasmi ad Martinum Dorpium" [Delete the entire letter to Martin Dorp in Defense of Erasmus (my translation)].

fol. IVr).<sup>38</sup> Medinilla does the same in his “Note on Chapter Nine.” He acknowledges that some anti-Catholic readers have intentionally misinterpreted the text and spread the wrong message (More 1637, fol. VIr).<sup>39</sup> Therefore, this was to prevent misuse of, and not to reject, *Utopia*. The 1612 and 1632 indexes did not include the text and Medinilla did not face any direct prohibition or limitation on his translating it.<sup>40</sup> However, the Spanish translator might have been taking advantage of this too: a briefer edition of *Utopia* would help him in his attempt to publish a collection of useful works.

The paratextual elements of *Utopia de Thomas Moro* function as a presentation of the translator and his background. These letters, dedications, and laudatory poems give the reader valuable information about the edition, such as, for example, how the authors

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<sup>38</sup> “quando se hallaren en este Catalogo prohibido algunos libros de personas de grande Christiandad, y muy conocida en el mundo (quales son Juan Roffense, Thomas Moro, Geronymo Osorio, Don Francisco de Borja Duque de Gandia, fray Luys de Granada, el Maestro Iuan de Auila, y otros semejantes) no es porque los tales autores se ayau desuiado de la sancta yglesia Romana [...]: sino por que, o son libros que falsamente se los han atribuido no siendo suyos, o por hallarse (en los que lo son) algunas palabras y sentencias ajenas: [...], o por contener cosas que aun que los tales autores pios y doctos las dixeron senzillamente, y en el sano y catholico sentido que reciben, la malicia destes tiempos las haze ocasionadas para que los enemigos de la Fè, las puedan torcer al proposito de su dañada intencion” (Quiroga 1583, fols. IVr-IVv) [when certain books of individuals of great Christianity and well-known in the world are found in this index of prohibited books (such as of John Thorpe, Thomas More, Jerónimo Osório, Francisco de Borja Duke of Gandia, Friar Louis of Granada, Master John of Avila, and others), it is not because these authors have deviated from the Holy Roman Church [...], but rather because either these books have falsely been attributed to them, or because there are certain words and sentences written by somebody else [...], or because they contain things that, even though these pious and learned authors have stated them in a sound and Catholic sense, the malice of these times makes them susceptible to being twisted by the enemies of the Faith with harmful intentions (my translation)].

<sup>39</sup> “Como los Santos Doctores i felices Martyres tenian assentadas en su coraçõ las verdades communes de nuestra Religion Catolica, seguros de su Fè, i de la de aquellos a quien escribian; hablaron a las vezes tan concisa, i brevemente, que de sus palabras, i precision, se valen los mal intencionados i contrarios a nuestra Religion, para ampliar, i estender sus proposiciones, i doctrinas torcidas” (1637, VIr) [“Since the Holy Doctors of the Church and blessed Martyrs confidently held the fundamental truths of our Catholic religion in their hearts, and were sure of their faith and of the faith of those for whom they wrote, they sometimes spoke so concisely and briefly that the precision of their words was used to advantage by the ill-intentioned and contrary to our religion in order to expand and extend their own twisted propositions and doctrines” (Cave 2008, 239)].

<sup>40</sup> There was, however, still an entry about Thomas More (Zapata 1632, 909-10).

of the poems esteemed the translator. The idea that the rendering's target is a political audience is reinforced by the type of position held by the different collaborators of the paratexts. Apart from Quevedo and Jiménez Patón, two renowned men of letters, other less known figures were involved in the arrangement of the work's preliminaries. These were mainly local people and could perfectly illustrate the type of reader Medinilla had in mind: father Cypriano Gutierrez was *maestro* – master – at the Jesuit school of the city; Andrés de Morales y Padilla, Francisco Roco, and Melchor Guajardo Fajardo were *caballeros veinticuatro* – aldermen –;<sup>41</sup> the *contador de resultas* – auditor of internal revenue to his Majesty – Agustín de Galarza; a religious representative in Córdoba called Joseph Rivas y Tafur; and Hierónimo de Pancorvo, headmaster of a Carmelite school in Córdoba. Medinilla dedicates his work to Juan de Chaves, who was *presidente* of the Consejo de Órdenes – president of the Royal Council of the Orders –. The translator thanks him for supporting him after the death of his father, Gerónimo de Medinilla. He also praises him and acknowledges his skill in governing, highlighting that the president puts into practice what Hythloday proposes in his narration (More 1637, IIv).<sup>42</sup> As noted in the introduction, dedicating the edition to a political representative was a common practice in other translations of *Utopia*. The presence of these politically influential characters in the body of the paratexts further reinforces the political reading of all these translations as well as providing examples of who their potential audiences were.

### Medinilla's reading of *Utopia*

“No propongo estos exemplares. [sic] como quien los sabe, sino como quien los dessea aprender.” (More 1637, Vr) [“I present these works not as one who already possesses the knowledge they contain, but as one who wishes to learn from them” (Cave 2008, 239)].

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<sup>41</sup> *Caballeros veinticuatro* or *regidores* are, according to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, twenty-four counsellors that worked advising the *corregidor* (*Veinticuatro*). These two positions made up the town hall of some Andalusian cities. The *Contador de Resultas* was someone in charge of the crown's fortune (*Contador*).

<sup>42</sup> “V.S. obra lo que este escribe, hallandose en su gran sujeto, erudicion, esperiencia, i prendas naturales aventajadas, en cuya ponderaciõ no tiene parte el afecto, ni la lisonja” (More 1637, fols. IIv–IIIr) [“Your Lordship puts into effect what he writes, since your noble character encompasses erudition, experience, and exceptional natural talents, which may be discerned without recourse to personal feeling or flattery” (Cave 2008, 237)].

Gerónimo de Medinilla acknowledges he does not publish the text to showcase his governing capabilities but to learn from the models proposed. With his translation, therefore, there was also an intrinsic personal concern. At the time he rendered *Utopia*, he was about to become a *corregidor* in Córdoba. He was appointed at the beginning of 1637 and, as mentioned, the translation could have been finished as early as 1635 and published by the end of 1637. Medinilla chose the octavo for the format of the book, which denotes his desire to make it portable and readable anywhere (Boutcher 2008, 131).

Davenport and Cabanillas have argued that Medinilla's interest in the translation at some point lies in self-fashioning. Even though these scholars do not integrate this term "in the more sophisticated sense elaborated by Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*" (2008, note 63, 125), the concept deserves close attention.

