

On Editorial Work; or, Some Baffling Words in William Haughton's

English-men for my Money

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From when I first picked up a scholarly critical edition of an early modern playtext, I always prided myself on taking the time out to read the text's introduction and textual paraphernalia – the annotations and collation line. Yet still I failed to register the pedantry, sleep-deprivation, frustration and energy that go into making (often small, yet) difficult decisions that, if the editor is good, the reader will only understand on a finalised and intellectual level: the edition as “end-product,” rather than “product-in-the-making.”

Consider, for example, the word “Siuill,” found in William Haughton's playtext *English-men for my Money*, written in 1598 and first printed in 1616. In the printer's alphabet, the medial “u” should be exchanged with “v.” This leaves me with “s/civill,” or “s/civill,” but the word's context (“we have sent unto your worship / sacke, siuill oyles, pepper, [and] Barbery sugar”¹) does not agree (“civil oils”?). A “sivil,” according to the *OED*, is also known as a “civet,” and seems to have something to do with cutting down trees. (Perhaps wisely, not even the *OED* has risked a definition: an online search simply comes up with “see quotes.”) After a bout of melancholic sighing, I decided to chance criticism of my research methodologies, and Google “siuill oyle/oil.” This led me to Project Gutenberg's impressive e-book collection; specifically, to Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics and Discoveries of the English Nation*, who, in his section on the “commodities of Spain,” writes that “Siuill oyle” is frequently shipped to England.² A rather lengthy study of Spain in a reproduction of the “Vniuerse Europe,” a map printed in 1583, identified “Siuill” with “Sevilla,” or Seville.³ A look through *Port Trade in Elizabethan London* (and thus a commute to the Bodleian) confirmed that Seville oil was, indeed, a frequently shipped-in item, and an expensive one at that.⁴ Given that “Barbary sugar” was another luxury commodity, I think I have – after more than a full day's work – identified, simply, that “Siuill” = “Seville.”

The two most baffling words that I wish to discuss are “superfluicall” and “cammileres.”⁵ Both are said by Frisco, the play's clown, and are therefore, probably, nonce words. (That is, etymologically sound but otherwise made-up words attributed to a particular character, and at a particular time, in order to emphasise their role in the play.) In *English-men*, a Bellman unwittingly identifies Frisco in front of characters that Frisco was hoping to dupe. After the Bellman apologies to Frisco, the latter insists that they should pass over such “superfluicall talk” (hereafter “modernised” to “superfluical”). Strangely, the text's past editors (Hazlitt and Baugh⁶) do not hazard a definition in their respective editions. Of the prefix “super-,” the *OED* gives “above, on top (of), beyond, beside, in addition,” which is only to be expected; “superfluical” itself,

however, is not in the *OED* or, other than under *English-men*, the comprehensive *Literature Online* (*LION*). “Superfluical” carries too much of the word “superfluous” to be an accident, and I am currently thinking that the ending (“-icial”) seems to imply “superficial.” The problem, however, is that while both words are contextually relevant (“superfluous” = over-abundant, “superficial” = surface-level), the words do not, to my mind, marry. Is it possible for the Bellman’s speech to be both unnecessarily detailed, and of only surface value? “Superfluical” does, therefore, seem to be a malapropism; yet there are not enough examples in the playtext to know if the misuse was deliberate, either on the part of Frisco or Haughton. The “malapropism” may even have been an error in the manuscript: perhaps one of the words (either by Haughton or a scribe) was written down, changed to the other word, but then poorly crossed out; consequently, the compositor mistakenly set an amalgamated word. But as (I think) the word stands, the two meanings are perfectly polarised, suggesting that the word was a decision, and not a mistake.

The second word that I wish to discuss is “cammileres.” The word is used by Frisco when he is in Paul’s middle walk, looking for a tutor for his Master’s three daughters. Frisco begins by talking about “Duke Humfrey” (who was fallaciously believed, at the time, to have been buried in St. Paul’s) and the poor people who were said to “dine” with him.⁷ Frisco calls these people a “brave sort of cammileres.”⁸ Again, the word does not appear in the *OED* or *LION* (except under *English-men*). Both Hazlitt and Baugh give the word as meaning “cavalier,”⁹ but this sense, to me, seems to not entirely fit: for a “cavalier” is a gentleman trained to arms; a courtly gentleman, a gallant. This *may* work – Frisco would be applying his usual irony – but it is doubtful that the double “m” would be confused with a “v” (/“u”) and, while the *OED* does cite numerous common spellings in the sixteenth century (“cauallere,” “cabbaleer,” “caueeleer,” “cavallier,” and (from the Spanish) “cavallero,” “cauilero,” “caualerio,” and “caverlerio”), “cammileres” is, even so, a far-out (and thus unlikely) spelling. It is possible that the word is an amalgamation: “camister” = a clergyman, minister; or it may be “cam” from the Celtic (meaning “crooke,” “bent,” “awry,” “wrong,” “false”). “Lere” (*OED*, *v.*) means “to teach.” Perhaps “camel” + “ers”? as (*OED*, *n.* 1. c. fig.) in allusion to Matthew xxiii. 24: anything large or difficult to “swallow” or do away with. “Cameller” is also spelt “camelier”, from the French, a cameleer, a camel-driver, and men who attend, feed, load, and unload camels. But what, I ask myself, have cameleers got to do with a group of London beggars (and audience members) who would have not likely known the garb of a cameleer?

