Performing Multilingualism on the Caroline Stage in the Plays of Richard Brome

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QUOTATIONS, ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Quotations from Richard Brome's plays are from the *Richard Brome Online* edition (Richard Allen Cave, General Editor, 2010). Dates of plays given parenthetically in the text refer to the estimated year (or date range) of the first performance.

The following abbreviations for Brome's plays are used:

AN	*The Antipodes*, edited by Richard A. Cave
CW	*The City Wit or the Woman Wears the Breeches*, edited by Elizabeth Schafer
CB	*The Court Beggar*, edited by Marion O'Connor
DM	*The Demoiselle, or, the New Ordinary*, edited by Lucy Munro
EM	*The English Moor, or the Mock-Marriage*, edited by Matthew Steggle
JC	*A Jovial Crew or the Merry Beggars*, edited by Eleanor Lowe, Helen Ostovich, Richard A. Cave
WL	*The Witches of Lancashire*, edited by Helen Ostovich
MC	*A Mad Couple Well Matched*, edited by Eleanor Lowe
NA	*The New Academy, or, The New Exchange*, edited by Michael Leslie
NL	*The Northern Lass*, edited by Julie Sanders
NV	*The Novella*, edited by Richard A. Cave
QC	*The Queen and Concubine*, edited by Lucy Munro
SG	*The Sparagus Garden*, edited by Julie Sanders
CG	*The Weeding of Covent Garden*, edited by Michael Leslie

INTRODUCTION

THROUGH THE PRISM OF MULTILINGUALISM

In Richard Brome's *The Novella* (1632) comedy springs from the encounter between the Dutch Swatzenburgh and Fabritio, an Italian young gallant who claims to be the real Dutchman. The foreigner addresses Fabritio in German in a bid to expose him as an impostor:

> *Enter FABRITIO in the German's habit.*
>
> **Fabritio** Where is this lady? Does her beauty fly me?
> **Borgio** She is at hand, but first here is a stranger,
> A most strange stranger, that says he is you, sir.
> **Swatzenburgh** *Was oder wer bistu? Bistu ein Deutscher?*
> *Sag mir in was ort Du gelebst hast*?
> **Fabritio** Who's this?
> **Swatzenburgh** *Ich denke du bist ein heuchler; bistu aber*
> *Ein Deutscher so anwort mihr in deutscher sprach*.
> **Fabritio** Good sir, speak in the proper language of
> The nation we are in, though it come brokenly
> From you, that this good fellow here may understand us.
> (*NV* 5.1.751-6)

Fabritio, unable to speak the language of his interlocutor, challenges him to speak "the proper language of the nation" they are in (i.e., English), and shows no interest in what Swatzenburgh has just asked him. In this case "the meaning of the words is less important than the meaning of the moment" (Dillon 1998, 156). No one understands what Swatzenburgh says in German, presumably not even the audience, and the character leaves the stage puzzled: he is perceived as "a most strange stranger", but, paradoxically, not alien enough to be recognized as the real Dutchman.

Among early modern dramatists, Richard Brome was one of the most responsive to foreign languages. He was the playwright of the period

who portrayed more foreigners,[1] both continental aliens and people from other parts of England, than "any other of his contemporaries" (Hoenselaars 1992, 186). Brome stands out from his peers for his originality and the topicality of his plays, attributable to, among other factors, his extensive recourse to multilingualism.[2] In his case it is worth adopting an open concept of language (Delabastita, Grutman 2005, 15), a definition which takes in the types of characters crowding the stages of the cosmopolitan and multilingual Caroline London: real or fictitious aliens from Continental Europe speaking their native languages, dialect-speaking countrymen from the most remote corners of England, refined court men adopting Latin or Greek to flaunt their superior education, and a vast array of people using professional languages, such as "the language of the lawyer, the doctor, the businessman, the politician, the public education teacher" (Bakhtin 1981, 289), all protagonists of an entertaining and lively Caroline Babel.

The recurrence of languages other than English in Renaissance drama epitomizes a sort of cultural fixation with otherness, a Babylonian obsession with "the interaction between the native tongue and its dialectal variants, or with 'foreign' languages and the associated phenomenon of translation" (Delabastita, Hoenselaars 2013, 1). A close look at the main studies discussing the issue of multilingualism in early modern drama and the representation of foreigners on the English stage confirms that so far the focus of scholarly attention has been mainly on the Elizabethan and

[1] In the seventeenth century people's anxiety about dealing with otherness was also reflected linguistically in the number of words used to define the concept: from 'foreign', which was applied by Londoners to anyone not born in London or not member of a guild (*OED* 1a), to 'stranger' and 'alien', employed for people from a foreign country (1), so drawing a distinction to those from the countryside, and 'denizen', a status in-between a citizen and a foreigner, "a permanent resident with rights of residency and work in the adopted country", in Lloyd E. Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2009, 3. I will be using the term 'foreign' according to its most conventional modern usage.

[2] I rely on this definition of 'literary multilingualism' seen as "the more or less extended mix of two or more languages in the same text, entailing a cross-cultural or experimental effect", in K. Alfons Knauth "Literary multilingualism I: General outlines and western world", in *Comparative Literature: Sharing Knowledges for Preserving Cultural Diversity*, vol. 3, ed. by Lisa Block de Behar et al., Oxford, EOLSS, 2009, 41-64, 41. See also Tom McArthur (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, Oxford; New York, Oxford UP, 1992, 673.