[Self-fashioning] describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; [...] it suggests representation of one's nature or intention in speech or actions. And with representation we return to literature, or rather we may grasp that self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life. It invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of the literary characters, the shaping of one's own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one's control, the attempt to fashion other selves. (1980, 3)

*Utopia de Thomas Moro* becomes a kind of presentation card after Medinilla's political promotion. This fact is directly in line with Greenblatt's principle of self-fashioning. Apart from the translation of Book II, the edition uses the paratexts to present the figure of the *corregidor*, who was new to both local authorities and inhabitants of Córdoba. The recommendations and laudatory poems written by different figures in the city craft the translator's *persona*, blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality. As was expected, they create a positive and rather idealized image of the governor and his future government: he is presented as the Spanish Thomas More, using metaphors to compare Córdoba and England or the rivers Thames and Betis – the Guadalquivir River today (fols. XVr–XIXr). The authors of these texts read the translation of *Utopia* as if the narrator were the governor himself instead of Hythloday. *Utopia* is regarded as the governor's perception of a utopian republic, consequently creating

expectations about how he might run his government—bearing in mind that he is also aware of its impracticability.

There is another basic principle of self-fashioning that Medinilla arguably satisfies: “self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile” (Greenblatt 1980, 9). The translator could have edited the work to oppose that alien something or defeat an authority he had in mind. Although there is no explicit explanation in *Utopia de Thomas Moro*, the potential enemy to defeat could be political incompetence. As previously mentioned, Medinilla aimed at bringing *Utopia* to a wider audience, considering political figures part of that target. The seventeenth century brought a period of crisis as a result of the decline of the Empire and the failed policies of the king and his *validos*—the king’s favorites—. At that moment, the education of the individual was essential. Therefore, part of the vernacular production of literature was in the hands of men holding an extensive list of titles and positions like Medinilla. Examples of people who published works to influence the political life of the country were Ribadeneyra with *Tratado de la religion y virtudes que deue tener el principe christiano, para gouernar y conseruar sus estados* (1595), Covarrubias Orozco’s *Emblemas morales* (1610), Diego Saavedra Fajardo and his *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano* (1640), and Francisco de Quevedo with *Politica de Dios, gobierno de Christo* (1626). The reason for portraying their experience was motivated by pedagogical inclinations, at times focusing on maxims and recommendations not only for princes but also for local governors (Maravall 1997, 29–30). Likewise, the content of *Utopia* could be considered useful and recommendable for the education of governors. Although Medinilla accepts its inapplicability, the premises of a model society, with justice, harmony, and peace, among other values, were still relevant for its target readers. The translator could aim to improve the quality of the governors and thus ameliorate the political situation in Spain.

Quevedo’s “Noticia, Juicio y Recomendación” acts as a kind of prologue to Medinilla’s *Utopia*. The Spanish poet introduces his reading of More’s text: “yo me persuado que fabricò aquella politica contra la tyrania de Inglaterra y por esso hizo Isla su Idea, i juntamente reprehendio los desordenes de los mas Principes de su edad [...]” (fol. XIr) [“I am persuaded that he constructed his system of government in opposition to the tyranny of England, and for this reason he presented



his idea as an island, and simultaneously rebuked the misrule of so many Princes of his age” (Cave 2008, 247)]. Jones claims that “Quevedo seems to have been one of the few Spanish men of letters in the seventeenth century who had read any of More’s work” (1950, 482). Actually, he is among the increasing number of seventeenth-century Spanish authors that showed an interest in the English humanist and his works—writers like Lope de Vega, Baltasar Gracián, and Juan de Mariana mentioned Thomas More in their texts.<sup>43</sup> What Jones does argue is that Quevedo was the only one who seriously read *Utopia* and was attentive to its political implications. The Spanish poet, apart from his participation in *Utopia de Thomas Moro*, owned a 1548 Latin edition of *Utopia* and translated a fragment from Book I in his *Carta al serenísimo, muy alto y muy poderoso Luis XIII* (1635).<sup>44</sup> Medinilla was just as serious a reader though. How *Utopia* is understood by the *corregidor* reminds us of its early readings by Spaniards in America, always with a practical purpose in mind. When the translator explains the relevance of More’s text, he remarks:

Fundò la felicidad de un estado perfectamente dichoso, estableciendo la virtud, destruyendo el vicio, cortò la raíz de competencias entre los hombres, reduciendolas a vivir en comun, sin poseer alguna cosa en particular; de tal suerte, que qualquiera accion publica, o privada, no se encamine a la codicia de muchos, ni al antojo, i mal desseo de pocos. (fol. IIIr) [“He founded the happiness of a perfectly prosperous state, establishing virtue, destroying vice; he cut the root of competitiveness among men, requiring them to live in common, without owning anything individually, in such a way that no public

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<sup>43</sup> These authors make a superficial mention of the Englishman. Lope de Vega refers to More in *La hermosura de Angelica, con otras diversas Rimas* (1602), in *Rimas de Lope de Vega Carpio* (1604) and in *Triunfo de la Fee, en los reynos del Japón, por los años de 1614 y 1615* (1618); Baltasar Gracián introduces him in *El Criticón* (1653); and Juan de Mariana alludes to the humanist in *Historiae de Rebus Hispaniae. Volume 2* (1592). Other authors already familiarized with More are Pedro de Salazar y Mendoza, Antonio Maria Graziani, Pedro de la Vega, Francisco Suárez, Fray Juan Márquez, Thomas Tamayo de Vargas, Andrés Mendo, and John Robert.

<sup>44</sup> This fact is relevant because Francisco de Quevedo admired More and his works. His copy of the Leuven 1548 edition of *Utopia* shows evidence that he might have studied it carefully, as Book I is full of marginal notes and comments—although their authorship is not confirmed (López Estrada 1967, 405; Peraita Huerta 2004, 323). This personal copy of *Utopia* is catalogued in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid with the shelfmark R/20494.

or private action fosters the avarice of the many, nor the whims and base desires of the few.” (Cave 2008, 237)]

The Spanish governor praises the qualities of the island by bringing up the corruption running rampant through seventeenth-century European societies. Medinilla might have been concerned about the problems of contemporary governments and found in *Utopia* solutions for those weaknesses. Quevedo and Medinilla’s utopian thinking divert at some point. Although they both agree on its impracticality,<sup>45</sup> the translator understands the text could serve as a recommendable book for governors due to the ideas depicted, whereas Quevedo believes it is an instrument of criticism.<sup>46</sup> In the same way that More wrote against the abuse of power in England, Quevedo criticized the political policy in seventeenth-century Spain.

## Conclusion

There is tangible evidence to suggest that Medinilla published *Utopia de Thomas Moro* with the idea that it could function as a manual for governors: the political background of the translator, the potential audience, the participants in prefatory letters and recommendations, explicit praise for the governor, and the content of *Utopia*’s Book II itself. However, the impracticality of the Utopian model prevents the transformation of the work into a handbook. The *corregidor* could not share the same political aims with those first Spanish readers of *Utopia* in the sixteenth century. As has been discussed, the difference between these two centuries lies in the applicability of Utopian policies and structures in real governments. Whereas Vasco de Quiroga and Juan de Zumárraga brought the organizational system of the island to the American cities in *Nueva España*, Medinilla was neither able to implement them in his areas of influence nor stated that that was his definite intention. The seventeenth-century interpretation of *Utopia* had shifted from the early political readings of the text, resulting in the growth of Spanish

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<sup>45</sup> Quevedo warns: “quien dize que se ha de hazer lo que nadie haze, a todos los reprehende” (More 1637, fol. Ir) [“who tells what no one does has to be done, reprimands them all” (Cave 2008, 247)].

