# 'False Latin', Double Dutch: Foreign and Domestic in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday*

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This paper offers a discussion of linguistic diversity as a source of laughter in two early modern English comedies, Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. When read together, the two plays provide a case in point for the bonds between languages and perceived identities in early modern cultures. Indeed, in both texts particular verbal practices carry a potential for laughter that relates closely to the playwrights' dramatisation of tensions between a sense of the foreign and an assertive vernacular Englishness; but I want to suggest that the two comedies construe those tensions in revealingly different ways.

The plays are almost exactly contemporaneous – Shakespeare's comedy probably first performed in 1597 and first published the following year; Dekker's with a first performance also in the late 1590s and a Quarto publication in 1600. In broad terms, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* emerge from a moment in

European cultural and political history that proved crucial for the development of commonplace perceptions of national identities, a historical process that has obtained significant attention within imagology (or 'image studies'). Indeed, as pointed out by Joep Leerssen,

> [i]n the course of the late sixteenth century and the seventeenth century, a systematization took shape in European attitudes toward nationality, whereby character traits and psychological dispositions were distributed in a fixed division among various 'nations'.[1]

The ensuing perceptions became a standard, mostly unchallenged dimension of European cultures in their auto- and hetero-images for at least two centuries[2] – and this on the basis of a "binary relationship" through which "one nation's view of the character of another provides an insight into its own self-estimate as well"[3]. The historical rise of vernaculars was a key element in this delineation of a system of national representations, even when it occurred long before the claims of linguistic legitimation that two centuries later, in the age of Romanticism, were to mark dominant perceptions of national identity.

When viewed from the standpoint of the sceptical, anti-essentialist discourses on self and community that have conceptually prevailed in recent intellectual and political frameworks, those early modern developments carry a particular fascination – to the extent that they validate arguments for the constructed nature of national profiles. As described by Leerssen (in a more recent study than the essay quoted above), national

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1   Joep Leerssen, "The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey", *Poetics Today*, 21:2 (Summer 2000), pp. 267-92: p. 272.

2   Indeed, "[t]he informal, anecdotal belief in different national characters formed the unquestioned cognitive ambience of cultural criticism and reflection until the late eighteenth century" (Joep Leerssen, "Imagology: History and Method", in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey*, eds Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2007, pp. 17-32: p. 17).

3   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*, London-Toronto, Associated University Presses, 1992, p. 15.

images tended to confirm the normative assumptions of the culture that generated them, which proves decisive for an understanding of the significance of notions of national identity – including its linguistic manifestations – in early modern cultures:

> The default value of humans' contacts with different cultures seems to have been ethnocentric, in that anything that deviated from accustomed domestic patterns is 'Othered' as an oddity, an anomaly, a singularity. Such ethnocentric registrations of cultural difference have tended to stratify into a notion that, like persons, different nations each have their specific peculiarities and 'character'.[4]

Concomitantly and by necessity, national images are found to be relational in their structure – since "national characterizations take place in a polarity between self and Other"[5]. As argued below, the risibility and hence dramatic effectiveness of the verbal practices to be considered indeed find a defining and ever-confirmed principle in their relationality.

The rise of this interest in the construction of identities as relational processes roughly overlaps, in recent academic history, with the disciplinary delineation of translation studies, which involved a dominant focus on intercultural processes. Edwin Gentzler has stressed this point, by recollecting how "translation studies […] took the 'cultural turn'"[6] in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period that proved indeed foundational for this area of inquiry (as construed since); and the discipline then came of age pointedly by developing the claim that "the study of translation *is* the study of cultural interaction"[7]. This equation further boosted the case for translation, in the intellectual environment of the 1990s, by proving to be reversible, as in an often cited remark by Wolfgang Iser: "cross-cultural relations seem to be guided by a great many different intentions – all of which, however, appear to be modes of

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[4]  Leerssen, "Imagology", p. 17.

