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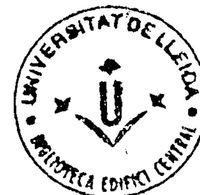
MANY STRANDS FROM DIFFERENT LOOMS:

ECLECTICISM AND CONTRADICTION IN THE WORKS OF

RICHARD MULCASTER



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Many Strands from Different Looms:

Eclecticism and Contradiction in the Works of Richard Mulcaster

Tesi de doctorat, dirigida per la Doctora Isabel Verdaguer y presentada per Maria O' Neill

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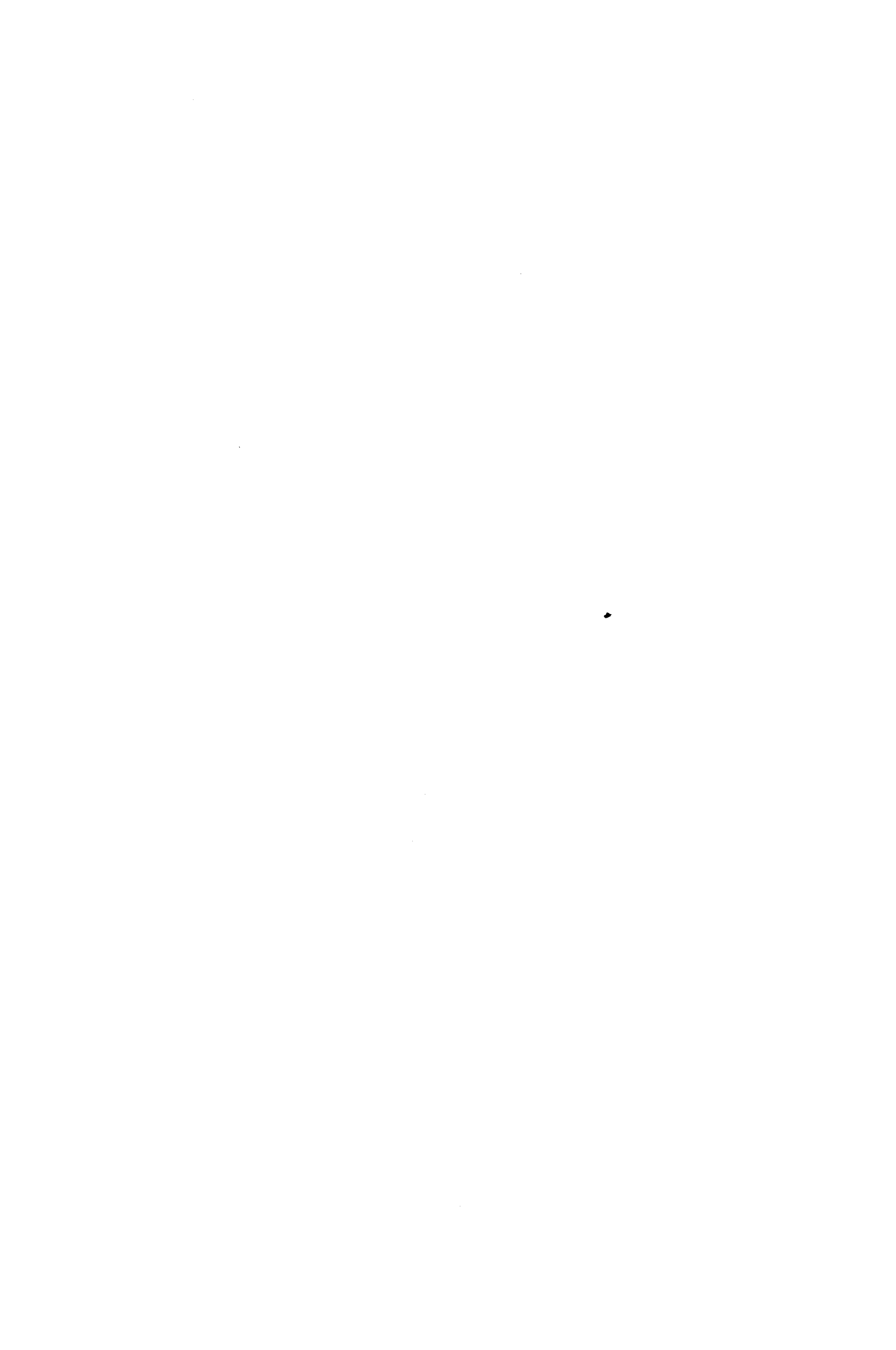

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The River

In The First Part of the Elementarie,[1] Richard Mulcaster uses the image of a river to represent the growth and development of language which he sees as the delicate synchronisation of tradition and change, a choreography of external and internal forces. The placing of this image towards the end of The Elementarie has a singular importance as it not only synthesizes the author's observations on language but is also a reflection on his world view.

The choice of image represents a veiled challenge from a closet revolutionary. The river had traditionally been an expression of loss, of degradation and corruption. Francis Bacon (1605), discussing the transmission of knowledge uses the river image in its negative sense. William Cholmeley describes the continual drain of English resources as a river flowing to the sea (1553). Machiavelli makes an analogy between the inexorable force of fate and a raging river. It became a rendering of the old conception of time as a descent from the age of gold to that of base metal, moving from the pure fountainhead towards defilement and corruption. From a linguistic point of view, Latin and Greek and Hebrew were placed at the source, and through contact with other languages of lesser pedigree had become corrupt and spawned, like Spencer's dragon, misshapen offspring - the vernaculars. Mulcaster here anticipates what Bacon would so assertively preach: that this is the

[1] All references to The Elementarie are from E.T. Campagnac's 1925 edition.

age of gold and not that of the ancients, this is the age of accumulated knowledge and not the inverse. Like Bacon, Mulcaster challenges the world view which was convinced of a gradual and inevitable slide into decay.

This is the philosophy behind his evaluation of language in time. The force and vitality, the diversity and variety found in language in the Elizabethan period is represented by the river in full flood. No banks, he maintains, can confine it; it has a life of its own. The dynamic nature of the living vernaculars tends at times to excess, carries like the flood-waters much that will sink to the bottom and be abandoned. These moments are, however, like seasonal inundations. When the waters retreat they leave a changed landscape and a new point of equilibrium is established. Language he implies has an internal control mechanism which sifts out the nuggets of gold from the gravel.

The river image also allows Mulcaster to express his opinion about the inadequacy of cast-iron rules. He rejects the inflexible norms that men try to impose on a living body continually in movement as, "staies must bend like bulrushes"(181). Like the best built dams and canalisations, the "staies" will, in the process of time be washed away. There are no definitive, permanent structures and neither the ramparts of rules can remain impregnable nor the whipcord of norms beat the language into submission.

The circumscribed scope of man's successful intervention in the course of a language's and indeed a society's development is dramatised here. It is a more

realistic attitude which typifies the later stages of humanism, when the initial heady optimism about the possibilities of man were mitigated by the bitter experience of a century of experiment and the raw edges of Reformation disputes. Mulcaster states that man can, but only temporarily shore up the river's progress, thus allowing him a greatly reduced role. Language is synchronically determinable but diachronically determined.

Through the image of the river, Mulcaster professes belief in linear progress, seen as part of the larger cycle of circular progress. The river, like language is a product of evolution and this analogy underlines the necessity of taking historical development (which Mulcaster calls custom) into account in order to understand the nature of present language. In order to understand the product, the process must also be studied. Mulcaster thus expresses the intimate relation between synchronic and diachronic forces.

Implicit in the image of the flood is the Baconian principle that through observation and the use of the intellect man can see beyond the apparently irrational to discern the underlying laws that govern all phenomena. Just as the flood responds to the laws of physics and meteorology, language and other social institutions can be explained in rational terms. The onus is on man to seek out the logic through observation, not to reject language's idiosyncrasies merely because they are not understood. Language is a system with its own - however dimly glimpsed - organisation, its own rules and a life-force which resists the imposition of any individual: "No vessel can hold such a liquor" (181). Mulcaster's treatise on

spelling constantly claims to go with the flow, to follow, not force. He advocates plasticity and flexibility. His aim is not to build dams and reservoirs but to neaten the edges, to trim the banks, a seemingly futile, seasonal work of limited scope, but necessary as an implantation of art. No hydraulic bulldozers, nothing but the secateurs in the hand of the artist.

Here, then, in this analogy we find the key terms of Mulcaster's ideas on language; the perception of its historical development as a meandering course, language like the river at the centre, shaping human society, language as a vibrant, self-regulating system, and linguistic change as progress. He propounds a dynamic vision of language in the throes of change but enriched by it, being fashioned in the national image and forming part of it, being etched by man and also moulding him, at once independent and dependent, forged by human consciousness and social needs yet maintaining an autonomy impervious to human meddling. He captures in the river image a sense of the grandeur of language, a respect for its hidden logic and its internally generated order.