<sup>46</sup> For further information about Quevedo’s utopian thinking, see Peraita Huerta (2004) and López Estrada (1967).

fictional literature (López Estrada 1980, 98).<sup>47</sup> The interest in reading Thomas More's work as a political piece waned and *Utopia* was left to inhabit a literary context.

The translator was aware of the difficulty of the challenge; he even warned his readers about it in a quote on the cover page. His original purpose, his desire to share the text, was not only to fill a literary gap, one created by the absence of Spanish translations of *Utopia* until that time. His potential audience could help him improve the Spanish political scenario and defeat an invisible force like ruling incompetence. However, as More claims at the end of Book II, the translation foresees the difficulty of modifying the political situation, but does hope to change it for the better. That is why Medinilla could not envisage a manual for governors with strict guidelines on how to deal with governments, like, for instance, those literary works belonging to the "mirrors for princes" genre. He presented his *Utopia* as a way to pose virtuous examples of governing, but with no expectations of seeing them fully put into practice. In fact, Medinilla says that "es diverso el poner las Republicas como ellas son, o como debrian ser" (fol. IIIv) ["It is one thing to portray republics as they are, and quite another to depict them as they should be" (Cave 2008, 237)]. He knew his translation would probably be considered more as entertainment for governors than a real set of guidelines. Even when his greatest commitment was to improve the politics of the country, Medinilla was not able to satisfy the political needs of the seventeenth century and his work could not become a manual for governors. But neither did More's *Utopia*.

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<sup>47</sup> In what way More's text contributed to the growth of Spanish fiction is an interesting topic that deserves more attention but cannot be further developed in this paper. For additional information about the influence of *Utopia* on Spanish fictional literature, see López Estrada (1980, 97-107).

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*Author's contact:* miurena@ujaen.es

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# Reviews



**Leticia Álvarez-Recio, ed. 2021.**  
***Iberian Chivalric Romance: Translations and Cultural  
Transmission in Early Modern England.***  
**Toronto Iberic, Toronto: University of Toronto Press**

Ana Sáez-Hidalgo  
*Universidad de Valladolid, Spain*

In the year 1700, in one of his incisive passages, the satirist Tom Brown proclaimed: “The Stage has now so great a share of Atheism, Impudence, and Prophaneness, that it looks like an Assembly of Demons, directing the Way Hellward [...]. What are all their New Plays but Damn’d Insipid Dull Farces, confounded Toothless Satyr, or Plaguy Rhiming Plays, with Scurvy Heroes, *worse than the Knight of the Sun, or Amadis de Gaul.* They are the errantest Plagiaries in Nature” (Brown 1700, 51–52; my emphasis). Reading such a statement, one might assume that the hero of *Amadis de Gaula*, and, by extension, chivalric romance novels generally, were widely despised at the turn of the seventeenth century. And certainly they all were. Still, only two years later, J. Gwillim ventured to publish John Shirley’s latest version of *Amadis*, doubtlessly tempted by its historical editorial success, while aware of the new tastes requiring some adaptation in the novel, by making it “somewhat briefer in Bulk, but not less in Effect [...], more pleasing and efficaciously diverting” (qtd. in Moore 2020, 118). Leticia Álvarez-Recio magisterially addresses the apparent paradox behind the negative perception of these novels and their enormous popularity during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, in her edited collection of essays *Iberian Chivalric Romance: Translations and Cultural Transmission in Early Modern England*.

In her introduction, Álvarez-Recio takes as a starting point the criticism of these novels by humanists, who condemned their lack of decorum and utility, their pernicious effects on religious and moral behavior and their stimulation of misguided emotions. This censure is seen by the editor as parallel to the long-standing scholarly neglect of the genre, resulting from the combination of earlier humanistic arguments and a change in literary tastes that occurred in the late seventeenth century, never to return to what Covarrubias called

“ficciones gustosas y artificiosas” [enjoyable and artful fictions]<sup>1</sup> (1611, 211v). Prior to this, however, early modern readers had made these works bestsellers all over Europe. The essays in *Iberian Chivalric Romance* brilliantly bridge the gap between these two realities by focusing not just on the popularity of the romances but also on how their influence permeated early modern English literary culture and contributed “to the very definition of English native prose fiction” (13). This volume thus proposes actively “to compensate for the distortions of literary history, both past and present, and establish a more accurate picture of Elizabethan literary culture,” in Jordi Sánchez-Martí’s words, reclaiming the study of “the literature read and favoured by the actual Elizabethans” (38).

With that purpose in mind, the essays in this volume study the English translations of Iberian romances as literary texts in their own right and in all their full dimension. The collection offers a wide range of methodological approaches that go beyond traditional translation and reception studies, which not infrequently relegate these works to the periphery of English literature. Authors of these essays address questions of book history, material culture, textual circulation, gender and sexuality, spatiality, rhetoric, post-colonialism and religious history, in a profound interdisciplinarity which demonstrates the immense possibilities for further research in this area. The book is divided into four sections, the first of which is dedicated to examining Iberian chivalric romances in the early modern English book trade, with a chapter by Jordi Sánchez-Martí on the “Publication of Chivalric Romances in England, 1570–1603.” This essay lays the foundation for the rest of the volume by providing a thorough analysis of the publication history of the chivalric romances in England, from Caxton’s 1473 edition of *Recuyell of Histories of Troie* until the end of the Elizabethan period. Combining a highly detailed examination of the Stationers’ register and their publication practices with a scrutiny of the sociocultural changes in England, Sánchez-Martí cogently explains how printers moved away from native medieval verse romances in the 1560s, only to look for new materials in the Iberian stock. In Sánchez-Martí’s view, the English translations of Spanish romances became instrumental in the renewed success of the genre on English soil in the last decades of the century. This, in turn, had a significant impact on

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<sup>1</sup> My translation.

the production of native English texts: “The fascination with English translations of Iberian romances served as a catalyst to encourage the publication of other types of chivalric fiction” (35) as English writers started to imitate the narrative devices, themes, stories, and style of the Iberian texts.