Jacobean periods, while the Caroline age has suffered considerable critical disregard.[3]

Janette Dillon, who authored *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England* (1998), limited her analysis to the end of the Elizabethan period without delving into the following phases "not because the staging of Babel ceases to become an issue then, but because the parameters of the study shift markedly at that point" (xii). Even Marianne Montgomery, who picked up the baton from Dillon, surveys the multilingual landscape of early modern England till 1620: "The babble of other languages continues to make itself heard in English drama until the closing of the theatres" (Dillon 1998, xiii), but not surprisingly the Caroline age has been somehow excluded from a more comprehensive investigation in this regard. Until the 1980s the Caroline age was almost entirely critically neglected, being unjustly labelled as a decadent phase of English drama. Nevertheless, "[d]espite the brilliant advocacy of Martin Butler", whose seminal study *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (1984) stands as a milestone in the process of re-appraisal of the period, "Caroline drama still suffers neglect", and the works of leading playwrights such as Richard

[3] See Paula Blank, *Broken English: Dialects and the Politics of Language in Renaissance Writings*, London; New York, Routledge, 1996; Laura H. Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us: Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England*, London, Routledge, 1996; Janette Dillon, *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1998; Jean-Christophe Mayer, *Representing France and the French in Early Modern English Drama*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2008; Lloyd E. Kermode 2009; Carole Levin and John Watkins, *Shakespeare's Foreign Worlds: National and Transnational Identities in the Elizabethan Age*, Ithaca, Cornell UP, 2009; Marianne Montgomery, *Europe's Languages on England's Stages, 1590-1620*, Farnham; Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2012; Dirk Delabastita, Ton Hoenselaars (eds.), *ETC* 6:1, a special issue on "Multilingualism in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries", 2013. The only exception is A. J. Hoenselaars, *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama*, *1558-1642*, Cranbury, N.J., Associated University Presses, 1992. In his monograph Hoenselaars devotes a whole chapter to the investigation of the representation of Englishmen and foreigners in 1625-1642; he also discusses some of Richard Brome's plays, but his analysis is mainly focused on the perception of foreigners and the stereotypes associated more than on their linguistic representation.

Brome, James Shirley, and Philip Massinger need more critical attention (Booth 2000, 556).[4]

This book is intended to fill this critical lacuna. It covers the period from 1625 to 1642, looking at the multilingual theatrical landscape of the Caroline age through the lens of Richard Brome's plays. Brome's body of dramatic works, from *The Northern Lass* in 1629 to *A Jovial Crew* in 1642, coincides with the King's period of personal rule, thus providing an insight into a delicate phase of English history that led to the Civil War and to the closing of the theatres. I argue that Brome's use of multilingualism, far from being merely a comic device, serves a number of purposes, while multilingual writing contributes to turn the theatre into an arena for the discussion of the contemporary social and political situation during the reign of Charles I and his French Queen consort Henrietta Maria.

"*Très bien venue, Mesdames*. You are very welcome" (*DM* 5.1.864)

The presence of a 'stranger' or 'alien' on the throne was bound to influence the popular perception of foreigners by the English subjects. England was not new to foreign monarchs: James I, who was an alien himself as formerly James VI of Scotland, had married Anne of Denmark, second daughter of King Frederick II of Denmark: yet the influence that the French Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria wielded was extraordinary. Despite her inability to speak English properly, Henrietta Maria is recognized as one of the most influential cultural agents of her age. It was the Queen who made the court of Charles I "highly cosmopolitan" and led the way to a "consequent tendency for affairs in one country to become entangled with those in others" (Smuts 2008, 13). Her cultural heritage was definitely cosmopolitan. Educated as a strict Roman Catholic, Henrietta Maria was daughter to the bellicose Henry IV of France and Maria de Medici ('Marie de Médicis'). She was sister to Louis XIII. In addition, her older sister Christine-Marie was Duchess of Savoy, while her sister Elizabeth had married Philip IV of Spain. In a sense she followed in her mother's footsteps, a powerful example of female governance in a foreign country. Far from playing a passive role, Henrietta Maria managed to carve a niche for herself and became "chief adviser to the King" (Smuts

[4] Booth questions the real impact of Martin Butler's pioneering monograph *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (1984), which challenged the traditional critical view on Caroline drama as 'decadent'.

2008, 27) after the death of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in 1628. Two years before, the Queen had already left a mark in the English court by introducing a theatrical innovation which was a common practice in continental Europe:[5] Honorat de Bueil, Seigneur de Racan's *Artenice*, presented for the court of Charles I in 1626, was the "first production in England that saw a queen and her women perform as actors on the stage" (Britland 2006, 35). Therefore, in encouraging female performance, Henrietta Maria accelerated "a process of cultural exchange and transformation which was already underway" (Tomlinson 2005, 8).