1.1 Aims and Objectives: The Road Taken

for doubting you know, bringeth the truth to light

(Thomas Starkey, 1534: 41)

It is Mulcaster's theory of language[2] which led to his being called a "quiet, meticulous, decorous, brilliant revolutionary "(Satterthwaite, 1972: 19). He appears in the guise of a bridge between the strictly insular and the European, portrayed as a bold adventurer marking out new terrain while his compatriots nestled warmly in the arms of classical conservatism. But, rather than signalling a break with the past, Mulcaster represents transition, straddling the closing days of English humanism and the dawn of Baconian philosophy, the dying embers of the medieval world view and the first flickers of the modern, Continental Europe and island England. He articulated, gave practical expression to, and modified ideas that had been in free circulation on the continental network since the fourteenth century, and paradoxically, to concepts which would not appear in writing on the public stage until the seventeenth century.

In this sense he is typical of the age of the Renaissance which was more an evolution than a revolution. The humanists inherited medieval concepts and adapted them to their changing circumstances. The revolutionary and highly self-conscious rhetoric of the Renaissance midwives of the new learning obscures the fact that there was no sudden sharp break with the medieval legacy. There was no rebirth as such but an extension and logical development of trends and theories that

[2] The term "theory of language" must be understood, not in the sense of a consciously wrought body of systematic precepts. I have adopted it as the most convenient to refer to what are observations, attitudes and thoughts on linguistic matters.

had existed in a less systematised form throughout the Middle Ages. The humanists were interested in marking out new territory and thus stressed their differences from the immediate past. Renaissance texts from all spheres of learning bear witness to the medieval foundations of the new philosophy.

Scholars themselves have tended to fashion and refashion the Renaissance in different ways. Tillyard (1943) presents a monolithic and deceptively cosy view of the mind set of the time where each element interlocks neatly. The chain of being and the correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm reinforce the idea of order and degree. Shuger finds this vision too monological and, in contrast, highlights the "complex and divergent assumptions, the plurality of voices and the corresponding habits of thought that riddle the period" (1990: 1 - 2). She identifies two habits of thought or interpretative categories: the participatory and the analytic. The participatory consciousness represents the absolutist standpoint, the mind at one with the universe while the analytic appeals to observation and the use of reason in order to bridge the gap between the self and the material world. Both world views coexisted and were not mutually exclusive. Although Shuger is primarily concerned with applying these categories to religious discourse, they can successfully be applied in more general terms. Mulcaster wavers between the two positions. He professes the necessity of observation and appeals to facts on the one hand while at the same time, is reluctant to abandon the safer shores of participatory consciousness.

dictated by the critical eye on the other. Dedications to patrons often make the dispersal of responsibility explicit by publicizing requests for protection and support and establishing a dynamic of shared responsibility. Ensuring approval from authority involved framing their proposals in such a way as to increase the standing of the patron. A corollary to this was the abject self-debasement that accompanied it. Mulcaster apologises for being a "simple teacher" and Bullokar pays tribute to his predecessors, stating that he is of simpler calling, knowledge and experience and repeatedly claims that his predecessors efforts to reform orthography were "unknown to me".

All of them imply a serious meditation of the question, that they are not jumping on the bandwagon by mentioning the amount of time that has lapsed between writing and printing. Hart states: "I have stayed from publishing hereof many yeares" (3) and Bullokar implies that his delaying was due to a desire to be well documented and to improve on the efforts of the misguided Hart and Smith. Something of the power of print is to be intuited from the fact that Mulcaster imputed his going to print to friends' encouragement. This has a double force, providing him with an anonymous source of support and a cautionary measure to deflect charges of personal ambition.

The preface to Positions, addressed to Elizabeth I demonstrates how the perfection of a strategy, which, under the apparent guise of Uriah Heap-type forelock tugging astutely places the ball in the royal forecourt. It begins with the conventional appeal to the common good, beseeching the favour of the Queen, and is larded with

equally conventional false modesty. It is modelled on the petition made by the lover to his lady in the courtly love fashion and the tone is surprisingly personal He pleads that she "bestow upon me the favourable smile of your good liking" (v). References to the body abound; he commends his work into her "sacred hands" and demands that her "fair countenance" look with favour upon it. Mulcaster exploited the very myth that Elizabeth had fanned - that of the virgin queen, the potential or virtual bride of the nation, the mistress who invited amorous admiration but prohibited desire.

The preface goes on to underline the fact that the honour due to the author will be reflected on the Queen, thus reinforcing the fact that it is not only a question of condescension but her duty as head of the body politic to implement his proposals, and it: "pretendeth great honour to your Maiesties person, besides the profit" (vij). Finally, he appeals to the precedent set by her father Henry VIII in the adoption of a standard Latin grammar throughout the nation thereby marking her off from past generations while simultaneously placing her within a tradition. He signs off: "Your Maiesties most humble and obedient subiect" (viij), a conventional closure but one which restates his position as dependent and prostrate before her benevolence.

The sedately personal air of the dedicatory passage to his first work is abruptly abandoned in The Elementarie which was dedicated not to the Queen but to her - in politically correct language - confidant, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. The tone here falls into the conventional mode of flattery, pandering to his patron's

sense of importance. He butters Dudly up by establishing an analogy between his position as second in command and the fact that he is being offered Mulcaster's second work. Sensitive to Dudley's unofficial role, the author develops the other image of the queen - that of the virgin -mother. Echoing her own words in a speech to the Commons in 1563: "yet shall yu never have a more natural mother than I mean to be unto you all" (qtd. in Greenblatt, 1980: 168), the Queen, is suitably referred to as a "parent", "my surest protection".

Mulcaster identifies his aims with those of Leicester and compares him with other enlightened leaders; counsellors, orators and conquerors who have backed initiatives for expanded literacy. Furthermore, he promises him "perpetual honour" and "everlasting memory". Mulcaster's ambition intrudes in the references he makes to his desire for recognition and the fear that "my credite were in danger".

The second strategy used by the spelling reformers is to highlight their "good will" and simultaneously denounce the ignorance of those who opposed such reforms. Hart terms opposition as "foly and madnesses", and believes that "whosoever shal speake or write for the amendment of anye whatsoever their customs, he shal be of the most part frowned at" (Scolar Press, 1969: 3). Bullokar entitles his prologue, "Bullokar to his Countrie" and justifies his endeavour in the tenth chapter in the following terms: "the welth and strength of our country, is cheefly maintained by good letters" (Danielsson, 1966: 40). Hart casts his vision further afield and claims to be working for the "good for posterity" (Scolar Press, 1969: 3). Mulcaster joins in the self congratulatory chorus with the explicit statement: "I am bond to my

cuntrie, and bound to hir people" (291). In the Preface to The Elementarie he commends his efforts asserting that: "none of anie sort can shew more good will". He claims to have put his reputation on the line to help both "the trade which is used in teaching & to help the trade of teaching"(256). The scope of his work is none other than to "assist my countrie in both trew religion, and politik rule" and promote concord, peace and profit. As Porter observes:

> It was in the nature of popularising literature that it aimed to fuse the interests of the supplier and consumer alike. The author would express the hope that his labours would benefit the commonwealth, promote industry, activity, population, good order, public spirit, patriotism and so forth (1992: 6).

Indeed, they tread the thin line between the idealist and the mercenary, attempting to shove forth love of lucre and fame in the guise of the social good and altruism. One cannot read these passages without being assailed by the niggling doubt that there is a more than acceptable dose of tongue in cheek. What Porter states in his analysis of the popularisers of medical knowledge also holds true for those who launched themselves into print: "Their undertaking bore a somewhat transgressive, equivocal air: they served as go-betweens, linking élite and people, neither fish, flesh, nor fowl" (1992: 8).

The third strategy involves the presentation of their labour as analogous to that of the doctor who is forced to apply drastic and painful measures in order to achieve the health of the body as a whole. This manifests itself at the structural level as

well as that of expression. Tracts open with an examination of the symptoms, followed by a diagnosis of the ailment afflicting the organism. The root causes are identified and thereupon, a remedy prescribed. The curing or healing of the disease can take two routes - medicinal or surgical. Some make the analogy explicit as does Starkey who identifies each of the chief social ills such as under population and the excess of yeomen, a top-heavy society, to consumption and dropsy respectively (1948: 81). Hart dons the surgeon's garb and aims to amputate the superfluous elements in order to restore a sense of "due proportion".

Although Mulcaster does not thoroughly exploit the literary possibilities of the analogy to the same extent as Hart does, he too expresses the hope that the defects evident in the training of children will be "healed" through the measures he proposes in Positions. However, while appropriating the imagery of disease and ill health there, he explicitly refuses to follow the standard format of listing the defects. He does, however, apply the imagery in a close analogy with Starkey when discussing the dangers to society which allowing "this flocking multitude which will needes to schoole" (145) could entail and appeals for a balance between those allowed into further education and the needs of society: "And in a body politike if, the like proportion be not kept in all partes, the like disturbance wil crepe thorough out all partes" (135). Just as Starkey had developed at length, he states that "superfluitie and residence bring sickenes to the body"(136). Unlike Starkey, however, he would not bring in legislation to regulate the situation as he sees the system as self-regulating. The current situation he maintains, is the aftermath of the expulsion of the "other" religion which was, "a harbour for all men to ride in"

(148). In order to advance true learning the new state must dispense with the multitude and impose a system of selection.