The second part of the volume discusses the main agent of the reception of these works in England, Anthony Munday, focusing on specific aspects of his translations from a cultural and ideological perspective. Leticia Álvarez-Recio’s chapter, “Sir Francis Drake: Conquest and Colonization in Anthony Munday’s *Palmendos* (1589),” situates Munday’s dedication to Drake in the context of a wider campaign by publishers and merchants with overseas commercial interests. Her analysis of the episode on the conquest of the Isle of Delphos discloses an underlying ideology of territorial expansion and foreign intervention in Munday’s work. In her essay “The Portrait of the *Femme Sole* in Anthony Munday’s *The First Book of Primaleon of Greece*,” María Beatriz Hernández Pérez puts romance and hagiography side by side to show that “the common ground shared by these two genres is a metaphoric means of highlighting space,” (74) in particular when depicting the qualities of the *femme sole*, which in Hernández Pérez’s view would have captured the imagination of English women readers of Iberian romances. The last chapter in this section, Louise Wilson’s, ““Such maner of stuff’: Translating Material London in Anthony Munday’s *Palmerin of England*,” focuses on material objects, noticing how Munday applies the polytemporal discourse typical of early modern chivalric works to them. Munday, Wilson contends, intended to appeal to non-elite readers by evoking objects in his own quotidian world – the world in which those readers lived – while simultaneously keeping the flavor of the medieval past of chivalry.

The last two sections of the book explore the impact of Iberian chivalric romances on, respectively, English literature and English prose fiction. The impact on English literature is examined through a number of specific elements. In chapter 5, Rocío G. Sumillera traces the development of the epistolary genre in England to translations of the letters in *Amadis*. Timothy D. Crowley, in chapter 6, argues for the influence of the interlaced motifs used by Feliciano de Silva in stories of disguise and clandestine marriages on Sidney’s *Arcadia*.

The representation of how loyalty issues exacerbated early tensions between national identity and cosmopolitanism is taken up by Elizabeth Evenden-Kenyon in chapter 7. Donna B. Hamilton examines ways in which Munday combines romance and history with ideological intent in the context of political and religious controversies in chapter 8.

Two essays specifically tackle the impact of the Iberian romances on English prose fiction. Goran Stanivukovic's "Iberian Chivalric Romance and the Formation of Fiction in Early Modern England" convincingly argues that the translations of these chivalric romances played a central role in the creation of a new kind of fiction "by shifting the narrative focus from the exteriority of militant chivalry to the interiority of the protagonists and their emotional lives" (208). The last chapter of the volume, "*La Celestina* and the Reception of Spanish Literature in England," by Helen Cooper, may surprise by apparently shifting attention from the Iberian romances to discuss the fifteenth-century Spanish *Celestina*. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Cooper compares the two early modern translations of the Spanish work, dated 1525–1530 and 1631, arguing convincingly that the changes in public taste they evince are the result of the pervading influence of chivalric romances.

The volume closes with an afterword by Alex Davis, whose reflections on the several ways these chivalric romances become central to the subsequent shape of English prose—in their cosmopolitanism, in their evocation of the past even as they move towards modernity—characterize the collective thrust of the essays, and provide a solid conclusion to this meticulously edited and superbly assembled volume.

*Iberian Chivalric Romance: Translations and Cultural Transmission in Early Modern England*, then, comes to join what is by now an expanding number of publications by a research group at the forefront of the study of the dissemination in England of Iberian chivalric romances. Among such illustrious company, this latest addition well deserves its place.

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*Author's contact:* [ana.saez.hidalgo@uva.es](mailto:ana.saez.hidalgo@uva.es)

*Postal address:* Dpto. Filología Inglesa, Pza. del Campus s/n, 47011, Valladolid, Spain.

**Cassandra Gorman. 2021.**  
***The Atom in Seventeenth-Century Poetry.***  
**Cambridge: D. S. Brewer**

María Vera-Reyes  
*Universidad de Huelva, Spain*

Among the multiple codes, images, and topics that fed into early modern English literature, atomism became a very productive perspective from which to write philosophical verse. In this thoroughgoing monograph, Cassandra Gorman overcomes not only the already classical—and too general—approaches to cosmic order and early modern English poetry (Tillyard, 1970), but also more recent debates on the relationship between the material and the immaterial during the same period (Knapp, 2022). In the five chapters of this book, Gorman explores the narrowest scope of this correlation: that of the atom, which, as both material reality and metaphor for the divine, pervaded the verses of Henry More, Thomas Traherne, Margaret Cavendish, Hester Pulter, and Lucy Hutchinson. After an introduction that contextualizes the early modern interest in atomism in light of Francis Bacon's *De sapientia veterum* (1609), the first half of the book covers the first two authors' main compositions to discuss "the 'atom' singular" (21), a symbol of stability and permanence. The second half explores the poetics of "the 'atom' plural" (21), since Cavendish, Pulter, and Hutchinson were fascinated by "the liberating power of atoms to dissolve and reconstitute into renewed and resurrected forms" (22). These and other writers participated in the so-called "atomic renaissance of the seventeenth century" (27), with its convenient integration of Epicureanism into Christianity and Neoplatonism.

Having established a solid philosophical background, Gorman heads for the particularities of each of the five authors' poetics of the atom. The first chapter analyses Henry More's "hybrid Platonic-Epicurean atomism" (38), which relies on the principle that, like the atom, humans participate in both their own earthly materiality and their connection to God's absolute immanence. In his *Philosophical*



*Poems* (1647), drawing on, but also deviating from, Cartesian atomism, Henry More defends the existence of “indivisibles,” renamed as “indiscerpibles” in *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659) and the *Divine Dialogues* (1668). These substances—essentially spiritual, but capable of physical interaction—are considered irreducible: they have extension but are divisible only to the human’s intellect (44–45). More attributes this atomic essence to all living creatures, yet maintains the old Platonic longing “to reconnect with the overarching world soul” (54) as an insatiable need that is distinctive of human nature. As Gorman concludes at the very end of the chapter, the connection between atomism and More’s vital congruity depends on the fact that, for this author, atoms are “ensouled” entities, which turns them into “an explorable emblem of the divine” (73).

The atom also found a privileged place of worship in Thomas Traherne’s manuscript verse; in his *Commentaries of Heaven* (ca. 1673), the author makes of the atom the quintessence of the created world, “a connecting-point between body and soul, time and eternity, humanity and the divine” (79). Traherne’s atoms are imbued with a soul-like spiritual potential. It is only by means of “active contemplation” (96) that this potential can be exploited; Traherne resorts to poetry, which is “characteristically active” (96), to explore the atom-soul correspondence. A writer of both philosophical prose and verse, Traherne emphasizes the function of the latter as “a physical medium equipped to observe divine entities” (98) and more specifically to transmit the Pythagorean connection he sees between atomic movement and metempsychosis (102). The very writing of verse, which varies between shorter and longer forms, facilitates active contemplation: “The metrical movements of the verse enact the soul’s wondrous ability to contract its focus and to ‘Dilate’, encompassing not merely creation, but ‘Eternitie’” (110). In Traherne’s works, therefore, the atom becomes “a vessel for divine knowledge and act” (114), expressing its creative potential in the contractions and expansions of metrics.