Thanks to the artistic support of the sovereigns, both patrons of the arts, "England entered the mainstream of European art" (Parry 1981, 227). Numerous European artists took up residence at the English court, such as Pieter Paul Rubens, Anthony Van Dyck, and Orazio Gentileschi, "a mark of England's continuing dependence on foreign masters" (Porter 1994, 85), and English nationals, like Inigo Jones, who undertook journeys to Italy and France in a bid to study European architectural models and new theatrical forms. The royal patronage contributed to establishing new religious, cultural, artistic, and social dynamics, and it introduced a cosmopolitanism into the English court, which was no longer cut off from European artistic and cultural trends. All these foreigners were agents of a cultural exchange that awoke people to alterity (Roodenburg 2007, 5).

It was in this period, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, that London became an increasingly multilingual and cosmopolitan city; "[o]verseas visitors were impressed with the number of foreign-speakers […] who made their homes" (Smith 1999, 54) there. In the reigns of James I and Charles I, London experienced an unexpectedly sharp demographic growth, increasing in population more rapidly than the rest of the country and other European cities. It passed from 200,000 to around 375,000 inhabitants (Beier, Finlay 1986), of which around 10,000 were foreigners. At mid century it was second only to Paris. This marked increase was due to migration both from foreign countries and from the countryside so that "about an eighth of the country's births eventually became Londoners at some stage of their lives" (Finlay 1981, 9).

London's hegemonic function was mainly due to its political and economic centralization, its leading political and mercantile role (London, being both capital and port, stood as a *unicum* in Europe), and its virtual monopoly over the entertainment industry (Kermode 2009, 3). This made the city a magnet for a wide variety of migrants from all social backgrounds,

[5] See Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2006; Erin Griffin (ed.), *Henrietta Maria*, VT, Ashgate, 2004.

both poor and wealthy, from the different regions in England and from foreign countries like Italy and France. Paradoxically "many Londoners might have experienced feelings of alienation. […] Almost everyone was a migrant" (Finlay 1981, 20).

One of the key aspects of immigration to London is that it was on a temporary basis, which made the atmosphere distinctly dynamic. On the one hand, there were commuters, male and female workers of any kind operating in and around the capital, but also people visiting a relative or a friend or taking their first step towards a more stable life in the city. In addition, upper-class young men and gentry from the country would take up temporary residence for a number of reasons: conducting business, consultation of lawyers or doctors, attending the court, shopping, and entertainment. On the other hand, there were the so-called aliens or strangers, such as the large-scale recruitment of foreign soldiers, pilgrims, and diplomats but also merchants, "schoolmasters, surgeons, physicians, engineers, musicians and artists" (Yungblut 1996, 14). It is hard to calculate the percentage of Londoners who were not of foreign origin.[6] According to Scouloudi (1938, 29-30, 43) around 1% of London residents were alien (about 3,622 people) so that the alien community amounted to "half the size of that of 1593" (Luu 2005, 195), also because its members were progressively assimilated into the native English population (Finlay 1981, 68).

Caroline playwrights like Brome could not fail to notice the presence of foreigners in all walks of life, and explored the new attitudes towards foreigners onstage. Indisputably friction with aliens was decreasing. In 1625 Charles I had permitted aliens to practice their trades freely (Hoenselaars 1992, 186), paving the way to a more advanced stage of integration in society, which tempered the xenophobic tendencies of the past and the excesses of nationalism and patriotism. This mind-set is paralleled in numerous plays of the period where foreigners come in for a more favourable portrayal or are the subject of less hostile satire than the characters of the previous times regarding their traditional stock traits. Yet some forms of xenophobia re-emerged at moments of tension. In 1635 the shopkeepers in London complained that there was a seemingly infinite number of 'foreign' tradesmen in the City and suburbs (Luu 2005, 200) or, as the merchant Matchil puts it in *The New Academy* (1636), "there's French enough in town" (*NA* 1.1.83). The hostility was often due to

[6] See Ole Peter Grell, *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London: The Dutch Church in Austin Friars 1603-1642*, Leiden; New York, E. J. Brill, 1989; Ole Peter Grell, *Calvinist Exiles in Tudor and Stuart England*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1996.

internal conflicts taking place on English soil rather than to issues pertaining to foreign politics. As Davies observes, during the period of Charles I's personal rule, the people of England "relaxed somewhat the interest with which they had previously followed events on the Continent", and one explanation for this is that they became more absorbed in their own affairs (1959, 215).

On the other hand, numerous English characters in plays are satirized for their excessive enthusiasm towards foreign manners, especially French; they are depicted as willing to adopt French court habits and learn from French councillors, cooks, dancing masters, or knights, all recurring figures in plays by John Ford, Thomas Nabbes, William Cavendish, William Davenport, and Brome.[7] Besides the traditional portrayal of stock characters and stereotypes recurring on the early modern stage, Brome's plays offer a clever and playful linguistic take on foreign languages. His treatment of foreign-language speakers is rather complex and the uses of multilingualism in his dramatic texts are multiple. While creating comic situations, these characters may also offer a way to explore several issues, such as the experience of learning a new language, the representation of the speech-mode of a particular community, the sense of marginalisation and isolation on the basis of language, the native-alien conflict and its impact on the construction of an English national linguistic and cultural identity.