Starkey had identified superfluity and idleness as the two main obstacles to achieving a true and perfect commonweal. The landed classes and the yeomanry impeded the efficient functioning of the state because of their lack of formation and the shirking of the role of leadership assigned to them. This universal principle of utility and public service for the advancement of the common cause was transposed to the evaluation of language. Superfluity was a symptom of lack of due proportion and thus ill health, whether in the physical, social or literate bodies. Ascham applies it to translation, advising his scholars to "wede out that that is superfluous, and idle" (Mayor, 1967: 128).

Held up to scrutiny, the alphabet could be criticised on similar terms. Definitions of the deviant letters range from the comic to the vituperative. Smith labelled <c> " a monster of a letter", (qtd in Jones, 1952: 147). Baret states that if "<c> were a proper letter" it would be uniformly pronounced. He concludes that it is "no letter at all", because it usurped the functions of <s> and <k> and was like the upwardly mobile social classes who occupied a position neither fitting nor assigned to it.

The letter < e > was utterly reviled as a parasite, a drone and the bane of English spelling practice. It was rejected by Smith on the grounds that a letter, when it represents no sound is abused. Baret refuses to trouble himself with its various pronunciations, labelling it "idle" and "dumme". Coote calls it "barber" and,

although Hart is less prolific in his name-calling, he can find no justification for its use as a diacritic. The most used epithet found with regard to the letter <e>, is "idle" and this is the characteristic it shares with the non-productive social classes who do not pull their weight.

This view is challenged by Mulcaster who draws the battle lines, ideologically and linguistically, widening the gap between himself and his contemporaries. Referring again to social realities, he inverts the analogy, seeing the letter not as a drone in the hive but rather the "chefe governour" of the letters and "no usurper". The uses to which the letter is put exemplifies his basic thesis and its wonderful capacity to serve in many places is extolled. It is a "letter of marvellous use, recommended to us speciallie above anie letter" (123). He proceeds to justify its existence with regard to his seven precepts and identifies its functions as three: qualifying, passant and silent. Within his scheme, it epitomises one of the chief virtues of the English spelling system - its capacity for reinvention and its multi-functional role, the "daliance with the letter" (286) which, far from being a defect, formed part of the character of the English language. Mulcaster accepts that one letter can serve many functions without degrading itself and his celebration of it brings the confrontation with his contemporaries to its highest pitch.

Littered throughout the tracts and treatises on public affairs, certain staple terms and concepts are regularly invoked, worked and reworked. These provide a key not only to the habits of thought of the age but can also be taken as an indicator of how enmeshed the two issues were and how they shaped their arguments from a

common pool of resources. One of the most commonly bandied about words is the adjective "true". It is used, both as the antonym of false and in the sense of originary or ideal. Political commentators strive to establish a "very and true common weal" where all aspects are "most perfit and flourishing" (Burton, 1948. 65). This ideal is dismissed by Lupset as "a dream and vain imagination" (40) which could not be brought about by "good order and the passing of good laws" (59). Ascham believes that the path leading to the perfect common weal lies in cultivating a sense of personal responsibility and not so much "good common lawes for the hole Realm" (1967: 41).

Underpinning definitions of just what this consists of is the central issue of order and proportion. "True writing", as the ideal sought by Hart and Bullokar refers to that which is transparent, maintaining a one to one equivalence between sound and letter. In Peter Bales' Writing Schoolemaster (1590), "true orthographie" designates the ideal fit between spoken and written language and he would make spelling "true" by recasting it in the Latin mould. For Bullokar "true" writing was a more ambitious and frustrating ideal, seeking to combine etymology and phonemic principles: "in true Ortography, both the eye, the voyce and the eare consent most perfectly" (Danielsson, 1966: Preface, No. pag). Coote's spelling book promises to teach how to "write truly the true orthography of any word truly pronounced".

Mulcaster avoids the term and, in so doing questions the premises on which "true" writing or spelling is based. He speaks not of "true" but of "right writing" and his choice of words affords a glimpse at the difference between him and the phonemic

reformers. The latter's aim was to devise an alphabet which would endure by returning to the originary moment before the abuse of letters had crept in, before social, cultural and political events had infected or corrupted writing. This model had no sense of historical momentum and is based on absolute and unchanging values.

"Right writing" on the other hand does not appeal to the absolute and the generalised but fixes the concept within its historical present, allowing considerable leeway for the ambiguity and fluctuations characteristic of language. "Right" is a relative term, contingent on the historical moment in which it is used. It allows the word to carry its historical baggage as evolved over time and it is this necessity which makes Mulcaster's spelling reforms so conservative and moderate. The word weaves a web around itself and one to one equivalences distort its meaning and attempt to fix what is forever in movement. Moreover, the pun on "right" and "write" which is exploited relentlessly throughout The Elementarie, is a subtle attack on the Achilles heel of the strictly phonemic approach. Their approach to homophones was riddled with inconsistencies, often forcing them to compromise and move from the strictly phonemic standpoint.

"Perfect" is used in much the same sense as "true". Starkey's dialogue has Pole and Lupset debate the strategy to attain a "most perfit state" (1948: 73), Elyot and Fortesque call up the vision of the "true and perfit" social, economic and judiciary order while Latin is frequently held up as a model for the future, perfect spelling system. Bullokar over-indulges in the use of the adjective and its derivations which

are liberally sprinkled throughout A Short Introduction or Guiding (1580 -1581); the title of the third chapter repeats the word three times and it appears six times in the fifty-five lines of chapter one. Arthur Golding's dedicatory poem in The Alvearie calls for sound orthography in order to "restore perfect order". Order was the altar at which Tudor society worshipped, because there the workings of man's rationality became patent.

Reformers in all spheres were embroiled in a dilemma concerning their presentation to the public. Their proposals had to be deodorised in order not to give off a whiff of rebellion or sedition. While bolstering up the reigning order, they were in fact striking sledgehammer-like blows at its very roots. Hart's rebellious/conservative stance provides a clear example of the quandary in which all reformers were caught. He attempts to weed the commonwealth of abuses, states that he will write the King's English by changing the unchanging and transcendent reason of royal rule. Although offered in the service of state maintenance, it recasts the alphabet on which the state stands. He aimed to rewrite the language in what Goldberg terms: "ways that violated hierarchies of power maintained by the privileged hand and by the vagaries of the English spelling system" (1990: 207). Mulcaster recognised the game in which Hart had perhaps unwittingly involved himself, by branding radical spelling reformers as revolutionaries and a threat to the stability of the state. This accusation is made first on academic grounds: by making sound the basis of spelling they were opening the doors to anarchy. Mulcaster drives this relentlessly home by his continued pun on "sound". Sound government, that is, one where sound as a

physical entity claims dominance, cannot make for sound (stable) government. Sound therefore becomes unsound.

There are other reasons for the vehemence of Mulcaster's opposition to the reformed spelling and it is one which can account for the high pitched tone of the debate everywhere. This is located in the social consequences of a literacy which would empower spheres which needed to be kept in place. In Mulcaster's view, literacy was the privilege of the few and should only be thrown open to a select section of society. This view was typical of the conservative branch of spelling reformers in both England and France. Peletier Du Mans one of Meigret's most vociferous rivals, defines the difference between speech and writing along the lines that the former is the property of many while writing is a hallowed enclave occupied by and for a mere few and Des Autelz defends the same position, stating that speech has been corrupted by the masses who are "des idiots et indoctes" (Citton, 1989: 48).

Mulcaster was unavowedly elitist, maintaining that etymologically justified letters conferred distinction on the writer, granting him a status above the masses. This conception remained and was explicitly expressed in the philosophy of the Académie Française as late as 1649: " La Compagnie déclare qu'elle désire suivre l'ancienne orthographe qui distingue les gens de lettres d'avec les ignorans et les simples femmes..." (Citton, 1989: 83). Notwithstanding, he too became entangled in the skeins of the dilemma because his own reforms, like those of Hart, challenge much more than spelling. Linguistically he was a liberal, advocating flexibility and

tolerance. Politically, the colour of his coat was less clear. He apparently defends the traditional and conservative, but his affiliation cannot go unchallenged.