Two other seventeenth century authors who explored the poetic possibilities of the individual particle atom were Margaret Cavendish and Hester Pulter, whose atomic perspectives are analyzed together in chapter 4. At a time when any author’s creative potential was still balanced between the perils of *vanitas* and the self-aggrandization

of phantasy (Archdeacon 2022, 125–32), these women’s “chemical vitalism” (121) stood not only for the particle itself but also for their defense of individual female authority and self-knowledge. Cavendish’s works, where natural philosophy and fiction go hand in hand, offer their most accurate explorations of atomism in the opening compositions of her *Poems and Fancies* (1653). Drawing on the faculty of “fancy” or “creation” (153), Cavendish pictures herself as the creator of world made up of atoms that come together to generate infinite new dimensions. In “A World Made by Atoms,” “Of Loose Atoms,” “What Atoms Make Life,” and the rest of her opening poems, Cavendish’s atoms avoid both determinism and chaos, as they move freely but only to occupy specific positions in the poem-world. If the creative force of fancies are distinctive of Cavendish’s printed poetry, Pulter’s insights into atomism, kept in the manuscript form, resort to the visual art of the emblematic poem. Deprived of both *pictura* and *motto*, these emblems concentrate images of atomic dispersal and dissolution which connect the human with the divine. Pulter’s faith relies on the principle “that physical destruction is the necessary first stage of the resurrection process” (134). In “The Hope” and similar compositions, death annihilates all things by turning them into indivisible particles that can aspire to rebirth only by means of divine trust (139). Contrary to Cavendish’s insistence on creation, it is “the promise of world-breaking rather than world-making” (140) which defines Pulter’s faith in resurrection. Despite these differences, there is a relevant parallelism between both authors’ atomism: like Cavendish’s fancies, Pulter’s emblematic poems allowed her to reinforce her own authority, since she “moves to associate her shifting perception of self-identity with the movement of indivisible particles” (145).

The last chapter of the book analyses the works and theories of Lucy Hutchinson, who followed two fundamental sources, Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura* and the Bible’s *Genesis*, for the writing of her major opus, *Order and Disorder* (1679). The work itself was a reinterpretation of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, printed twelve years before; its title accounts for Hutchinson’s belief that “human experience of disorder and change unveils the promise of divine order” (187). An innovative approach, indeed, considering that “the fear of chaos and the fact of mutability” had straitjacketed the works of philosophers and poets less than a century before, insomuch as change and

corruption represented a menace for the ideal cosmic order (Tillyard 1970, 25–26). The concept that governs Hutchinson’s distinctive experience is the atom: incarnated in Adam, the immortal atom indicates resurrection after disintegration or the apparent melting into nothingness. When reading Hutchinson, “through the combined mediums of scripture, the Adam and the atom, we learn mankind shall be restored once more to the original state of ‘Paradise’” (197). In *Order and Disorder*, Hutchinson Christianizes the atom, picturing it as a divine particle, the first and original dust, the ultimate principle which will allow human beings to regenerate and reach the promised land after death.

As Gorman states in the afterword to her exhaustive study, the works of More, Traherne, Cavendish, Pulter, and Hutchinson comprise a varied yet coherent “poetics of the atom” (215) throughout the seventeenth century. A key idea for the understanding of this new vogue is that it is verse, not prose, which carries the weight of atomism. In a recent article, Gorman (2023) demonstrates that a previous manifestation of this scientific theory was already present in the lyrics of Elizabethan poets such as Sir Philip Sidney and Michael Drayton, who offered an atomized portrait of Cupid in sonnet form. The authors studied in this monograph chose the more elevated style of philosophical poetry to explore, although from different approaches, the same dual correlation, that which linked the generative potential of the individual atom with the author’s creative mind, and the infinite possibilities of atomic movement with a rich variety of poetic forms. As Gorman successfully proves in her study, the atom, with promises of vitalism, harmony, and resurrection, found in seventeenth-century poetry a fruitful art form for the exegesis of multiple material and spiritual mysteries.

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*Author's contact:* maria.vera@dfing.uhu.es

*Postal address:* Avda. Tres de Marzo s/n, Campus de El Carmen, 21007, Huelva, Spain.

**Francesca Clare Rayner. 2022.**  
***Shakespeare and the Challenge of the Contemporary:***  
***Performance, Politics and Aesthetics.***  
**London: Bloomsbury Publishing**

Veronika Schandl  
*Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary*

Commencing a book review by focusing on the concluding chapter is an unconventional approach. However, in the case of Francesca Clare Rayner's book *Shakespeare and the Challenge of the Contemporary: Performance, Politics and Aesthetics* it may prove beneficial as it urges readers to revisit the volume after reading its final section. It is in this concluding chapter (entitled "Performance Matters: Contemporary Shakespearean Performance Criticism") where, in her aim of addressing the pertinent questions of contemporary Shakespearean performance criticism, Rayner posits that adopting a *performative* approach to writing about Shakespeare in performance can resolve several prevailing challenges. Drawing upon the works of Peggy Phelan and Della Pollock, Rayner contends that "as opposed to conventional critical writing, performative writing tends to be open-ended, self-reflexive and often subjective rather than objective, thesis-led and conclusive. It deconstructs stable notions of self and other in order to open up multiple dialogues within and between selves. Unlike creative writing however, it also pursues critical lines of enquiry using theoretical insights from various subject areas" (172). This proposition is also the underlying objective that the book strives to accomplish and succeeds in doing.

Indeed, the volume can be read as an informed manifesto for contemporary Shakespeare performance criticism. For a criticism that is ethically motivated and politically informed. A criticism that uses theory and literary criticism with ease and in a way that could also resonate with a non-theatrical readership. A criticism that describes performance elements with a keen eye to detail yet with a constant awareness of the performance as a whole. A criticism that disavows the pretense of objectivity, for it harbors genuine concern for the artists and productions it investigates. A criticism that does not shy away

from moving beyond Shakespeare studies, extending its purview into theater studies, cultural studies, queer criticism, and other domains.

Picking up from where Jan Kott's assertion that Shakespeare is our contemporary left off, Rayner presents a compelling case study of recent Portuguese Shakespeare productions. Through her insightful analyses, she explores how these productions address the questions of the contemporary posed by Shakespeare's works. In doing so, Rayner also examines how performance criticism can effectively rise to the challenge of describing these issues and capture the performative solutions devised to confront them. The book takes into consideration the impact significant events such as Brexit, global climate change, and the pandemic have had on Shakespearean productions. It acknowledges that "how and why Shakespeare is performed has been radically transformed by processes of globalization, mediatization and neoliberal market economics and the global inequalities that have resulted from these features" (4). It is this strong social awareness that characterizes all the chapters in the book, adding greatly to the unique tone of Rayner's writing.

Rayner argues that although the Portuguese theatre scene and its Shakespeare productions may be perceived as relatively self-contained or enclosed, they serve as a captivating case study for contemporary Shakespeare productions as a whole. This is primarily due to their connection to "intermediality, with devised, rather than text-based performance, with ensembles who co-create performances rather than being director led and with a focus on the participation of the audience rather than their silent presence in the auditorium. It is informed politically by concerns around democracy, disempowerment, and austerity" (10). This reviewer, not Portuguese and with limited insight into Portuguese theatre, acknowledges the success of Rayner's endeavor. The examples of theatrical productions described in the book provide a transnational and cross-national perspective, offering insight into the contemporary European condition. They resonate with the reviewer's own experiences, despite being located on the opposite end of the continent.