[5]  Leerssen, "The Rhetoric of National Character", p. 271.

[6]  Edwin Gentzler, "Foreword", in Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1998, pp. ix-xxii: p. xi.

[7]  Gentzler, p. ix.

translation […]. Thus translatability turns out to be the hallmark of any cross-cultural interchange"[8].

A conceptual framework grounded on these foundational arguments, instrumental as they have been both for translation and comparative studies, can prove critically productive for confronting the challenges posed by *Love's Labour's Lost*[9]. This comedy has enjoyed an uncertain reputation, both with readers and audiences, that has directly reflected the rich complexities of its language. The play's puns and 'tricks with words' have long been the object of studies that, in earlier stages of its reception, earned it such diagnoses as "a youthful debauch of the poet in word-plays"[10]. Indeed, an attraction to the play's verbal vitality has historically coexisted with dismissive pronouncements on its supposed pedantry, which, in the early nineteenth century, obtained the following from Hazlitt: "If we were to part with any of the author's comedies, it should be this"[11]. From the late twentieth century, however, there has been a marked recovery in the play's critical and theatrical favour, and this has centred precisely on its "verbal virtuosity"[12] or rather the extent to which, "[i]n our image-oriented era, *Love's Labour's Lost* refreshingly challenges our verbal skills", offering "the modern theatregoer" a gratification that will not require him/her to "understand every word or all the puns in this play"[13]. In sum, at a moment in history (ours) that has witnessed so many challenges to the notion that language can transparently appropriate and convey the real, verbal practices that another era

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[8]    Wolfgang Iser, "On Translatability: Variables of Interpretation", *The European English Messenger*, 4:1 (Spring 1995), pp. 30-38: p. 31.

[9]    The paragraphs below revisit and update some of the critical points made in my earlier and more extensive discussion of the play in "The Feast and the Scraps: Translating *Love's Labour's Lost* into Portuguese", in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars, London, Arden Shakespeare, 2004, rev. edition 2012, pp. 114-29.

[10]   Thomas R. Price, "Shakespeare's Word-Play and Puns: *Love's Labour's Lost*" (1889), in *Love's Labour's Lost: Critical Essays*, ed. Felicia Hardison Londré, New York-London, Routledge, 2001, pp. 71-76: p. 71.

[11]   William Hazlitt, *"The Round Table" and "Characters of Shakespear's Plays"*, ed. P. P. Howe, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, eds P. P. Howe, A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover, London-Toronto, Dent, 1930-1934, 21 vols, vol. IV [1930], p. 332.

[12]   William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. John Kerrigan, London, Penguin, 1982, p. 7.

[13]   Londré, ed., p. 4.

might have dismissed as empty verve are bound to appear as mere corroboration that language cannot but refer to itself; and this process of self-reference can be accepted and indeed cherished as a source of uncomplicated enjoyment.

A highly elaborate use of language is the play's key source of literary and theatrical enjoyment, operating at two culturally distinct but concomitant levels. On the one hand, *Love's Labour's Lost* draws on the legacy of the classics, central as it was to Renaissance literary culture, largely to offer a satirical view of its significance in education through the figure of the schoolmaster as pedant, a long-lived comic type. On the other, this comedy plays several European vernaculars against one another, a set of antagonisms that also involves the national stereotypes associated with the languages in question. Dialogues in English, which seize opportunities for laughter afforded by English language and culture, are thus deployed in the characterisation of royals and noblemen with French names, as they move about a nominal court of Navarre; while this aristocratic setting also hosts a Spanish knight who stems, within the dramatic fiction, from the battlefields – but probably also from Italian comedy, when one probes the lines of theatrical descent that *Love's Labour's Lost* explores.