Furthermore, multilingualism can work as an important vehicle to discuss the concept of identity and the dynamism in the continual renegotiations of human social and gender relations, which makes the identity adapt to new contexts and situations. In the following scene from Brome's *The Weeding of Covent Garden* (1632-3)[8], the country gentleman Crosswill is astonished at his son Gabriel's abrupt transformation from a strict Puritan into a drunken tavern-goer. "How came he thus translated?", he exclaims, showing the same surprise as Peter Quince looking at Bottom's head metamorphosed into an ass:[9]

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[7] See A. J. Hoenselaars 1992, 185-215; Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, 162-208.

[8] For a discussion concerning dates of composition and performance see Matthew Steggle, "Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641", *Renaissance Forum* 5.2., 2001, at http://shura.shu.ac.uk/2852/1/Brome.pdf; Michael Leslie, "Critical Introduction" to *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, edited by M. Leslie, *Richard Brome Online*, 2010, § 1-98.

[9] "Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated" (*MND* 3.1.113).

> **Crosswill** What can this mean? How came he thus translated?
> What charms or what enchantments are upon him?
> **Gabriel** What Babel was a-building in my brains? (*CG* 5.3.1179-80)

The connection between construction of the self and language is highlighted by Gabriel who, once sober, evokes the biblical tower to describe his drunkenness and the confusion of sounds in his mind. His radical change in terms of language and behaviour is tantamount to a translation, a translation of identity.[10] The construction of the self may be thus compared to the process of learning a new language. In a much quoted passage from his notebooks, published as *Discoveries*, Ben Jonson makes an analogy between language and identity:

> *Language* most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech. (Vol. 8, 625)

Still language is one of the aspects deployed in the process of self-fashioning or refashioning, "though not exclusively". Borrowing Greenblatt's words, "identity is a mask to be fashioned and manipulated" (1980, 14) through the medium of language, among other elements. I will take into account several types of speakers in a bid to shed light on the dynamic and complex relationship between language and identity. On the one hand, language strengthens the identity of characters such as Tom Hoyden and Coulter from Somerset in *The Sparagus Garden*, and Lawrence and Parnell from Lancashire in *The Witches of Lancashire*, whose employ of dialect reflects their inner essence. Language also contributes to negotiating and forging a new identity, as in the case of Tim Hoyden, an aspiring gentleman who refashions his rural linguistic identity to look superior and climb up the social ladder. On the other hand, speech can be "exposed as an instrument of disguise rather than the sine qua non" of the origins of a character (Rubright 2014, 134). People such as Sarpego in *The City Wit*, who uses it with manipulative aims, or those who pretend to be foreign speakers, "decide who they want to be and choose their language practices accordingly" (Garcia 2010, 524). By making up a fictitious identity, they try to deceive their interlocutors, to influence their

[10] The phrase is part of the title of a collection of essays (*Shakespeare and the Translation of Identity in Early Modern England*, 2011) edited by Liz Oakley-Brown, which investigates the impact of translation processes on the construction of identity and self representation in literature.

reactions and behaviour or laugh at their expense. They also develop a heteroglossic "identity repertoire" (Blommaert, Varis 2013, 157), which makes them adapt to different situations. Therefore, the multiplicity of voices and languages that characterizes Brome's theatre suggests that the playwright intended the background of heteroglossia[11] to be heard on stage: his use of multilingualism was far from being only a merely comic device used to represent the "intercultural encounters" (Sanders 2010b §31) that took place daily in early modern London with a large number of foreigners.

"Forbear this unknown language" (*NA* 5.1.1043)

Brome's personal knowledge of foreign languages was not extensive nor profound. He lacked Jonson's erudite correctness in the representation of the language and Shakespeare's complexity. According to Clarence Edward Andrews, one of Brome's earliest biographers, he possessed nothing "more than a ready memory, and a clever ability at making a little knowledge go a long way" (1972 [1913], 5). There are no records of his attendance of private schools and, in all likelihood, he could not afford further education.[12] Or rather, he must have developed his penchant for language, a remarkable receptiveness to the linguistic stimuli around him, by walking around London and in the playhouses, by attending the performances of his contemporaries' plays, which exploited this device in various ways. Unlike Shakespeare, Ford or Davenport, Brome's use of multilingualism is rooted in his age and contributes to portraying contemporary social dynamics and a vast array of foreigners without the filter of a setting in a different era or in another country;[13] moreover, his recourse to this device differs in terms of degree of sophistication and variety of languages represented. The most decisive influence came from

[11] For a definition of heteroglossia, see Benjamin Bailey "Heteroglossia", in *The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism*, edited by Marylin Martin-Jones, Adrian Blackledge and Angela Creese, Abingdon, Routledge, 2012, 499–507.

[12] See Vivian Salmon, "The study of foreign languages in 17th-century England", in *Historie Epistémologie Langage* 7.2, 1985, 173-93.

[13] In Brome's corpus only two plays in which the playwright has recourse to languages other than English are not set within the boundaries of England: *The Novella*, set in Venice, and *The Queen and Concubine*, in Sicily. While in the former the amount of foreign speech is extremely limited, in the latter an Italian Catholic setting amplifies the resonances of the curate's Latin (see chapter 2).

Jonson: not only did Brome learn how to "master the rules of comedy"[14] but absorbed from his mentor a certain mastery in the representation of dialects and foreign languages.