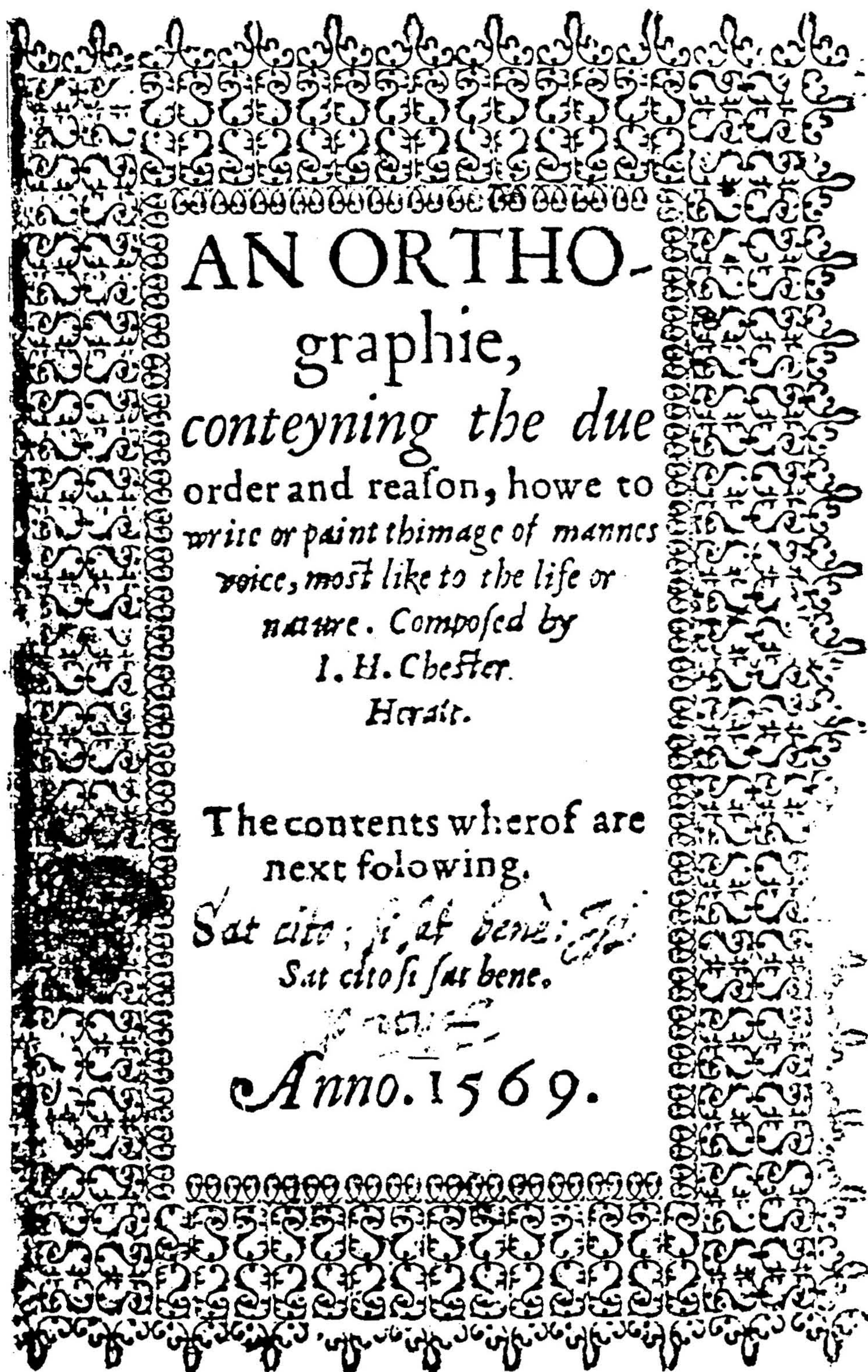
4.4 Appeals to Authority

Hart, Bullokar, Mulcaster and Baret make, with varying degrees of directness an appeal to the monarch (or a higher authority) to intervene in the question of true or right writing. Hart states that a reformed system cannot be imposed unless there is "excelling authoritie" - whether he is appealing to his own or another is not specified. Bullokar expresses his hope that the Magistrate will intervene on his behalf and also refers in passing to some kind of official recognition although, like Hart is oblique in his reference: "through the good hope that I have in the Magistrate" (Turner, 1970: n.p.). Baret makes by far the most direct appeal to royal prerogative to take steps to regulate spelling practises: "for it is best to hold us to our accustomed usages, untill authoritie shall move, and decide things to the contrary." (1580). Apart from these specific references to temporal authority, there is, of course, the effort to enlist God on their side as the ultimate dispenser of linguistic justice. Bullokar's missionary zeal pits his efforts against the "Divell hinself as enemy of truth" and Hart stresses that his proposals may be made "without offence to God or any reasonable man" (Scolar Press, 1969: 6).

Mulcaster states that his decision to enter into print is merely part of his civic duty: "For I do but that, which is set free to all, to utter in publike a private conceit (1888: 2). He appeals to the authority of the monarch in matters of educational reform, urging her to "reduce the professours of learning" and "to appoint books for learning"(264) but in matters of spelling appeals to no authority, temporal or divine, other than that of custom whose imponderable weight will deliver the

verdict. Having fashioned his reforms on custom he is self- sufficient and confident that his proposal is "such as will bear it self out & my pacience such, as can abide time till either other men se me & allow if I deserve, or my self se my self, and amend mine own misse" (182). In Mulcaster's view, spelling reform lay beyond the scope of any political institution and was exempt from legislation, being determined by the history of letters which had taken on a life independent of their users. This does not prevent him from appealing to authority as a sponsor of his reforms.

It can be seen from these examples that spelling reform has always planted its bulky form at the doors of political issues, because rewriting a language involves rewriting its past. Letters compile their own curriculum, run a course which outstrips sound and their putative relation to it. Most attempts at spelling reform hold up as a model an idyllic primitive origin which must be regained in order to perfect spelling practice. This origin was more often than not, that of the perfect harmony between sounds and letters, a state of grace which never existed, or only existed in historical fantasy. Whatever his desires, man is intimately aware of the fact that letters can never be stabilized. Writing is humanisation but as perfect humanisation never exists, neither does a perfect code of writing. Mulcaster recognised that he was working not with absolute ideals but with a world plagued with ambiguities and half measures. His judgement of his plan to reform elementary education holds equally true of the philosophy he adopted in areas of language. His aim was to be guided by: "the mediocritie which furnisheth out this world, and not to that excellencie, which is fashioned for an other" (1888: 15).



AN ORTHO-
graphie,
conteyning the due
order and reaſon, howe to
write or paint thimage of mannes
voice, moſt like to the life or
nature. Compoſed by
I. H. Cheſter
Heralt.

The contents wherof are
next folowing.

Sat cito; si sat bene:
Sat cito si ſat bene.

Anno. 1569.

Fig. 5 Title page An Orthographie, 1569. Scolar Press, 1969.

4.5 Hart's Imagery : The Body Politic

> to cut away the branches of sedition ... his highness intendeth to pull away the root. He seeth it not possible to cure this sore, which indeed Plato calleth the greatest sickness, that can come to a commonwealth, except he search out, both where it ariseth, and what thing most nourisheth it, and then do as physicians are wont, which oft times lay not their medicines to the part, that is diseased, but to that rather, fro whence the disease first came, and is like to come still, unless it be there stopped.
>
> Richard Morison, A Remedy for Sedition (1536) sig.D2 v[4]

The imagery of cleansing used above, stated in terms of both gardening and medicine is also found among the spelling reformers. Hart plans to rid the alphabet of seditious members while Mulcaster hopes to cut back the overexuberant growth. Language from the semantic field of cutting defines the scope each of their reforms; Hart would amputate while Mulcaster would merely trim back.

Closely allied to this was the imagery of disease, used to classify the lack of synchronisation between parts. The body politic analogy, as Hale (1971) has pointed out, served primarily to stress the unity which permeates the whole body in a healthy state and to reinforce the essentially conservative, hierarchically based concept of commonweal. Bodies natural and politic are composed of parts which

[4] Quotation taken from material supplied at a plenary lecture, "Sedition in John Bale's King Johan", given by Dr. Dermot Cavanagh at The Tudor Symposium, Newcastle, April 16, 1998.

are in a certain structural and functional relationship to each other. Starkey, for example, identifies each of the ills of the state with its corresponding human disease. Pestilence, therefore, is the result of the want of agreement and lack of proportion between parts. That member of the body which usurped the functions of another was ascribed a quasi-political epithet by Latimer who says the seditious element is like a "putrified and festered membre" (qtd. in Hale, 197: 57) which should be amputated. The ills of the state were also attributed to the imbalance of the humours which could be relieved by purgations and blood-letting. However drastic the curative measures were, they could be justified as being necessary for the maintenance of order and harmony, as essential for the human body as for the state.