Throughout the play, a perception that the foreign is inevitably risible proves fundamental for cultural and linguistic diversity to retain its confrontational capacity – or, in other terms, to activate that "binary relationship" through which "one nation's view of the character of another provides an insight into its own self-estimate as well"[14]. As suggested above, this process extends beyond the various vernaculars that make up the play's linguistic range, since the text is rife in Latinisms and a mock-learned, sometimes abstruse English lexicon of classical descent. This crucially defines Holofernes, the schoolmaster who ravenously attends the play's "great feast of languages" but is ultimately left with only "the scraps" (V.i.35-36), and the orotund Don Adriano de Armado, the Spanish braggart who boasts his way through life with "high-born words" (I.i.170)[15].

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[14]   Hoenselaars, p. 15.

[15]   All passages from the play will be quoted from the Arden Shakespeare Third Series edition, ed. H. R. Woudhuysen, 1998.

Armado indeed offers the play's earliest instances of a remote Latinate vocabulary punctuating the vernacular. Examples of this include his comment on the phrase "tender juvenal" as "a congruent epitheton" (I.ii.13-14)[16] for the young page Moth; or in his lexical choice, when referring to the tip given to Costard, the clown, of the resonant "remuneration" (III.i.128) – an occurrence that the dialogue then risibly explores. Additional opportunities for humour arise from an over-elaborate syntax that boasts classical erudition, as in some of Holofernes's postpositive constructions: "A soul feminine saluteth us" (IV.ii.78-79), says the schoolmaster on Jaquenetta's entry. This is compounded by the character's ostentatious Latin glosses, fundamental for the authority he claims, in several lines from Act IV, scene ii: "*sanguis*, in blood" (3-4), "on the face of *terra*, the soil, the land, the earth" (6-7), "to Luna, to the moon" (39).

It is with Armado, however, that the risible potential of linguistic difference converges with the dramatic power of cultural stereotypes. On the one hand, he embodies the 'proud' Spaniard, a stereotype that at the close of the sixteenth century was developing towards its later culmination in the 'black legend' of a nefarious Spanishness[17]. On the other, he stands for a rather indistinct cultural and linguistic southernness as contemplated from the playwright's northern European location. A case in point is provided by a lexical particularity in his reference to "my excrement, […] my *mustachio*" (V.i.96-97, my emphasis). The 'i' in its standard anglicized spelling (to be found in the 1623 First Folio edition) flags the word's derivation from Italian *mostacchio* or *mustachio*; against this, however, the single rather than double consonant (the latter, in the Italian form, indicates the hard 'c' or velar stop consonant [k]) hints at a pronunciation closer to Spanish *mostacho* (since the nearly homophonous Italian form *mostaccio* refers to a snout, rather than a moustache). To complicate matters further, the spelling "mustachio" in the 1598 Quarto edition may indicate a corrupt form of the French *moustache*.

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[16]    The form "epitheton", adopted in most modern editions, first appears in the 1632 Second Folio in lieu of the 1598 Quarto's "apethaton" and of the First Folio's "apathaton".

[17]    See Hoenselaars, p. 17.

Incidental though it may seem, 'mustachio' is one of a range of words in *Love's Labour's Lost* the origins of which highlight the uncertainties surrounding this character. Indeed, Armado boasts his Spanishness but has found his home in a French-speaking royal court, while he may also (through the dramatic lineage of the *miles gloriosus* or braggart soldier of Latin New Comedy, as reworked in the tradition of *commedia dell'arte*) embody one of Shakespeare's many debts to Italian culture. After all, as noted by Keir Elam, Italy is no less than "a source of sources, or a metasource for Shakespearean drama"[18], regularly representing a generic foreignness and the attractions of an intra-European exoticism.