French was the language he was more familiar with. It is incorporated in four plays, and it is used more extensively than any other language of Brome's repertoire. As for other languages such as Dutch, German, Italian,[15] and Spanish,[16] Brome characterizes his foreign characters fluent in these languages through their accent or the use of single words (often cultural elements such as names of coins, dances...), brief phrases, interjections, or swearwords, which enrich the "décor auditif" of the play (Camard 2005, 40). Ironically, even in two plays set in Italy,[17] *The Novella* (in Venice)[18] and *The Queen and Concubine* (in Sicily), none of the characters actually speak Italian but they only have Italian names. The representation of the Italianate is mostly at a stereotypical and superficial level. The characters speak an accented English and use brief Italian phrases such as "Basta" (*CB* 4.1.678) or single words: an attractive woman is "Italian Bona Roba" (*CG* 1.2.177) and Victoria addresses Piso as "signior" (*NV* 3.1.270). The Italian words often recall the areas and abilities the Italians were usually associated with, such as beauty and fashion ("Italian masks", *CW* 2.2.188), unscrupulous dealings, prostitution

[14] In "To my old faithful servant", a commendatory poem accompanying Brome's *The Northern Lass* (1632), Jonson praises himself as a master and takes credit for the skills acquired by Brome as a playwright: "I had you for a servant, once, *Dick Brome*;/ and you perform'd a Servants parts, / now, you are got into a nearer room, / of fellowship, professing my old Arts. /And you do doe them well, with good applause, / which you have justly gained from the Stage, / by observation of those Comick Lawes / which I, your master, first did teach the Age. / You learn't it well, and for it serv'd your time / A Prentice-ship: which few do now adays" (1-10), in Ben Jonson, *Poetry*, edited by Colin Bullow, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, edited by David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson, vol. 3, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, [1616] 2012.

[15] For the treatment of Italian in early modern English drama, see Jason Lawrence, '*Who the Devil Taught You So Much Italian?': Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2006.

[16] Brome's plays feature some Spanish characters but their language is not represented consistently.

[17] See also Michele Marrapodi (ed.), *Shakespeare's Italy: Functions of Italian Locations in Renaissance Drama*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 1997.

[18] For an analysis of the treatment of Italy in the play see Richard A. Cave, "Critical Introduction" to *The Novella*, edited by R. A. Cave, *Richard Brome Online*, 2010, §1-34; Michael J. Redmond, *Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy: Intertextuality on the Jacobean Stage*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2009.

(in *The Weeding of Covent Garden* Dorcas, disguised as a prostitute, claims to be Italian and asks for "the same freedom the famous courtesans have in Italy" *CG* 1.1.82), sex ("The Italian trick" *CW* 4.2.684, *CG* 1.2.190) and trade, as in the phrase "he means to send anon a *Mercadante* from the *Merceria*" (*NV* 1.1.135), which means sending for a female merchant from a shop selling fine haberdashery. What Camard says about Jonson's use of Italian is valid for Brome as well, to some extent:

> Chez Jonson, il s'agit beaucoup plus de reprendre directement des mots lus ou appris ailleurs et parfois de les accumuler de façon pédante. (2005, 41)
>
> Il me semble que le désir de couleur locale italienne n'est pas ici primordial: il s'agit plutôt de mettre en scène une Italie livresque et de tenter de la démythifier par le ridicule. (2005, 53)

On the other hand, Brome had a natural "ear for dialects" (Clark 1992, 155) in his native land. "The representation of dialect in literature", Görlach reminds us, is "limited to certain conspicuous phonetic or lexical features which are enough to signal to the audience that a speaker is of either southern or northern origin" (1991, 14). The playwright created sharp imitations of regionalisms of the varied English dialectal landscape, showing a surprising ability to reproduce or mimic several dialects, such as south-western, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cornish[19] and East Anglian. Brome might have rural or provincial roots like Shakespeare, who was "technically a foreigner" (Archer 2005, 9).

In a bid to explain his ability with stage dialects, Catherine Shaw, one of Brome's main biographers, argues that "the skill with which he handles country dialects might suggest that, although he certainly knew the city well, he was not originally a Londoner" (1980, 18); but this sounds more like guesswork than concrete evidence. For Thaler (1921), Brome worked as an actor, like Shakespeare, Jonson, and Heywood at the beginning of their careers. So he may have been exposed to provincial languages: it is "entirely possible", Sanders claims, "that Jonson, Brome, Shirley and others had hands-on experience as touring players or, at the

[19] Cornish, for example, is used as a *Leitmotiv* in several comedies, from the early *The Northern Lass* (1629) to *The Court Beggar* (1640). Apart from topography and surnames, Cornish is not presented extensively from a linguistic point of view. This may depend on the dramatic diminution of the number of Cornish speakers in mid sixteenth-century. See Bernard Deacon, *Cornwall: A Concise History*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2007.

very least, visited particular provincial households engaged in theatre" (2014, 208).

However, Brome's life is actually shrouded in mystery. Previous critics have been able to agree on very little about his place of birth, family ties[20] and education. However, he certainly showed a particular sensibility towards professional playwrights like himself. He started at the bottom of the ladder as a man-servant to Ben Jonson and made a name for himself as a playwright. He was likewise highly responsive to the linguistic stimuli around him and shared the skill of other dramatists such as Jonson, Shakespeare, Dekker, Marston, Middleton and Kyd, who had widely exploited the comic device of multinational and multilingual discourse.