From the beginning Hart identifies correct spelling as one where there would be absolute harmony between letters and the sounds produced in speech. The word, like the body, is composed of basic elements and it can be "undone into those voyces only whereof it is made" (Scolar Press, 1969: 9). Hart imagines himself as a physician seeking to find a "remedie" for the abuse of letters and throughout An Orthographie, consistently uses the traditional imagery of disease and illness. Like the physician, he proposes to first identify and understand all the parts, their complexion and disposition. This in turn will lead to a diagnosis of the illness and its causes. The solution will thus be settled upon, knowing what purgations can be administered for the vicious humours and which treatment prescribed for the ailing member. This analogy is referred to scathingly by Mulcaster when he states that in the phonemic reformer's plan, the remedy was often worse than the disease. Hart

cites the political solution for disorder in the state as a model to be followed in the restoration of harmony to the alphabet: "and the vicious parts thereof cut away, as are the vyle and offensive members, in a politike common welth" (Scolar Press, 1969: 12).

His diagnosis of the ills afflicting the spelling system are based on the concepts of harmony and hierarchy. Usurpation - a term with overt political connotations and one with which the system was rife, is one of the main infractions of order; vowels masquerade as consonants, while certain letters usurp the role of others. Superfluity, as manifested in the doubling of vowels or the existence of silent letters and deficiency, are metaphors of the capitalist economy of supply and demand.. The body analogy as a means of analysing the faults in English spelling, transfers the chief characteristics of the well governed state - reason and order - to spelling which in its current condition misrepresents sound and therefore thought that "in the place of eares, we doe use to paint eyes"(28). Images of disorder and an Alice in Wonderland-like world abound, dramatising both violations of the natural and social order. The actor forced to play the part of mother, father and child, appearing on stage in different guises is also invoked to conjure up an image of disproportion and falsehood, a charge frequently levelled against acting, especially in an age when gender roles were not respected.

Punctuation marks are likened to the sinews and tendons that connect and articulate joints: the sentence begins with the head and ends with the feet. This was the doctrine behind the utopian twenty-three letter alphabet Hart would substitute

for the bloated and gouty system in existence, and the system which Bullokar would pad up with fourteen new signs.

Hart's reform of writing responded to the necessity to impose a law, to move off the quicksands onto solid ground - a reaction of Tudor society to the uncertainty caused by waves of change which hurtled along, bulldozing away old values and opening new horizons. By identifying the model on which his new script was based, a model set in the Court, "the flower of English", Hart presented himself in the guise of a politically correct conservative, bolstering up the established order, although he was by no means reluctant to assume the label of radical as long as it did not transgress the bounds of safety. Nor indeed were any of the reformers.

Reinforcing the establishment and forming at least a simulacrum of order were the stated objectives of reformers in all fields although to follow their proposals to their ultimate conclusion would imply, like Tudor policy itself, dismantling the structure in radical and far-reaching ways. Their aim was to establish a new order. This much is evident in Mulcaster's educational reform proposals. He muses that the old order dominated by the "expelled " religion had fostered a situation which was no longer viable and called for the pruning of the superfluous sectors of society through the mediations of education. The "enemy state" (148) relied on the multitude: not so the new streamlined one which must dispense with them. He equates disproportion with the rule of Rome and thus with illness and disease, a sentiment with which many of his country men concurred.

The correspondence established between the health of the bodies politic and orthographic was racked with inconsistencies and contradictions. In the first place, appealing to a concept such as the commonweal or the integrity of the body politic was to cast a line back to a mental construct which was increasingly becoming inadequate for the analysis of contemporary affairs. Ferguson (1978) argues that Tudor society was stubbornly reluctant to relinquish the concept of the common weal, with the result that its earliest social and political analyses explored the possibility of change within a static social theory. This is true of Mulcaster's advocacy of traditional spelling aimed at keeping literacy within the confines of the elite. He has been characterised as stifling innovation in favour of tradition. However, it is also possible to read his text as an advocacy for change and conjecture that accepting it in language would ultimately allow its acceptance in all other areas of life. The intellectual and cultural barriers to such a leap were, however, beyond the scope of most Tudor consciousness. The phonemic reformers, on the other hand, sell their product on the basis that it will aid the spread of literacy over as wide a spectrum of the population as possible, although, much of their discourse needs to be analysed in terms of the mechanisms they facilitated to achieve this objective. They were just as much a product of a traditionalist system as was Mulcaster

There is yet another aspect of Hart's imagery which distinguishes it from Mulcaster's and which also has political implications This is the imagery of violence and warfare. Much of this belligerent tone can be traced back to Meigret whose texts on spelling reform take the form of violent onslaughts on the

conventions and customs deeply rooted in spelling practices. Hart's approach to spelling was obviously influenced by the French reformer. In An Orthographie he pays tribute to his efforts and acknowledges his debt to him: "a worthy man well learned in Greek and Latin named Louis Meigret of Lyon [whose] reasons and arguments I do herebefore partly use as he did Quintilian" (1969: 53). [5]

Hart's verbal imagery is typified by bellicosity whereas Mulcaster's occupies the opposite range of the spectrum. Within the field of gardening, Mulcaster plans to prune while Hart will have none other than replanting and cutting away. Hart complains of the intractability of the alphabet and its wayward character while Mulcaster speaks of "easie notes" which may "be easlie removed". Hart clings to the image of disease while Mulcaster speaks of blemishes which are superficial and easily removed.

[5] The above text appears in Hart's new spelling. It has been normalised. In the text I have used the original paging although it has been amended from page 35 onwards and the original number 53, has been crossed out and replaced by 57.

4. 6 The Allegory: Previous Interpretations, Precedents and Function

Mulcaster prefaces his suggestions as to how and on what basis English spelling is to be relandscaped with a political allegory which traces the development of writing from its inception, democracy, through oligarchy to his own time, represented by monarchy. Its function and significance has for long gone unheeded. .Quick dispatches it as "his very curious and interesting allegory" (1888: 306). Jones paraphrases the tale without offering any comment. (1926: 281-82; 1953: 159). This line is followed by Demolen (1970: 157) while Scragg (1974: 60-63) makes no reference whatever to it. Recently it has received some attention from Blank (1996) who again merely paraphrases it, but underlines its political implications. She tentatively proposes that if Mulcaster's theory of monarchy can be derived from the allegory, he is a constitutionalist rather than a monarchist, a conclusion which can by no means be placidly accepted as I shall demonstrate in the following pages. Goldberg, (1991) interprets the fable as a political statement and in conjunction with other aspects of The Elementarie, concludes that Mulcaster's conservative approach to spelling reform propped up the elitist establishment. Bradbrook (1964) reads it shorn of its political connotations and claims that it traces the evolution of orthographical reform over the previous thirty years. A.B. Ferguson sees it as a testimony to Mulcaster's maturing historical consciousness and would place it alongside the prefaces of anthropological development found in numerous treatises of the time.

Interpretations of the fable must, however, be viewed in light of the on going debate over the nature of monarchy and, even when this is taken into consideration, the conclusions that can be drawn must be interpreted in the light in which they were made. Was not the ambiguity deliberate and a defence mechanism of one who could not afford to offend? To all appearances Mulcaster was walking the tightrope between offender and lackey by refusing to file ranks in the academic setting but acting as pawn of the Crown. His proposals for both spelling and educational reform were carefully shaped within the limits of traditional power structures. The allegory is sufficiently crafted to preclude giving offence while at the same time opening itself up to a political reading where he questions, as he questions Sound's dominion, the validity of an absolute monarchy. This was both a reflection of political thought of the time and a clever self-protecting strategy.

Mulcaster's reconstruction of the anthropology of language shows a disciplined, historically conditioned imagination and forms the core of Mulcaster's political and linguistic thought. It was not without precedent as the allegorical form was the natural approach for minds acustomed to and conditioned by the symbolic mode. Moreover, it points to a general lack of a vocabulary commesurate with the ideas he and his contemporaries were trying to express.

It belongs to the tradition of allegorising the invention of writing, which figured in most treatises on language, both in England and in France. His fable differs from the conventional version which has spelling plotted on a flight path which takes off from the airport of purity and is heading, progressively losing altitude towards a

crash landing in a land of corruption and promiscuous licence. It has a precedent in Erasmus' etologic fable of Cadmus. Like Erasmus, Mulcaster places the origin of writing wholly within the human domain and emphasises its social and contractual nature.[6] From this fable Mulcaster inherited the sense of conflict and combativeness inherent in letters. His parable is a depiction of forces in confrontation, although in this case, unlike in the self-immolating denouement sketched by Erasmus, it is resolved diplomatically and, ironically, by resort to the skilful use of language itself.

The historical description of the invention and development of writing serves a number of purposes. Firstly, it justifies Mulcaster's uncompromising rejection of phonemic reformers by casting them as seditious rebels who threaten stability and order while, at the same time, outlining his theory of language. Secondly, by its mere format it makes a resounding statement about the links that exist between language and state, elevating the importance of spelling reform to the equivalent of national well-being. Furthermore, the allegory converts the issue of language into a vehicle for commentary on the political issues of the time. Finally, it introduces into the debate a facet which had hitherto been absent: the sense of historicity and the feeling for the importance of taking the diachronic element into account when judging languages. Its final statement is crucial for an understanding of Mulcaster's methodology: everything is governed by the laws of time and place. It is a precursor of the theory of relativity in linguistic terms.