Characterisation and lexis thus construe a rather motley southernness or Mediterraneanness throughout *Love's Labour's Lost*. Such traits could not contrast more starkly with the manner in which a London setting is played off against a nominal foreign presence and language in Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, the cultural geography of which is firmly centred on the North Sea. The play is a quasi-emblematic example of city comedy, a phrase that (as is well known) at base level refers to plots that find their location in London – vis-à-vis those comedies (prominent among which Shakespeare's) the plots of which are set in courtly or otherwise socially rarefied locations primarily associated with the Romance languages[19]. Against this, Dekker's comedy involves the City, a traditional craft (shoemaking) and a neighbourly, quasi-homebred foreignness in the form of Dutchmen – one of them a 'real' (within the dramatic fiction) but rather incidental Dutch sea

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18  A phrase employed in *"Vail your stomachs": Self-restraint in Fruitful Lombardy*, a lecture given at the *VII World Shakespeare Congress: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean*, Valencia, April 2001.

19  Robert Shaughnessy, to whose edition of the play all quotations below will refer, offers a concise reminder of this long-established perception by noting that "the social milieu" of Shakespeare's comedies "is primarily aristocratic rather than bourgeois, its geographical setting fabled or romantically foreign […] rather than localised, its general tenor rural and pastoral rather than civic" (*Four Renaissance Comedies*, ed. Robert Shaughnessy, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. xviii). For a relatively recent critical reassessment of the role of language in defining the sub-genre city comedy, with a special focus on the centrality of "the English vernacular" to "plays that regularly stage the city precisely as language or languages", see Heather Easterling, *Parsing the City: Jonson, Middleton, Dekker, and City Comedy's London as Language*, New York-London, Routledge, 2007, p. 1 and *passim*.

captain; the other a fake Dutchman, the disguise taken on by a young English nobleman, Lacy.

The main plot is relatively simple: Lacy, nephew to the Earl of Lincoln, and Rose, the Lord Mayor's daughter, are in love and mean to get married, but face the opposition of Lincoln and the Mayor, who separately find such social intermarriage detrimental to their interests. Lacy's uncle decides to dispatch him to the wars in France (the play is set roughly at the time of the final stretch of the Hundred Years' War). Lacy, enabled by a prior experience with 'the gentle craft' (as shoemaking is described), circumvents his uncle's decision and, disguised as a Dutch shoemaker, seeks and obtains employment in the shop of Simon Eyre – the name, indeed, of a historical Master Shoemaker who rose from the ranks of ordinary craftsmen to become Lord Mayor. The lovers manage to get married in secret and, immediately after, obtain royal support for their union, overcoming last-minute opposition from their relatives – their success coinciding with Eyre's rise to his new position, through which he replaces Rose's father.

Fundamentally for my argument, this love plot, and its parallel didactic tale of middle-class mercantile merit rewarded by upward social mobility, is enveloped and indeed aided by the Dutch connection, largely signified through language. The play found its source in the stories of shoemakers that Thomas Deloney had published as *The Gentle Craft* (1597). Dekker, himself probably of Dutch origin[20], duly noted that Deloney's narrative about Simon Eyre drew on mock versions of several foreign languages – that fascination with 'mixing languages' that made macaronics a prominent strand in early modern cultures of laughter[21] – but chose to reduce it to Dutch. Together with other features of the play, Dekker's use of Dutch matters less for the degree of its

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[20]   Lawrence Manley, "London and Urban Popular Culture", in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock and Abigail Shinn, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014, pp. 357-71: p. 369; Christopher Joby, *The Dutch Language in Britain (1550-1702): A Social History of the Use of Dutch in Early Modern Britain*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2015, pp. 316-17.

[21]   Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 111, 133-38.

'authenticity'[22] than for its dramatic effectiveness. This ranges from the element of wordplay in references to "the Netherlands" and "the Low Countries", which prompt Marjorie Rubright to claim that "to speak of things 'Dutch' in early modern English was almost always to traffic in double meaning"[23], to a broad acceptance that the urban space could thrive on cultural and linguistic mingling. At its most general, Dekker's use of the language and stereotypical traits of England's neighbours from across the North Sea shows him aware of the dramatic potential in the ambivalence that marked Anglo-Dutch perceptions:

> The Dutch occupied a particularly conflicted place in the English imagination throughout the period as both co-religionists and economic rivals. As fellow Protestants facing a common enemy in Catholic Spain, the Dutch might expect English sympathy but as maritime traders increasingly competing for the same markets, sporadic hostility would develop into outright enmity and warfare in the succeeding century.[24]

The socio-dramatic implications of the use of Dutch – or, rather, stage Dutch – come to the fore in sections of the dialogue that thrive on wordplay, arising from a risible rapport between foreign and vernacular. The mock foreignness of such passages is of a kind that, rather than creating remoteness and othering the characters, bridges the gap between same and other. Paradoxically, the 'foreign' here confirms the sturdiness of domestic values – since it turns out to be eminently recognisable, the intriguing quirkiness of a close relation, rather than the insurmountable, quasi-adversarial difference of an outright stranger. Dutch, a language from the same latitude as the play's setting, a language that arrives in England from just across the North Sea, proves ideal for this confirmation –

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[22]  As approached, for example, in Christopher Joby's discussion of Dekker's contacts, experience and (possibly) real-life dialogues as sources for his Dutch in this as in other plays (Joby, pp. 320-23).

[23]  Marjorie Rubright, *Doppelgänger Dilemmas: Anglo-Dutch Relations in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, p. 2.

[24]  Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock, "Popular Xenophobia", in Hadfield, Dimmock and Shinn, eds, pp. 207-20: p. 212.

as if the descent into shared Germanic, rather than Latinate, roots entailed a reassuring and entrenched sameness.

This is all the more striking because, in its general contours and implications, foreignness is far from celebrated, or even positively represented in the play[25]. One of the first occurrences of a phrase in another language in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* involves an obscene epithet for the French (the enemy, unsurprisingly), when a newly conscripted soldier is encouraged to "[f]or my sake, firk the *basa mon cues* [i.e. *baisez-mon-culs*]" (i.215-16); and later, when the same soldier returns wounded in his leg, the stereotypical connection between France and venereal disease prompts the remark: "The left leg is not well; 'twas a fair gift of God the infirmity took not hold a little higher, considering thou camest from France" (x.61-63). More broadly, an urge to travel and see the world becomes associated, in an early stretch of dialogue, with dissipation and profligate behaviour, when the Earl of Lincoln recalls that his nephew

>          requested
> To travel countries for experience.
> I furnished him with coin, bills of exchange,
> Letters of credit, men to wait on him;
> Solicited my friends in Italy
> Well to respect him. But, to see the end,
> Scant had he journeyed through half Germany
> But all his coin was spent, his men cast off,
> His bills embezzled. (i.19-27)

This edifying tale of a prodigal includes, however, redemption – which significantly came not from a patron's munificence but from the earnings afforded by humble work. No less tellingly, the

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[25] I differ, in this regard, from Marianne Montgomery when she claims that "*The Shoemaker's Holiday* acknowledges and even celebrates England's openness to linguistic and commercial influences from abroad" (Marianne Montgomery, "Speaking the Language, Knowing the Trade: Foreign Speech and Commercial Opportunity in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*", in *The Mysterious and the Foreign in Early Modern England*, eds Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox and Graham Roebuck, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2008, pp. 139-49: p. 140): as shown below, the treatment given to France and the French language, and the links between Italy, dissipation, and 'Romish' commodities, entail that cultural and linguistic foreignness is here markedly diverse in the representations it obtains.

redemptive environment is not that of Italy (Lacy's desired destination), but rather the northern, Germanic context of an honest craft, learned and practised in a city with a set of earnest historical and confessional associations:

> and my jolly coz,
> Ashamed to show his bankrupt presence here,
> Became a shoemaker in Wittenberg. (i.27-29)