Irish,[21] Welsh[22] and Scottish, popular figures in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays,[23] are unexpectedly hardly mentioned by Brome, and their native dialects are absent from the stage; the few references are rather caricatured and stereotypical. In *The City Wit* (1630), the courtier Rufflit is depicted as possessing several physical foreign characteristics: "he has an English face, a French tongue, a Spanish heart, an Irish hand, a Welsh leg, a Scotch beard and a Dutch buttock" (*CW* 4.1.604). The presence or absence of a speaker of a specific dialect may also depend on the historical circumstances, as well as on the amount of conflict with those foreigners in the domestic domain. As far as the Scottish are concerned, I may presume that they were more integrated in London society, due to the investment of another monarch belonging to the Scottish Stuart dynasty. Furthermore, mindful of the consequences of Jonson's anti-Scottish satire in *Eastward Ho!* (1605), Brome may have preferred avoiding any risks of giving personal offence to foreigners living in London. As Hoenselaars remarks, "Brome is xenophobic and patriotic when he wants to be", according to the "specific requirements of the plays in question" (1992, 186), and his comedies create a notion of 'Englishness' that the Caroline London audience might have approved of seeing.

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[20] It is clear that he was not related to the writer Alexander Brome and to the printer Henry Brome.

[21] In *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, the Irish are mentioned when Crosswill reproaches his profligate son: "Ha! I had been as good have brought thee up among the wild Irish" (*CG* 2.1.268).

[22] Cf. *MC* 1.1.122-4.

[23] See Andrew Hadfield and John McVeagh, *Strangers to That Land: British Perceptions of Ireland from the Reformation to the Famine*, Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1994. For the treatment of Welsh characters in Shakespeare's theatre, see also Megan S. Lloyd, "*Speak it in Welsh": Wales and the Welsh Language in Shakespeare*, Lanham, MD/Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2007.

Method and chapters

This book examines the entire corpus of Brome's plays and analyzes how the use of this linguistic plurality varies from the beginning to the end of Brome's theatrical output[24], while exploring the social, political, and cultural implications of its recurrence. Considering the wide spectrum of terms for foreigners and outsiders, my analysis is not limited to continental foreign languages, but also includes Latin, oscillating between the status of living and dead language in seventeenth century England, and stage dialects, which "sounded no less strange than London English spoken with a heavy Dutch or French accent" (Levin, Watkins 2009, 11).

I will investigate the different types of linguistic interactions between English and other languages against the Caroline historical background. The presence of a foreign language and their speakers on stage, their treatment and characterization were heavily influenced by a range of historical events of domestic and foreign politics; the peace treaty between England and Spain or the marriage of Charles I with a French Princess, Henrietta Maria, impacted on drama, which did not fail to register these events, their consequences and the people's perception.

Brome's handling of foreign characters and languages thus moves from a purely stereotypical depiction, aiming to satirize habits, laws, and practices, to a more complex one, which reveals the author's interest in commenting on national and foreign policy, and on the place of England in relation to other European countries. Therefore, the foreign languages he incorporated into his plays and the countries where these languages were spoken are not granted equal attention. This may be due to a number of reasons, such as an imperfect knowledge of the national language and culture of a country, the audience's taste, the recurrent presence of some countries on the English stage, the availability of actors able to speak foreign languages and dialects, and the relationship between the foreign country and England in the specific *hic et nunc* of England. I am inclined to believe that in his plays Brome represented the nations whose influence on England he perceived as more significant and stimulating for his audience. For this reason Spanish and Dutch are often portrayed and satirized, while French characters are predictably in the majority, due to the crucial influence of Henrietta Maria.

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[24] Besides the allegorical entertainment *Time's Distractions* (1643) and the collection of elegies edited by Brome in 1649, *Lachrymae Musarum*, my analysis will also exclude Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* (1610-13), a play that Brome presumably rewrote or updated.

Even though I will not disregard the study of stereotypes related to continental Europe and the English counties, I will concentrate mainly on the textual representation of all these foreign languages and native dialects, contrasting the quarto/octavo versions of the plays with the modern edited ones in the Richard Brome Online Edition in a bid to assess how they might have sounded to the ears of an early modern audience,[25] that was assumed to be heteroglossic or used to foreign languages.[26] This is easier when pronunciation is recorded phonetically, more difficult when we have to presume that lines were only delivered with a foreign accent. Foreigners are not all equally 'other' in terms of provenance and gender. Therefore, I will also take on board gender and feminist theories, seeing that language is inevitably gendered. Brome's plays feature a number of female foreign-language speakers who are integrated in the English society to varying degrees: real nationals like the Dutch Martha, tenant of the Sparagus Garden, and the Lancastrian servant Parnell of Brome and Heywood's *The Witches of Lancashire* (1634)[27] or fictitious like the supposed French demoiselle Frances and Phillis, who pretends to be a blackamoor servant in *The English Moor* (1637).