[6] See Goldberg (1990: 176 - 78) for an account of the origination of writing following Erasmus' fable.

4.7 The Renaissance Concept of Monarchy

Any reading of the allegory rests on the theories of monarchy at the time. Spelling and political theory can be traced back to the same initial question: whether their origins were divine or conventional. With the assumption of ecclesiastical authority by the temporal monarch, developments in political theory in England lagged behind the Continent. The desacralization of religion which followed the sublimation of the church within the monarchy led to a remystification of sovereignty. The medieval theory of monarchy coexisted comfortably with that of a limited, consensual monarchy and they were not considered incompatible until the period immediately prior to the Civil War. According to Eccleshall (1978), throughout the sixteenth century, the theory of limited monarchy cannot be said to have served to undermine the monarch.

Although Elyot disseminated and popularised the ideas of Aristotle, Plato, Castiglione and Erasmus, Renaissance ideas on political theory were slow to be absorbed in England. It was an illogical shambles, fruit of a world still living in medieval pluralism. Under the Tudors, the country was enjoying a period of relative peace, which bred an easy complacency. Furthermore, the winds of change could do little to buffet the strong myth of the Tudor dynasty. Their doctrine of the duty of obedience and the conception of royal supremacy in the Church had evolved into a theory of absolute monarchy which, in turn, it was claimed, derived its power directly from God. As Elizabeth I declared, they were "not bound to yield account or render the reasons of their actions to any others but to God". (qtd, in

Holinshed 1587). The potential struggle between absolute and constitutional monarchy did not bear fruit until the latter decades of the sixteenth century when various texts tentatively question the all-embracing and far-reaching powers of that monarchy. The voices of dissent which queried whether the monarch was the source of his own authority, came from the Puritans influenced by Calvin and Knox. However, it was never more than half-heartedly articulated because church tenures were granted through the Crown and the Tudors proved astute manipulators of this dilemma. They attempted to, and succeeded in creating a facade of co-operative and collaborative government by creating puppet bodies such as the privy council whose function as a hedge to royal power was null, given that its members were royally appointed and consisted mainly of those indebted to the Crown for monastic estates. As Allen (1942) remarks, none of the writings on constitution or monarchy of the period present a distinct or coherent theory, limiting themselves to the repetition of old formulae about the wickedness of rebellion or matters of the Church. Loades (1997) concurs, stating that sixteenth century England had no concept of sovereignty other than that which emerged from the declaration of independence from the Pope. This overrode speculation as to the nature of the institution until the end of the century. As Eccleshall remarks: "In the sixteenth century there was no need to raise questions of sovereignty. There was a need to justify the co-operation of the crown with influential groups in parliament" (1978: 100).

Sir John Fortescue had identified the mixed constitution as the natural form of government for the English nation and this was borne out by a tradition that

reached back to Alfred the Great. A sense of unease about the increasing trend towards absolutism visible in the Tudor dynasty was first voiced in the 1530's by Starkey[7] when he called for an independently appointed council of advisers whose function would be to curb the far-reaching powers of the monarch. It is significant that Starkey, like others who rose their voices against the increasingly tyrannical posture of the Tudor monarchs centred their arguments around the constitution rather than the person of the king and duly hedged their proposals with praise for the benevolence of the reigning monarch.

The most coherent treatise on Tudor government is Smith's De republica anglorum (1583)[8] where he advocates a mixed monarchical system. The highest power of the realm was seen to lie not with the prince alone but with the Crown in Parliament. He associates absolute monarchy with tyranny and presents a complex view of the institution as the nexus where custom, law, tradition, habit and institutions interact. Smith had no concept of the divine right of monarchs; nowhere does he mention God or divine power. The monarchy was bound by law in its executive capacity. On one side was the divine right of kings and, on the other, unrelated, the absolute nature of the monarchy. Allen (1942) maintains that the former only became current in the seventeenth century.

Literature also provides an insight into then current theories of kingship and the majority vouch for a mixed constitution. In Arcadia, (1598) Sidney advocates a mixed state of limited monarchy, showing a suspicion of absolutism by

[7] Starkey's Dialogue was written between 1536 and 1538 but not published until 1837 .
[8] The work was written in 1565 while Smith was ambassador in France but not published until twenty years later.

sanctioning, albeit with reservations, the right to insurrection against tyranny. Spenser's views on government are most clearly expressed in Mother Hubberd's Tale, (1591) where a hierarchically organised society is opposed to its antithesis, the egalitarian democracy. Spenser advocated a powerful but pliant aristocracy, working and depending for social advancement on a monarch who propagated the myth of absolutism. As a beneficiary of the monarch, Spenser in this analysis, no doubt pandered to the source of his own advancement

"If the humanists had any common political prejudice, it was against purely popular regimes" (Hankins, 1996: 120). The rediscovery of Aristotle's Politics which identified monarchy as the best form of government further contributed to the decline of support for republicanism. It was widely acknowledged that the source of authority lies in the people but not in popular licence. William Thomas states what lay at the back of every mind: "The multitude utterly knoweth nothing. It is fickle and passionate" (qtd in Allen. 1941: 248). Elyot had made the same point earlier; the state must have one head if it is not to become a parody of itself. Bullokar echoes this opinion: "the multitude are of least iudgment"(Turner, 1970: Preface: No.Pag.). This belief echoes throughout all texts and in Mulcaster's allegory, elective government is represented as characteristic of primitive societies and continually in danger of degenerating into tyranny. The abuses perpetrated by Sound are attributed not to his own person but to an error of judgement in those who elected him. Mulcaster identifies popular rule with chaos, and finds in this image a powerful weapon with which to condemn the phonemic reformers by creating a parallel between a writing system based solely on phonological

principles and a society which combines the worst of tyranny and popular licence, where all decisions are arbitrary and made on whim, each member setting himself up as a supreme authority. Sound's mandate comes from the people who "give him alone the authoritie over the pen" (74). He acts like a prince but, as the source of his might is human, Mulcaster suggests, it is seriously undermined. Popular suffrage is not rejected out of hand, but seen to be insufficient on its own, at least in advanced societies.

Equilibrium between tyranny and chaos is found in the constitutional format. Monarchy, in one form or another, was considered the best form of government by the majority of political theorists. In spite of Tudor strong-arm tactics in pushing new legislation through parliament, the monarch's function was interpreted as the implementation and administration, rather than the creation of laws. Starkey emphasises his purely remedial role: "to see to the administration of justice to the whole community" (Burton, 1948: 166). This was by no means a new concept of monarchy and can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times. It is the model preferred by Mulcaster as he specifically states that the monarch, Art, can exercise its power only in conjunction with the trivium on which it rests: Custom, Reason and Sound. Art is represented as a "beaten lawyer" (84) and a "notarie" (82). The mood around the end of the century tended toward a concept of the monarch not as the fountainhead of Truth but its recipient and propagator.

The influence of the lively debates which had raged in Europe over the merits of the different forms of government was not felt in England which remained

relatively free from the immediate pressures of Continental politics. There was in fact a strong trend in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towards mixed constitutions as a guard against tyranny although, according to Ferguson (1963) in England only Starkey and Smith raised fundamental questions concerning the forms of government. The debate, he maintains was diverted towards specific areas such as trade and international policy rather than a careful examination of fundamentals.

This complacency is evident in both Mulcaster and Starkey, confirming Hankins' (1996) claim that the humanists were not intellectuals committed to a single political ideology. When Mulcaster numbers the three forms of government available to a people in Positions, he explicitly refrains from recommending one or the other. Like Starkey, he implies that the best form is decided in accordance with the nature of the people. This was to be his policy also as regards spelling and borrowing: necessity, circumstance and tradition were the three parameters by which innovation or reform was to be judged.

In states with political unity and a strong centralised government, the cultivation and perfection of the national language was defended in terms of its role in promoting political unity and increasing prestige. This was true of all the emerging nation states, England, France and Spain. Henri Estienne (1579) expresses the mood of the time thus: "The true and native Italian language is nothing but a Platonic ideal, whereas the French language has behind it the authority of the state and the beneficence of its king". He not only questions the fundamental superiority

and intrinsic qualities of Latin but exalts the vernacular on quite distinct terms; those of a political and not a linguistic nature. The prestige of the French language was measured by its political might and in the same vein, the linguistic hegemony of Latin was increasingly attributed to its military prowess, conquest and occupation of foreign territories rather than any superior intrinsic qualities.