This is the experience through which Lacy regenerates himself socially and economically, while learning the skills (a craft *and* a language) that allow him convincingly to adopt the disguise that will bring him success in his love pursuits. As pointed out by Marianne Montgomery with regard to the blurred relationship between Dutch and the German venue of Lacy's redemption, "the geographical identity of the Netherlands was in flux during the wars with Spain", and, linguistically, "the distinction between early modern German and Dutch would not be easy for Dekker's audience to hear"[26]. Dramatically, what matters is that being able to speak Dutch – or be perceived as speaking Dutch – allows Lacy to sound foreign while yet making himself understood. And to this one should add, from a perspective afforded by historical linguistics, that all the characters in the play are speaking variants of the same language, 'Low German'; as glossed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this includes all "those forms of German that are not High German; = PLATTDEUTSCH *n.* Also more widely: West Germanic dialects other than High German (including, e.g., English, Dutch, and Frisian)"[27].

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[26] Montgomery, p. 145.

[27] "Low German, *n.* and *adj.*", *OED* Online, https://www-oed-com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/Entry/291888?redirectedFrom=low+german (accessed on 21 September 2019). In her discussion of historical 'contact' between English, German and Dutch, Jennifer Hendriks ponders the terminological/conceptual complexities that envelop her topic, and favours the use of "the label *Low Dutch* […] to refer collectively to Flemish, Dutch, Frisian, and Low German" (Jennifer Hendriks, "English in Contact: German and Dutch", in *English Historical Linguistics: An International Handbook*, eds Alexander Bergs and Laurel J. Brinton, Berlin-Boston, Walter De Gruyter, 2012, 2 vols, vol. II, pp. 1659-70: p. 1661). Her discussion of a variety of scholarly sources also suggests that early modern conditions include the development of a previously non-existent differentiation, since "[f]or the Middle

Functionally, as regards Dekker's construction of his plot, Lacy's command of the language also facilitates this character's complicity with the Dutch sea captain whose cargo brings additional prosperity to Simon Eyre in his rise to presiding over the City:

> LACY
> *Godden day, mester; dis be de skipper dat heb skip van marchandise; de commodity ben good.*
> […]
> FIRK
> To him, master: O sweet, master! O sweet wares, prunes, almonds, sugar-candy, carrot roots, turnips! O brave fatting meat.
> (vii.113-21)

Lacy's stage Dutch thus mingles with and slides into English, generating a medium of blurred contours that seems just right for that concomitance of stage and commercial business that appears to have always fascinated Dekker[28]. This shared vernacular ensures an emplaced mercantile affluence – rather than the displacement and profligacy associated with languages thoroughly perceived and represented as alien. The ease with which that linguistic commuting happens prevents the foreign code from fully activating an oppositional nexus vis-à-vis the domestic, operating rather as a variant that domesticates the foreign.

Lacy's first appearance in disguise entails, at every level, a sense of the domestic and homely – even of the rustic. The stage direction describing Lacy's entrance "*like a Dutch shoemaker*" suggests (as argued in Eugene Giddens's notes to James Knowles's edition) that he would be wearing the garment known as a "great Dutch slop"[29], slops or baggy breeches operating as the exact – and dramatically relevant – opposite to an elegant streamlined foppishness, associated with French or Italian fashion; indeed, and as regards

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English period" it would be futile to try and "make the distinction between words from Low German dialects and English due to their close resemblance" (Hendriks, p. 1660).

[28]  Mark Netzloff, "Work", in Hadfield, Dimmock and Shinn, eds, pp. 163-77: p. 174.