In his last play, *A Jovial Crew, or the Merry Beggars* (1642), Brome experimented with cant[28], also known as Pedlar's French, the underground language spoken by criminals, vagabonds and beggars. As Blank remarks, "[c]ontemporary observers describe the canting language as a dialect partly invented by its own speakers, a secret code based on neologism" (1996, 18). Brome's colourful and experimental cant effectively contributed to re-imagining the beggar world in Caroline England. Nevertheless, Blake criticized Brome's approach to cant in *A Jovial Crew*, claiming that "nobody could have spoken like this; and Brome has not bothered to listen to low-class speakers himself" (1981, 95). Actually, Brome provided his characters with a linguistic identification as beggars mainly relying on a

[25] See Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor*, Chicago, Chicago UP, 1999.

[26] I will also consider the video clips of sequences of Brome's plays available at https://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/. Selected by the editors of the Richard Brome Online Edition and performed by professional actors from the RSC alumni list, these videos represent a unique opportunity to see Brome's works in performance and to hear how Brome's plays might sound.

[27] I will refer to the play as *The Witches of Lancashire*, its first title prior to its printing for Benjamin Fisher in 1634 as *The Late Lancashire Witches*.

[28] For further discussion on the use of canting language in early modern England see John L. McMullan, *The Canting Crew: London's Criminal Underworld 1550–1700*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers UP, 1984; Blank 1996, ch. 2.

literary vocabulary learned from books available at the time, such as Thomas Harman's *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors* (1567)[29], *The Bellman of London* (1608) and Dekker's *English Villanies* (1638). On the other hand, his cant works as a literary homage to the plays of his mentor Ben Jonson and John Fletcher, who experimented extensively with it in *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621) and in *Beggars' Bush* (1622). The playwright also coined new cant words, thus enriching the literary tradition of canting language and suggesting that, at the eve of the Civil War, Caroline society could "profitably expand along its lower end" (Stern 2014, 25).

Looking at the linguistic polyphony of the Caroline age (to borrow Mikhail Bakhtin's term)[30] through the prisms of multilingualism means analyzing the historical events which characterized this troublesome age from a wider perspective. The recourse to 'other' languages sheds light both on the construction of a national linguistic and cultural identity, and on the relationship and influence of other European countries on England. It also contributes to investigating the evolution of the polarity city-countryside and city-court, while criticizing and complimenting on the current political situation in England. One might claim that these foreign languages, taken as a whole, contributed to forging a new identity for England. Bakhtin's studies on prose fiction provide us with useful vocabulary to define the use of multilingualism in drama: the concept of dialogism and heteroglossia as multilingualism may be used to investigate the idea of 'Englishness'. Actually such multilingualism effectively reveals the peculiar mixture of languages that concurred to define the uniqueness of English national identity in the seventeenth century. The 'Englishness' of Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and the next generation can thus be understood in a wider international and multilingual context.

In the following chapters I explore how Brome adopted the device of multilingualism and to what end. His use becomes increasingly more subtle and complex as his career progresses: if at the beginning he incorporates a single foreign language into his plays, gradually he begins experimenting with more than one. Chapters 1 and 2 examine plays in which there is the prevalence of a single foreign language, respectively French and Latin. Chapter 1 deals with *The New Academy* and *The*

[29] Beggars' cant is first set out in detail in England in a special section of this work. See William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare*, Ithaca; London, Cornell UP, 1996, 37.

[30] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis; London, University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Demoiselle, both featuring French-speaking characters. Brome's treatment of this foreign language is peculiar since the plays depict two distinct moments in the relationship between England and France. Chapter 2 investigates the use of Latin in *The City Wit* and *The Queen and Concubine*. The analysis reveals that this 'dead' language is employed in entirely different contexts and with different aims: if in the former it stands for culture, education, court life, and seems to be "the *sine qua non* of an educated person" (Hale 1997, 2) who aims at climbing the social ladder, in the latter it is associated with religion and used by a country curate in a play set in Sicily.

In chapters 3 and 4 I delve into the combined use of two languages, which creates a double-voiced discourse. Chapter 3 explores *The Witches of Lancashire*[31] (Latin and Lancashire dialect) and *The Northern Lass* (Latin and Yorkshire dialect), where the different languages set up a contrast which is vital to the plays' dynamics. In *The Witches of Lancashire* the opposition is between Latin as symbol of order (both in legal and religious terms) and Lancashire dialect, associated with the disturbing presence of the witches; in *The Northern Lass*, instead, it is the one between legal language (Latin) and Yorkshire dialect which stands for a simple and honest life. Chapter 4 deals with *The Sparagus Garden* (Dutch and south-western dialect) and *The English Moor* (Norfolk dialect and an invented language supposedly spoken by the Moors). In both cases these foreign languages represent different faces of the same issue, thus allowing the playwright to offer his audience diverse foreign perspectives. In conclusion, what emerges from Brome's plays is not only the multifaceted and multilingual universe of Caroline London. We also discover the playwright's ability to give his characters a recognizable foreign voice, and to dramatize the contacts and interactions between foreigners and English people.

Multilingualism and the reception of foreigners are highly topical issues, owing to the massive wave of migrants and refugees in Europe and to the recent Brexit, the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. In an interview reported in *The Guardian*, the Director of the National Theatre, Rufus Norris, declared:

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31 A double-voiced discourse is particularly intriguing in a collaborative play such as this, written by Brome and Heywood, "writers different in most every respect but joined by complementary commitments to the stage's sociocultural function", in Heather Anne Hirshfeld,"*Collaborating across Generations: Thomas Heywood, Richard Brome, and the Production of The Late Lancashire Witches"*, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 339-374, 355.