Antonio de Nebrija (1492) too recognised the value of an ordered vernacular for the state, and saw language as an instrument of government which would go hand in hand with the progress of the empire: " Siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio, y de tal manera lo siguió que junta mente començaron crecieron y florecieron y después junta fue la caida de ambos"(Quilis, 1980: 97). Mulcaster was aware of the connection: "doth not speche alter sometime to the finer, if the state where it is used, continew it self, and grow to better countenance, for either great learning, or other dealing" (83). The burgeoning economy together with the military successes of the Elizabethan period seemed to offer irrefutable evidence in its favour. He identifies war and trade as the two motors which boost a language's territorial and lexical command and implies that given the favourable conditions then prevailing, the English language could be a candídate to move onto the throne formerly occupied by Latin: " so theie seme to infer no base witted peple ... for it is not for foulls to be so well learned, to be so warrious, to be so well practised" (91). However, he seems unconcerned or, at the very least, ambivalent about the vast possibilities opening up for linguistic colonisation: "But our state is no *Empire* to hope to enlarge it by commanding over cuntries ... tho it be neither large in possession, nor in present hope of great encrease" (271). Whatever its role on the

world stage, perfection of the vernacular should be motivated by concerns strictly limited to the native linguistic community. [9]

Hart, in contrast, evidently sees in spelling reform a tool of colonialism. He cites the two rebellious groups, the Welsh and the Irish which, if their writing were reordered could be more easily "civilised", that is brought under the yoke of the protocolonial power. He entertained the possibility that linguistic control in the form of spelling reform could be an instrument of suppression in the struggle for power just as effectively abroad as at home. [10]

Language also played an important role in diplomacy which was essential for achieving some degree of harmony between belligerent nation states engaged in the battle for dominance. A series of exchanges between Elizabeth I and her then ambassador in France highlight the extent to which international affairs took place in an elaborate verbal network. She encourages him to use Latin in his dealings with the French contingent as she herself had done in her negotiations with their ambassador and his retinue on June 5, 1563 "to dryve them from their french". Language is here patently a pawn in international negotiations.

Other humanists who addressed linguistic questions all had some experience - either enforced or voluntary - abroad. Cheke had spent the years of Mary Tudor's

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[9] Samuel Daniel, writing in the 1590s expresses the same view of England, demonstrating that the possibilities of overseas expansion and linguistic colonisation had not yet been fully assimilated. He refers to England as "This little point, this scarce discerned isle/Thrust from the world, with whom our speech unknown/Made never any traffic of our style."(Colby Sprague. ed.1965: 81)

[10] See Blank, 1996 for an analysis of the ambiguity which bedevelled English linguistic policy in Ireland. 144 - 52.

reign in exile in Padua and Starkey, chaplain to Henry VIII had travelled widely on the Continent and spent time in Paris, Avignon and Padua. Elyot was ambassador to Charles V during Henry VIII's divorce proceedings and Wilson occupied diplomatic posts in Portugal and the Netherlands under Elizabeth I. They orbited around the centres of power as did their Continental counterparts, Erasmus and Vives. Moreover, the discourses of influential humanists were guaranteed by the sponsorship of the sovereign - Starkey's treatise had been commissioned by Henry VIII, although royal favour was later abruptly and cruelly withdrawn; Elyot, likewise enjoyed royal patronage and Ascham was under the protection of Edward V. The alliance of language and politics was a tangible reality and Machiavelli who was undeservedly demonised for his observations on the relationship between the two, did little more than reflect what he had observed.

The predominant theories of monarchy of the period can be traced through the imagery of the body politic. As Hale (1971) in his analysis of the political metaphor in Renaissance English literature demonstrates, the changing conceptions of the nature of monarchy can be measured by the prevalence of either the body analogy, which enjoyed widespread use especially under Elizabeth I, or analogies which place their emphasis on the social contract and covenant theory. During the seventeenth century, the body analogy lost much of its vitality.

4.8 The Implications of the Allegory

Mulcaster begins his arguments against the invention of new signs, the excision of superfluous ones and the relandscaping of English orthography by illustrating the historical process whereby Sound lost its dominion over the form of written words and was joined in a position of shared power by Reason and Custom. Later, with the intervention of Art as supreme sovereign, the system reached its zenith although Mulcaster is not very clear on the final outcome of his tale.

Initially Sound was elected "soueraine and iudge" (73), a situation which quickly degenerated into chaos as all speakers became a law onto themselves. Alarmed at Sound's overbearing attitude, a delegation was sent to persuade him to share his power with Reason, based on observation and comparison, and Custom, holding the scales of linguistic justice and mediating between the forces of change and continuity. Together they would forge into law those practices which had been etched out over time and, through their joint action, regulate spelling. The order established was, however, precarious until the supreme monarch, Art, using artificial method, bestowed stability on writing. The template chosen by Art was the late sixteenth century, a period when the language was thought to have reached the height of perfection. This identification of his own time as the pinnacle of the English language is out of joint with his general theory of continuing evolution but falls into step with Bullokar's identification of the period, as if he was dragged by the current to admit a fallacy which ran countercurrent to the very precepts which dictate his approach to spelling and writing.

Mulcaster's description of the era of Sound's reign is designed to create the maximum impact on his readers as chaos, by which it was typified, was the great bugbear of Tudor society as Elyot had expressed: "without order may be nothing stable or permanent" (qtd. in Rollins and Baker, 1992: 107). Mulcaster's description of the anarchic reign of Sound may well have been inspired in the state of Ireland, always a festering sore on the English body politic. It represented all that the ideal state should not be: power was diffuse, spread among a number of small chiefs, each a rule onto himself. Sound behaves with "great uncertaintie, naie rather with confusion" (74). Lack of order is "odious " and "uncomely". Mulcaster attributes this "odious" and "uncomely" lack of order to the plebes or communality, where there is no "discrepance of degrees" (qtd in Rollins and Baker, 1988: 107). Like Elyot, he subscribes to the view that the "public weal" and the "common weal" are mutually exclusive, if not contradictory terms.

Sound is "in autoritie tyrannous" (75), and violates the humanist ideal of the good ruler by placing self-interest before the general good. It is arbitrary and destructive, governed by neither rule nor reason. The concession of power to Reason and Custom is dramatised to show the characteristics of the bad ruler: thirst for power and his reluctance to relinquish it for the common good make him prey to the false advice of those friends who fan his resentment and incite him to rebellion.

Sound is modelled on the tyrant that appears in Elizabethan literature, "allowing no mercy, or pitie but death, no pardon, no forgiveness, no misericordia" (74). The

description invites comparison with the figure of the Machiavellian tyrant who as Wyndham Lewis asserts "... was at the back of every Tudor mind" (qtd in Praz, 1966: 118). Although a translation of The Prince was not available according to Praz until 1602, he had been known to the Elizabethans with the publication of Gentillet's Contre-Machiavel in 1576. Whether the Machiavellian or the Senecan tyrant inspired the characterisation of Sound, is irrelevant: both exploit their positions to exert power for their own private ends.

By equating Sound with tyranny Mulcaster strikes at the heart of phonemic reform. Smith's, Hart's and Bullokar's overhauling of English spelling in Mulcaster's opinion, represented a regression rather than an advance and would open the doors to an anarchy more fearsome than that which ruled before their intervention. In his opinion, where these reformers had run aground was in failing to adapt their reforms to time and place. As the English language was at that time further along the evolutionary scale, their efforts would strike out any advantages won, and endanger the commonweal. Moreover, in language as in politics, consent is the prerequisite for just government and private initiative has no validity, no matter how well intentioned. Chaos and sedition therefore loom menacingly over the work of the phonemic reformers.

In the evolution from chaos to order, from arbitrary rule to divine right, from communality to hierarchy, oligarchy is placed on the second rung of the ladder, representing a half-way stage in the ascent to perfection. This order follows the grading given by Aristotle and in turn adopted by Elyot, the state "that hath mo

chief governours than one" is not perfect: " It is a monster with many heads." (qtd in Rollins and Baker: 1992: 108). What is lacking is an all-encompassing authority which comes in the guise of Art. It is stressed, however, that its function is not to create but merely to implement and codify those laws which have been forged through time and consolidated in custom so that people can work with assurance of what is right and wrong.

4. 9 Absolute or Parliamentary Monarchy?

The circumstances of Mulcaster's life would appear to confirm the fact that he was a monarchist. He enjoyed the patronage of the Queen, presented plays at Court with the boys of Merchant's Taylors and participated in the Tudor propaganda machine. In the allegory, however, he opts for limited or constitutional monarchy.