The five central chapters of the book engage with the actual productions that exemplify the particular aspects of the contemporary nature of Shakespearean performances. Teatro Praga's Shakespeare trilogy (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* [2010], *The Tempest* [2013], and *Timon*

*of Athens* [2019]) showcases an intermedial deconstruction of traditional theatrical and generic conventions. The trilogy challenged the notion of reciting the plays' texts and instead emphasized the creation of "an enjoyable, pleasurable co-authored experience" (26). Rayner insightfully describes how Praga's *Dream* peeled back the comedic veneer to reveal the debilitating aspects of love, while their *Timon*, the most frequently performed Shakespeare play in Portugal since 2010, critically examines cultural institutions and the allocation of resources within the cultural sphere. In the next chapter, Tiago Rodrigues' *Three Fingers Below the Knee* (2012), *By Heart* (2013) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (2014) are used as examples of Shakespearean traces in contemporary performance texts, but Rayner also uses them to challenge concepts about Portugal's "postmemory generation," a generation that was born after the end of the Salazar regime, and is struggling to have a space and a voice, since it is often silenced by the stories of the previous generation. While the first chapter focuses on the intermedial dimensions and physicality of the performers, this chapter entitled "Memories of the future: Tiago Rodrigues and dramaturgies of the Shakespearean trace" delves into personal and collective memory, and the challenges of audience involvement. What connects these chapters is also their context: most of these shows were performed against the backdrop of the financial crises and austerity measures of the early 2000s.

Nuno Cardoso's four Shakespeares (*Richard II* [2007], *Measure for Measure* [2012], *Coriolanus* [2014] and *Timon of Athens* [2018]) are strongly political in their intent and are used in the book to illustrate the pan-European idea of a theatre that should "both reflect and intervene in society" (87). Placed in distinctively Portuguese settings, these productions offer a critical examination of the deepening social divide within Portuguese society. Rayner makes a compelling argument that although these stagings may initially appear as providing no empowerment for their audiences, as they reflect the realities of contemporary Portugal through their "cruel optimism" (103), their continuous interest in everyday human interactions in locations such as football fields, car parks, or public toilets (which serve as sets for the productions) demonstrates that Cardoso's "political cynicism is closely related to political idealism" (104).

Through the analysis of Christiane Jatahy's *The Moving Forest* (2018), an immersive and multimedial take on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Rayner

sheds light on both the ethical and performative challenges that arise from the apparent empowerment of the spectator. This production serves as a case study that reveals the complexities associated with granting the audience an enhanced role in the performance experience. Rayner skillfully strikes a balance between her role as an engaged participant in the production and her objective role as a reviewer, as she describes the diverse elements of surveillance, objectification, and misuse within *The Moving Forest*. Furthermore, she demonstrates how performer-generated visual and written materials can be seamlessly integrated into a review, showcasing a comprehensive approach to analyzing the performative process.

The book's final theatrical chapter discusses mala voadora's *Hamlet* from 2014. This analysis confronts established notions of authority within Shakespearean texts and performances. It emphasizes how the production, utilizing the "bad" quarto text, self-reflexive scenography, and a consistent incorporation of parody and melodrama, dismantles preconceived expectations of *Hamlet*. Rayner argues that despite subverting traditional interpretations, the production legitimizes its unique approach to the play by virtue of its vitality and the enjoyment it offers to the audience.

Francesca Clare Rayner's book is a remarkable achievement, tackling the challenges posed by contemporary Shakespearean productions while simultaneously serving as a heartfelt reminder of a European sentiment that unites us through Shakespeare, theater, and scholarly pursuits. It is a tour de force of theatrical criticism, empathy, and social insight that we all need when facing the (seemingly growing) challenges of the contemporary.

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*Author's contact:* schandl.veronika@btk.ppke.hu

*Postal address:* PPKE-BTK, 1111 Budapest, Bertalan Lajos u. 2, Danubianum – BME, Hungary.



**Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and Berta Cano-Echevarría, eds. 2021.**  
***Exile, Diplomacy and Texts: Exchanges between Iberia***  
***and the British Isles, 1500–1767.***  
**Leiden: Brill**

Carme Font-Paz  
*Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain*

In 1623, a fifty-page account by an alleged British soldier warning King James I against Spaniards indulges in a rambling lament of political distrust: “How prejudiciall their treaties of peace have ever been to such Princes or State with whom they have contended, is most evident, as well as to us, as other Nations, as appears by their *Armado* in 88” (4–5). Understanding how political animosity unfolds in early modern public discourse through interested representations of the “other” is the work of historians as well as literary scholars in their search to apprehend underground patterns of continuity and change, tensions and overtures coexisting in any departure from the conflictual relationship between the British Isles and Iberia beyond the Spanish black legend. The number of articles and monographs exploring the alternative dynamics of the political and religious rivalry between these two world powers has grown significantly, with studies on the textual cultures of recusant literature, diplomatic channels, the circulation of news and commercial partnerships with major contributions to the debate by Liesbeth Corens (2019), Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (2016), David Coast (2014), Helen Hackett (2016), and Freddy Cristóbal Domínguez (2020). While the broader picture of these exchanges and routes has been mapped out with its cultural and historical parameters, the assumptions regarding their antagonistic nature permeate many of them even when the evidence points at a more complex interplay. *Exile, Diplomacy and Texts* is a most welcome study in this direction. Stemming from the lead authors’ research projects, in particular, *Exilio, diplomacia y transmisión textual: redes de intercambios entre la Península Ibérica y las Islas Británicas en la edad moderna*,<sup>1</sup> Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and Berta Cano-Echevarría interrogate

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<sup>1</sup> Sáez-Hidalgo, Ana; Cano-Echevarría, Berta. 2016–2020. *Exilio, diplomacia y transmisión textual: redes de intercambios entre la Península Ibérica y las Islas Británicas en la edad*

the Anglo-Spanish binary through neglected archival materials: manuscript letters, printed pamphlets, reading traces in printed books, reports from prisoners or soldiers, notarized inventories and travelers' accounts make up the raw material and backbone of the "heterogeneous transnational and transcultural conversations carried out among the diverse communities in early modern Iberia and the British Isles" (2). By examining the subtleties of these discourses, as well as the comments and viewpoints that emerge unexpectedly within the context of these exchanges, this volume dispels the belief in simplistic accounts of confrontational politics to articulate a more capacious and multi-dimensional cultural landscape.