[29]  Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, in *The Roaring Girl and Other City Comedies*, with an introduction by James Knowles, notes and glossary by Eugene Giddens, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 315.

the latter, much earlier in the play Rose refers to her "Romish gloves" (ii.54) as a sophisticated item, using a synonym for Italian that equated it with Catholicism – exacerbating a sense of the foreignness as alien on all fronts. In this light, it is fitting that Lacy should enter singing of peasants – literally, "boors" – and drunken frolics, explicitly bringing an uncouth boisterousness into close association with that reassuring sense of the vernacular which the play ultimately celebrates:

> *Enter Lacy singing.*
> LACY
> *Der was een bore van Gelderland,*
> *    Frolic si byen,*
> *He was als dronck he cold nyet stand,*
> *    Upsolce se byen,*
> *Tap eens de canneken,*
> *    Drincke, schone mannekin.*[30] (iv.35-40)

In its dramatic consequence, this instance of the other comfortably recognized as the same does not assist that satirical rejection which other forms and representations of foreignness might obtain. On the contrary, it prompts in one of Eyre's journeymen the wish to learn languages – one of the clearest manifestations, after all, of an interest in reaching out to elsewheres and communicating with others: "He's some uplandish workman; hire him, good master, that I may learn some gibble-gabble" (iv.42-44).

The particular difference that Lacy embodies is so much at home in the world of the City that it goes together with material success – rather than with the notions of waste and dissipation that otherwise foreignness would seem to conjure. Even more revealingly, a later passage suggests the erotic potential carried by such difference. Indeed, Eyre's wife admits to feeling aroused by news of her imminent upward mobility, in a passage that opens with her journeyman Firk citing Lacy's mock Dutch:

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[30]  "There was a boor from Gelderland / Merry they are / He was so drunk he could not stand / Drunk they all are / Fill up the little mug / Drink, fine little lad".

Firk

Yaw heb veale ge drunck[31], quoth 'a! […] But come, dame, I hope you'll chide us no more.

Wife

No, faith, Firk; no, perdie, Hodge; I do feel honour creep upon me, and which is more, a certain rising in my flesh. (vii.128-32)

As argued above, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* partake in an ambivalent construction of the foreign as a source of misgivings that inspire both fear and laughter. This construction prominently includes language, as offering primary evidence of a dual, perplexing mechanism: the primary resource for communication can also be a primary site of failed communication, or at best of misunderstanding – in some cases explored as dramatically creative misunderstanding. The resulting expressive possibilities are enhanced both by the generic characteristics of drama, and by defining conditions of the period in question.

The two plays process the tension between domestic and foreign, however, in starkly different ways. In Shakespeare's comedy, a sense of the English vernacular is variously mediated, since, within the dramatic fiction, the setting is aristocratic and foreign, and French is the language nominally spoken by the motley gallery of characters of this English play – punctuated by an incidental lexicon from other Romance languages. None of the characters in *Love's Labour's Lost* emerge as normative, since the playwright's handling of their risible traits, largely brought out through their use of language, keeps them (albeit to varying degrees) at a satirically managed emotional and judicative distance, down to a famously *deferred* happy ending. In Dekker's play, however, a vindication of the English urban, bourgeois and mercantile setting, and of the English language, is central to the comic structure in its development towards an unequivocal happy ending. This is achieved, though, through the construction of a partly fake foreignness, linguistically manifested as the stage Dutch spoken by an English character in disguise. This medium is framed as different enough for it to become an enabling foil for the Englishness of the host environment – and similar enough for it to

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[31]   "You have drunk too much".

collude with that Englishness in a sense of reassuring sameness, around shared Germanic roots.

While it is true that, in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, "Dekker […] causally *links* the comic and the commercial by representing the economic opportunities made possible by comic foreign speech"[32], foreignness is not celebrated per se, remaining plural in its dramatic and cultural processing. Indeed, Southern European cultures and the world of the Romance languages retain their value in the play as traditional satirical butts, and as enabling counterparts for the commonality into which the play's equivocal Dutchness is welcomed. Further, it would prove reductive (and critically unhelpful) to set *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* against each other as examples of the risible processing of difference respectively through courtly and popular cultures: after all, Lacy is an English nobleman, though happy enough to go Dutch and integrate a middle-class mercantile culture. Unequivocally, though, the two plays share a common origin and set of attractions by emerging from that formative moment in European history when cultures sought definition through the mutuality of their perceived identities – and their languages.

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[32]   Montgomery, p. 139.