I am currently still unsure. I do, therefore, conclude this note in something of an etymological quandary, having unfortunately not had anything like enough damascene moments, ecclesiastical, secular or otherwise.

Notes

- ¹ William Haughton, *English-men for my Money 1616*, ed. by W. W. Greg, TLN 505-06. The edition that I am preparing currently lacks line numbers; hence the use of Greg.
- ² Richard Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 2nd edn., 12 vol. (vol. 1), Glasgow, J. Maclehose and Sons, 1903, pagination not given.
- ³ Ashley and Miles Baynton-Williams, eds., “Vniuerse Europe maritime eiusq̄ nauigationibus descripto, 1583,” *New Worlds: Maps from the Age of Discovery*, London: Quercus, 2006. 40.
- ⁴ Brian Dietz, ed., *The Port and Trade of Early Elizabethan London: Documents*, vol. 8, [Leicester], London Record Society, 1972, as examples: 45-50.
- ⁵ *English-men*, ed. Greg, TLN 1684 and 909 respectively. (Quotations are out of order as I wish to discuss the most difficult word last.)
- ⁶ Hazlitt: William Haughton, “*English-men for my Money*,” *A Select Collection of Old English Plays, Originally Published by Robert Dodsley in the Year 1744*, ed. by William Carew Hazlitt, 4th edn., 15 vol., (vol. 10) 469-564, London, Reeves and Turner, 1875; Baugh: *William Haughton’s English-men for my Money*, ed. by Albert Croll Baugh, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1917 [published D.Phil. thesis].
- ⁷ *English-men*, ed. Greg, TLN 907-09.
- ⁸ *English-men*, ed. Greg, TLN 908-09.
- ⁹ “English-men,” ed. Hazlitt, 504; *English-men*, ed. Baugh, 224.

Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*

(Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 276. (paperback)

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It has often crossed my mind that academic “Introductions,” manifold and inevitably palimpsestic as they are, ought to be more properly re-branded as “Re-Introductions.” Not very catchy, I confess, but how else to signal the dialogic processes of scholarly refinement and betterment that each round of “Introductions” (supposedly) brings? *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, by Pericles Lewis, is an excellent case study in this regard. Although a fine and comprehensive volume in its own right, I couldn’t help but feel while reading it that Lewis’s study is as much a cultivation and synthesis of previous introductory accounts of modernism as it is a superbly inclusive and brief synopsis of the modernist terrain as interpreted by Lewis himself. Throughout the volume Lewis is engaged in an implicit and constructive conversation with his predecessors, one that affords a variety of stimulating readings of what can appear, at times, well-trodden territory.

Literary territory, that is, for this book is primarily a study of modernism as it appears in late-nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth century literature of the Anglo-Irish, North American, European, and Slavic traditions. In saying this, Lewis manages to include a wide range of references to developments in the plastic arts, painting, and music from the period, but he remains focused on the histories of modernist linguistic and structural experimentalism, the various strategies of avant-gardism contained and

excluded by modernism's key innovations, and the political and philosophical backstories to modernism's post-Enlightenment wellsprings. In addition, the book offers a welcome attention to the input of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, moving from Flaubert and Baudelaire to Wildean aestheticism to what Lewis himself identifies as the "Primitivists and Modernizers" of the Edwardian and Georgian artistic milieu. In a mere 250 pages of main text this is a considerable achievement.

Lewis chooses to anchor his chapters on genre to specific texts. The chapters on poetry and prose fiction, for instance, explore key generic issues (poetry: tradition, voice, *vers libre*, epic; prose: consciousness, time, narrative, fiction) in relation to the dominant artworks of their respective literary modes (Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Joyce's *Ulysses*). Lewis's chapter on theatrical and dramatic works draws out to Chekhov, Brecht, Ibsen, Pirandello, and Strindberg. Nevertheless, all of these foreground stories of literary works frequently draw back to include others, resulting in a broad, surprisingly comprehensive tapestry of modernism's kaleidoscopic networks of influence and inheritance. Balancing this out, there follows a chapter on "Literature and Politics," which discusses writers such as W. H. Auden and George Orwell who, in Lewis's words, "sought an art that would combine the aesthetic complexity of modernism with a more direct moral or political message" (211). (Of course, whether Orwell ought to be included in such a rubric, whose texts after *A Clergyman's Daughter* [1935] can hardly be called "modernist," remains open to debate.) To finish things off, Lewis discusses the late-modernist laughter of Beckett and succinctly demonstrates how any clear-cut division between modernism and its playful, postmodern progeny is a somewhat misrepresentative attitude.

Broadness is this book's strength; at times, its weakness. This is particularly true of Chapter 7, "Literature and Politics," in which Lewis makes a number of highly condensed and wrinkle-free observations that really should be left *wrinkled*. A good illustration is his claim that Wyndham Lewis, "the former vorticist, aligned himself with Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, praised Hitler (before his rise to power), and attacked Eliot and the Bloomsbury intellectuals in a new journal, *The Enemy* (1927-9) and in his novel *The Apes of God* (1930)" (230). There is no clear indication here of the ways in which Wyndham Lewis's politics were drastically self-reflexive and ambiguous during the late twenties, and even if one accepts the charge of fascist sympathy (itself problematic on the evidence of the Blackshirt character in *The Apes of God*), Lewis gives no indication here of Wyndham Lewis's development away from such sympathy in his later writing (a standard insight of the specialized Lewisian scholarship these days).

However, despite some local inaccuracies, the whole amounts to probably the best introduction to modernism available on the market today. Highly recommended.