The volume is divided into three main parts that tackle these various types of multilateral exchanges, presenting in each chapter interactions with the "other," conceptualized as "the encounter, the narration and the reading" (2). These correspond to three typologies of difference and dissonance in transnational relations coming from accounts of military collaboration or the intricacies of diplomatic missions, including the relationships of Irish nationals with other countries. The opening chapter by Glyn Redworth in his review of English participation in the 1557 Battle of Saint-Quentin in France invokes not only textual sources but visual materials from one of the witnesses to the battle, Antoon van den Wijngaerde. As Sáez-Hidalgo and Cano-Echevarría note, his sketches would decorate the *Sala de las Batallas* in the El Escorial monastery (5). Perhaps more importantly for the purposes of the volume, Redworth's close-up analysis of Wijngaerde's sketches of the strategic positioning of English troops help the reader reconsider the negative light with which previous witnesses' accounts of the battle viewed English participation, moving away from ready-made representations of triumph in battle as an unequivocal measure of political alliance. Redworth reads the episode as one of collaboration between the English and the Spanish forces against the French. Such an entente could also be at risk at times when geographical borders were called into question. Susana Oliveira's chapter on an English mission to the Portuguese court led by Thomas Wilson aiming to seek compensation for the Portuguese

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*moderna*. "Exile, diplomacy and textual transmission: Networks of exchange between early modern Iberia and the British Isles." MINECO, Excellence R+D Project. FFI2015-66847-P. <http://www.estudiosingleses.com/networksexchange/>

sinking of an English ship and its cargo off the shores of Liberia shows the complexities of the Lusitanians' special rapport with the English. Although no monetary compensation was gained, the English diplomatic mission was at least successful in guaranteeing the release of English captives from the Castle of Mina, an outcome that broadens the lens of our definition of alliance in the early modern period by moving it closer to contemporary notions of *realpolitik*.

Under the rubric of "narrations" in the second part of the book, Berta Cano-Echevarría's chapter on the construction of a "white legend" of Catholic faith on British soil reads martyrs' accounts, popular romances, and newsletters as instruments for promoting the political and religious efforts to correct the enemy's mistaken stance. It does so by assimilating it into a supra-narrative in which Catholic Spain is a moral and benevolent superpower. Representations of national identity, though, are not only projected onto "the other," as Sáez-Hidalgo and Cano-Echevarría rightly note (7). National self-representation was also strategically deployed and, as Rui Carvalho Homem shows in his chapter on Tomé Pinheiro da Veiga's *Fastigínia*, even defined in almost oxymoronic terms. By studying imagology, Carvalho Homem signals the "tropes energizing the narrative" (107) of the invented persona of the warrior-bishop of Turpin in 1605 Valladolid to celebrate the birth of the new heir to the throne of Spain—Valladolid being at that time the capital of Spain. The contrasts between Portuguese and Spaniards, Catholics and Protestants, the early modern global North and South, allow us to finetune our concept of "foreignness" through the imaginary mind of a third person who "lends density and complexity to [the author's] polarized remarks" (106). But reading the other gains as much prominence as writing the other, and in this context Ana Sáez-Hidalgo's chapter delves into the practice of reading through material objects—books themselves—and the dramatic renderings in narratives of diplomatic encounters. Her nuanced definition of what constitutes orthodox and heterodox messages in the context of the textual production of English missions and seminars in exile informs Sáez-Hidalgo's analysis of a copy of *The Second Part of Christian Exercise* by Robert Person held at the Royal Library of El Escorial in Spain. Her examination of the annotations and markings in various hands not only casts light on the reception of English books in Spain and the channels through which they were disseminated,

but it provides evidence of how Catholics in exile *repurposed* those texts, including Protestant ones (157). Mark Hutchings' chapter closes the volume by revisiting the episode of the English embassy's visit to Valladolid in 1605—offering an interesting counterpart to Carvalho Homem's chapter on the same episode from a different angle. His analysis of Robert Treswell's *A Relation of Such Things* explores the performative function of reenactments of narratives of diplomatic missions. By reading the two dimensions of the text, as the *Haupttext* (the main dialogical text of the diplomatic event) with the *Nebentext* (the stage directions), Hutchings demonstrates the importance of the latter in diplomatic accounts in which the visual and almost ritualistic aspects of the *mise-en-scène* become the main message, inviting us to understand the craft of diplomacy narrative as a response to "the 'problem' of translating visual material into prose" (212).

The scope, analytical depth, and original choice of primary materials and perspectives makes this volume a major, if not a landmark, reference book for the understanding of the cultural ramifications of early modern Anglo-Iberian relations. The penetrating analyses of each and every chapter, together with an insightful and highly informative introduction provide the necessary context and theoretical underpinnings to open up new ground in the continuing and exciting explorations of the political uses and readerships of early modern textual culture.

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*Author's contact:* Carme.Font@uab.cat

*Postal address:* Departament de Filologia Anglesa, Facultat de Filosofia i Lletres, UAB, 08193, Bellaterra, Spain.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

**Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (June 1-3, 2022)**  
**Directed by José María Muscari**  
**International Classical Theater Festival of Mérida\***

Víctor Huertas-Martín  
Universitat de València, Spain

### CAST

Moria Casán (Julius Caesar), Marita Ballesteros (Mark Antony), Alejandra Radano (Brutus), Malena Solda (Cassius), Mario Alarcón (Calphurnia), Mariano Torre (Portia), Mirta Wons (Lucius), Vivian El Jaber (Caska), Fabiana García Lago (Octavius), Payuca (Trebonius)

What is today known as the International Classical Theater Festival of Mérida (in Badajoz, Spain) began as the Classical Arts Festival in 1933 and 1934. After a long interruption caused by the Spanish Civil War, performances restarted at Mérida's Roman Theater and its archaeological ensemble. Performances began again with a series of initiatives by the Spanish University Theater in 1947 and 1953. However, performances at the Roman theatre decisively took off in 1954 with a performance of *Oedipus* by the Lope de Vega Company. One consequence of the socialist victory in Extremadura in 1982 was the development of the region as an autonomous community. The International Classical Theater Festival of Mérida became part of this regional blossoming that supplemented the transition to Spanish democracy. Since its early performances, the Festival has given space to some of the most renowned Spanish local and national theater artists. Though the site was meant to be for Graeco-Latin works, Shakespeare was first introduced to Mérida in 1955. Since then, Shakespeare's corpus of Greek and Roman plays has been part of the Festival's regular programming.

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\* Acknowledgements are owed to Jesús Cimarro (Pentación Espectáculos) and Pedro Blanco-Vivas (Consortio Patronato de la Ciudad Monumental) for giving me the possibility to enjoy the performance and the production's recording.

Coinciding with the 2022 Pride Parade, the Festival's sixty-eighth edition opened with *Julius Caesar*. The Argentinian Complejo Teatral de Buenos Aires travelled to Mérida with a production directed by José María Muscari, which had been a hit at the Cine Teatro Plata. The concept cohered with the edition's focus on women in the ancient and classical worlds. Female characters and artists were given extra prominence during that summer's season. At first sight, *Julius Caesar* might not seem to be the most obvious fit for the season's program. But the play was re-gendered: male characters were played by female actors, female parts by male actors. The production's goal was not only to encourage male and female individuals to explore each other's viewpoints through the play's gender politics<sup>1</sup> but also to foster playful juggling with categories of gender, sex and sexual orientation in Shakespeare's play. In an interview, Muscari argued that the Spanish context was perfect for this queer take on Shakespeare insofar as debates were taking place over the what has just been recently passed Law for the Effective and Real Equality of Trans People and for the Guaranteeing of the Rights of LGTBI People (Law 4/2023, February 28, 2023).<sup>2</sup> The production was called radical and transgressive by the local media.