> Art can have no boundaries – in spirit as well as in practice. [...] Our continued success depends on the free exchange of ideas, talent and creativity, and we remain committed to increasing our collaboration with friends and colleagues across the UK, Europe and around the world.[32]

In this moment the journey to the integration of foreigners and the development of a cosmopolitan England in the Caroline period may stand as an important memento, an imperfect but helpful "mirror up to nature" which may avert the risk of a new xenophobic wave and contribute to preserving multilingualism and multiculturalism.

[32] "Arts hit back at Brexit: 'I feel nothing but rage'", *The Guardian*, culture, 24/06/2016, available at https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/jun/24/arts-hit-back-at-brexit-i-feel-nothing-but-rage.

CHAPTER ONE

"THERE'S TOO MUCH FRENCH IN TOWN": *THE NEW ACADEMY* AND *THE DEMOISELLE*

The concern with France and the French has resurfaced at crucial moments in the history of the UK, and it has been promptly recorded by the theatre. French characters have often been among the most frequently represented on the English stage: beside Shakespeare's *Henry V* and *Henry VI*, French characters appear in plays by Marlowe, Chapman, and Jonson, and they are in the highest percentage in Brome's works. The 1630s actually saw a resurgence of interest and the flourishing of several plays featuring French characters: a dancing master in Shirley's *The Ball* (1632), Warbeck's French councillor Frion in Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* (1633), the French cook Kickshaw in Nabbes's *The Bride* (1638), and several other characters and situations in Brome's plays. Here we find a sharp photograph of London's population.

Nevertheless, I intend to draw a distinction between the actual number of French in England and the impact of their presence on the English stage. John Bulteel, Walloon pastor at Canterbury, calculated that the French church had 1,400 communicants in the mid-1630s.[1] Even the "more precise figures at our disposal cannot explain entirely why the French figured so prominently in the drama" of the age (Mayer 2008, 33). It is worth remembering that the 1630s coincided with "a perceptible cultural shift" (Atherton, Sanders 2013, 2) due to a highly discernible influence of the Queen on Caroline politics, after Buckingham's death.

Henrietta Maria's political stance was complex and articulated. We can assume that the Queen's ties were "more personal than national" (Britland 2006, 23): as Sharpe clarified, "[i]n the early 1630s [...] the queen's faction was not 'French' in any way that served the interests of Richelieu and Louis XIII" (1996, 175). Henrietta Maria sustained the

[1] See Bernard Cottret, *The Huguenots in England: Immigration and Settlement c. 1550-1700*, trans. by Peregrine Stevenson, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1991, for an investigation of religious refugees.

cause of her mother Marie de Médicis, who had been banished from France, and was seen, by the large majority of the population and major figures at court, as 'Spanish'. Therefore in the late 1630s the Queen became a supporter of a pro-Spanish foreign policy, which included a firm opposition to Scottish Presbyterians and support of anti-puritan ministers like Strafford (Smuts 2008, 36), and a more insistent Catholic proselytism at court, as if she bore the responsibility to promote the cause of Catholics in her adopted country.[2] Besides being the King's chief adviser and a fervent Catholic, Henrietta Maria was also a "connoisseur and patron of the fine and decorative arts" (Hibbard 2008, 115). She saw it as her duty to bring about the assimilation of French motifs, styles, and characters in English theatre.

Brome's plays, mostly written and staged in this decade, contribute to the shaping of Frenchness for the English; they evoke France and its citizens variously and depict the wide spectrum of English perception, from mistrust to admiration. They illustrate a growing French mania affecting the English, alongside a mounting English intolerance towards the country that was the object of their craze. In *The Sparagus Garden* France is the destination to where the young Samuel pretends to flee after having allegedly got Annabel pregnant, while Winloss in *The English Moor* was imprisoned for a year in Dunkirk. The French are often regarded suspiciously: in *The Weeding of Covent Garden* Brome sets parts of the play in an existing tavern without a licence (trading without the official sign), called Paris Tavern. Kept by the Frenchman Robert Brasseiur or Brewer between 1633 and 1643, the tavern was located at No. 14 Henrietta Street near Covent Garden, in an area with a fast-growing French group, an enclave with "controversial French links" in the heart of London (Steggle 2004, 51). In this location the puritanical Gabriel gets drunk and regarding the wine observes: "'Tis mighty heady, mighty heady, and truly I cannot but think that the over-much abuse of these outlandish liquors have bred so many errors in the Romish church" (*CG* 4.2.795). Brome's satire lies in the irony that Gabriel's fear of Papism is expressed in a place "associated with covert French and Catholic property interests in Covent Garden" (Leslie 2010, *CG* n875). In *The Sparagus Garden* France does not seem to be related to a sense of honour. The gentleman Gilbert asks for the price of the meal is going to eat in the Sparagus Garden:

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[2] See Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2005; Rebecca Bailey, *Staging the Old Faith*: *Queen Henrietta Maria and the Theatre of Caroline England*, *1625-1642*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2009.