Muscari followed Shakespeare's text closely, though he made the drastic decision to cut acts four and five, reducing them to the proscription scene, the quarrel scene and the parley scene. The latter concluded with manslaughter perpetrated by the gun-carrying Octavius, who, starting with Mark Antony, eliminated every single person on stage, announced the death of all mankind, then received the crown from the Ghost of Julius Caesar himself. The story-world was formed by red-linen sofas and LED screens placed lining the back of the Roman Theater's *frons scaenae*. Shakespeare's Rome became a VIP nightclub dreamscape.

The factions of Optimates and Populares in Shakespeare were replaced by political sides equally driven by fashion, desire, corruption, greed, consumption and striving for popularity. Moria

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<sup>1</sup> This re-gendering of characters in *Julius Caesar* was not unprecedented. See, for instance, Phyllida Lloyd's production of *Julius Caesar* at the Donmar Warehouse (2012) and Nicholas Hytner and Tony Grech-Smith's National Theater production (2018).

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.canalextramadura.es/noticias/extremadura/julio-cesar-travestido-y-shakespeare-trapeado-esa-es-la-cuestion>.

Casán's Caesar was a voluptuous rap star whose fetishized body simultaneously turned into a feminine and masculine normative model. Octavius was an influencer, a commentator and a choric figure who led the emerging political forces. Antony and Caesar were made lovers. This was also the case with Brutus and Cassius and, eventually, with Antony and Octavius. Muscari inserted misogynistic remarks that spurred reflection on the patriarchal politics of the play. Two soliloquies were written for the Ghosts of Portia and Calpurnia who appeared on stage to protest the historical invisibility that they had suffered as characters. An unusually self-conscious and narcissistic Brutus – fascinated by Caesar's and Antony's bodies, terrified by their autocratic power –, an overtly Macchiavellian Cassius, and an intensely abrupt Caska were an old Left that, for a long time, had been corrupt, ravenous, and contemptuous of the plebs. Lucius was a micro-influencer turned into a morally ambiguous side-switching subject. Trebonius was a trans servant who acknowledged himself a dupe seduced by mass technology and by Caesar's commodification of LGBTQ+.

In Brechtian style, Muscari concentrated on describing the socioeconomic forces and the material culture that shaped the story's events. Digital platforms, WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook, Tinder, Twitter, public and private TV replaced Shakespeare's fora as arenas for dispute. Trawling, fake news, influencing, and binge-watching became tools to guide the masses to seemingly fulfill what is regarded as their ultimate aspirations: to be guests in Caesar's private lounge before falling off the rails of the rollercoaster of (self-) consumption. Nathy Peluso's songs were used as transitions between scenes and to shine light on certain themes in *Julius Caesar*. "Businesswoman" – playing during Caesar's first entrance – appeared to be used to criticize the tyrant's autocratic rise. C. Tangana and Peluso's "Yo era ateo" was incidental music played to the quarrel scene. The song's focus on the miraculous power of love contrasted with the crisis of friendship in times of impending defeat that underlies the scene.

The play's overall approach to gender, sex, and sexual orientation and their convergences with the themes of love, politics, and mass culture were, to my mind, stimulating, particularly since previous Anglophone re-genderings of the tragedy (see footnote 1) were still



too subjected to textual canonicity, one dispensed with here. As far as I could see as a spectator, re-gendering was neither dismissed nor rejected by audiences. And yet this did not suffice to make this *Julius Caesar* as incendiary as it was meant to be.

Some reviews made too much of Muscari's radicalism in re-gendering characters and of his cynical portrayal of politicians. While the acting was highly praised, deviations from Shakespeare's text were criticized, sometimes through anachronistic invocations of Mankiewicz's *Julius Caesar* (1953). Others argued, patronizingly, that feminism and LGBTQ+ were not suitable for Mérida's public, accustomed – so they said – to more traditional renditions of the classics. Negative comments were made on the occlusion of the archaeological ensemble with LED screens, red-linen sofa and the narrow range covered by the lighting. Others did not interpret the production's feminism, LGBTQ+, queer, and trap overtones as revolutionary, but as *totum revolutum*.

While I enjoyed the show, my critical reaction to this *Julius Caesar* is mixed. I was impressed by Muscari's skill as a director as well as by the players' deliveries, yet the production did not engage the space in the way it had apparently managed to do in Buenos Aires. This *Julius Caesar* was disembodied, though not in its politics. Obscuring Mérida's site with LED screens and using an extremely narrow section of the *frons scaenae* doubtless facilitated the production's global exportability. But theatrical research and practice show that taking advantage of site specificity in archaeological locations strengthens productions and helps make them unique. Such an opportunity was missed in Mérida. Additionally, some jokes about Spanish politics were too predictable, outdated, or confusing. What was marketed as provocative eventually became simply an amicable, fast-paced and light-hearted theatrical event. Paradoxically, it was not as successful as the much more traditional *Titus Andronicus* (directed by Antonio Castro Guijosa) which in 2019 was put on in the Roman theater with the superb local actor José Vicente Moirón in the title role. This production successfully toured through Extremadura and the rest of the country. But the success of *Titus* was not, in my opinion, due only to its plain delivery of the text. Castro Guijosa took advantage of the site and hired local actors who had been schooled on the site. The overall production was conceived for that specific Roman theater.

Muscari's *Julius Caesar* was provocative though for other reasons. I did not find that the combination of feminism, LGBTQ+, free love, screens, mass media, and popular culture was *totum revolutum*. Rather, the mise-en-scène was a semiotically rich intermedial palimpsest worthy of in-depth examination. Muscari raised questions about the currency of love in times of political crisis. The production challenged the idea that the LGBTQ+ and feminism cocktail itself suffices to produce substantial social transformations if subsumed under the aegis of global capitalism. The inclusion of plebeians as influencers suggested porosity in the lines dividing elites and the lower classes in *Julius Caesar*. Even though the text stresses that the masses were dupes – whose intellectual and feeding habits made them incapable of political action – , these masses were made complicit with the very power that subjugated them. The interpolations of trap, Rosalía, CNCO, Annen May Kantereit, and references to Netflix and mass consumption suggested nuanced lines of intersection between Shakespeare and pop culture. It did so by inviting the audience to ethically assess inter-weavings of the Renaissance and contemporary zeitgeists. Though Muscari succeeded in producing those intersections, it is only to be regretted that this excellent palimpsest did not quite fit the performance space of Mérida.

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*Author's contact:* victor.huertas@uv.es

*Postal address:* Departament de Filologia Anglesa i Alemanya, Facultat Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació, Avinguda Blasco Ibáñez, 32, 46010, València, Spain.



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