This stance contrasts with Mulcaster's description of the Queen's passage through the city of London. Wall (1989) examines how, in the hands of a propagandist, the written text "strains through several strategic manoeuvres to redirect the power fractured by the dynamic interplay of social negotiation back onto the Queen" (1989: 26). She goes on to state that, "The pamphlet makes clear that her [the Queen's] loving gestures subsume any indication that the power of the ruler is contingent, dependent, inadequate" (27). Where the young queen's power is interrogated, it is in Mulcaster's terms because she allows this to occur - it is product of her benevolence. When reminded by the Mayor of London that it is the city's generosity that has paid for the lavish spectacle laid before her, that she is in some sense dependent on the people, this is reinterpreted by Mulcaster by laying emphasis on the Queen's, rather than the city's generosity,. Throughout her analysis, Wall displays how Mulcaster emphasises Elizabeth's power, "He emphatically heralds her as the source of her own authority, the commander of her gestures and her language" (34). The written script gives no indication that her power is either dependent or inadequate.

Just as Art rested on the pillars of Reason, Custom and Sound, so too the monarch in theory was advised by the members of the Privy council. They represented, like their counterparts in language, the forces of tradition and common sense whose roots stretched downwards and backwards to embrace and strengthen its authority. During the Tudor dynasty, it had become a mere puppet. As early as 1540, Starkey claimed that it mitigated against the common good: "to him must be joined counsel, by common authority, not such as he will, but such as by the most part of the parliament shall be judged to be wise and mete thereunto" (Burton, 1948: 155). Mulcaster too advocated that the absolute monarch "... qualify his gouernament, and ... use the assistance of a further councell" (75). The general feeling in England in the period was that:

> the English monarch could not govern in an arbitrary fashion because he or she was hedged about with communally beneficial restrictions. So long as the parliament was vigilant in using its privileges, the monarch could do nothing of national importance without its assent (Eccleshall, 1978: 38).

The structure and selection procedure of the advisory council that appears in the allegory follow closely on that recommended by Starkey. Art inherits a three-member council who have earned their place by merit not by royal favour. No law passed has any legitimacy unless signed by all four parties. It is therefore not over-audacious to suggest that Mulcaster favoured a system of limited rather than absolute monarchy. This echoes Pole's maxim that "the authority of the prince must be tempered and brought to order" (1948: 165). His power had to be ratified from

below but did not entail doing the bidding of the intemperate masses. Unquestioning obedience was demanded only on those issues which were already established by tradition and reason.

Mulcaster's spelling amendments were designed to change those things capable of rectification within the bounds of established use. They are the fruit of hindsight. Over-zealousness it had been seen, only caused social upheaval in the form of the agrarian and corn revolts, misery, homelessness and an ensuing crime wave. Moderation was the lesson to be learned from past mistakes and Mulcaster who was a man who never lost touch with the common people was able to apply these social lessons to language.

The whole text is permeated with terms of a legal and judicial nature. Art, as has been noted above is described as a "beaten lawyer", an analogy of some significance as it implies that art acts as an intermediary between contentious parties, that of Sound, Custom and Reason and must thrash out a compromise, an out of court settlement, to arrive at agreement. Art is also personified as a notary, the one who inscribes the legal terms of a treatise or covenant. This identifies its role in perfecting the spelling of a language; it is not incumbent upon it to make laws or set conditions but to formulate and set down for posterity the conditions agreed on according to law and the parties involved. Art does not instigate, merely ratifies those judgements reached at through common consent, much in the same way that the monarch's role in the parliamentary government is to give the official stamp to laws passed by parliament.

Furthermore, in the allegory, Reason and Custom's decision to curb the powers of Sound is dramatised as the presentation of a petition before a court. They present their "humble suit" pleading for a hearing before the "judge". In this way, their assumption of power jointly with Sound is granted legal status. Mulcaster's gifts for dramatisation and characterisation come to the fore in his allegory. Each of his characters have distinctly recognisable traits. Sound's intractable stubborness and perversity are countered by the reasoned diplomacy of Reason and Custom while Art remains silent as a supreme dignitary. Sound is represented as childish and petulant while the other two appear in the role of wise and judicious parents. Moreover, the ending of the fable lacks the definitive tone of its antecedents and remains inconclusive is probably deliberate. The debate over spelling could have no point of closure.

4.10. Custom. A Minefield of Contradictions

> The idea of custom teased the minds of linguistic scholars as it teased the minds of churchmen and lawyers, with intimations both of permanence and evolution (Ferguson, 1979: 318).

"Custom" if not a catch phrase, was a force invoked or denounced in almost all discussions in Tudor times. The paradox of custom is that it must be age-old and up to date and this dual necessity was made more acute by the intervention of legal, monarchical and religious questions. It became an issue which caused a certain amount of historical discomfort to the Tudor dynasty. Springing from a line of descent which was yeoman in origin and, having acceded to the throne by virtue of military prowess, it was contrary to their interests, at least in its early days, to place undue emphasis on a line of blue-blooded monarchs with a well-established and recognised lineage[11]. In the meantime, they did everything within their power to invent their own history and create their own mythology through the patronage of officially sanctioned histories.

The Tudors, however, found it difficult to shed off their genetic heritage and disavow their instincts. Paradoxically, while promoting a view of the monarchy which insisted on continuity, the brazen policies of these "upstarts"; the remodelling of bureaucracy, the transfer of powers to the yeoman class identified by merit, and their use of Parliament, all edged towards, if not directly incited the

[11] Wall points out that Mulcaster's interpretation of Queen Elizabeth's progress through London performed the "indispensable state function of mythologising the Queen" and served "to substantiate and verify her claim to the throne." (1989: 22 - 24)

destabilising of established order. The policy which promoted social mobility in certain sectors was at loggerheads with their insistence on the maintenance of social order and adherence to concepts which were essentially medieval in origin. Edmund denounces "the plague of custom" (King Lear, 1: 2. 1 - 6) which refuses to recognise merit above tradition and thus limits the horizons of the rising protocapitalists.

The balance between regulated change (regulated by the monarch, that is,) and the unleashing of unforeseen social forces was a delicate one and was almost toppled by the additional wave of disturbances set in motion in the wake of the split with Rome. The propaganda apparatus felt it imperative, like the relatively new dynasty, to undermine the value of custom or tradition by relating it directly to Papal domination. An old and archaic tradition had to be dethroned and a new idol set up in its place. The quiet acquiescence with which the new church was accepted, bred all kinds of ambitious hopes in reformers in all spheres. Custom, it was thought, was not as tenacious as had first appeared, and it was the conviction that, with royal backing, any reform could become a reality that fanned the aspirations of the spelling reformers.

The issue of custom was of considerable consequence in the religious terrain. For the newly formed Church of England, the rupture with Rome signified a break with tradition and the establishment of a new church without a tradition or within an alternative tradition. These events led to a revaluation of custom. While political commentators had long exulted in the customary nature of the English constitution,

custom also symbolised enslavement by Rome. Could there be two traditions? How could the rupture be justified without damaging the integrity of the legal term?. This was central to the debate on church and state in the sixteenth century and by so strongly invoking tradition Mulcaster brings the language debate into close parallel with religious controversy.

The new church, devoid of a past and lacking the sense of continuity which characterised Catholicism, sought to downgrade custom or tradition and advocated change as the path forward. Custom, thus, in the minds of many came to be synonymous with the hegemony of Rome, a force allied with the enemy, with connotations of slavery, stagnation and decay. Thus, when Mulcaster places his chips on the side of custom, he is - not wholly inadvertently - invoking the wrath of the monarchy. To favour custom above change was to call into question, however indirectly, the legitimacy of the Established Church.

In religious terms then, change was favoured as a means of validating the new church and was a key to liberation and independence. One of the many problems that the unification of spiritual and temporal power in the figure of the monarch brought to the surface, however, was the clash between the monarch as representative of the Constitution, based on tradition, and as the figurehead of a church which could do quite well without being reminded of the force it commanded.

Custom was accused, moreover, of representing a rag bag of disparate pieces of wisdom and thus opposed to the order so necessary for the state to function. Mulcaster refutes this claim stating that "custom has become orderly" (181): one of his chief achievements was to rationalise custom and show how it represented the laws of logic. Common law, those laws and customs devised by man, diverse and variable, derive from the opinions of man, rest on consent and vary according to time and place, enjoyed the sanction of custom and as Ferguson claims, fostered "a more tolerant, a more historical, attitude toward custom" (1963: 21). It was compared to the unifying sinews, or soul of the body politic, and custom, the cumulative wisdom of a people, was exalted in its defence although voices of dissension were raised against its *ad hoc* nature. Pole, contends that "There is no stable government in our common law to lean unto" (Burton, 1948: 173). The major issues of common law were thrashed out in the Tudor and Stuart periods although in hushed tones as the law of succession itself was determined by custom. Mulcaster relied on the sacrosanctity of custom to build up a compelling argument in favour of tradition in spelling practices, maintaining that "som change of great extremitie"(59) to regulate spelling was not necessary. Starkey's interlocutors agree, likewise, that it would be impossible to change the customs of the national community sporadically without running the risk of confusion and civil strife.

The Constitution had its roots in Common law, in uncodified traditional practices. The clash between the claims of tradition as a fundamental element of English law and its potentially undermining role in the claims for royal supremacy created a quandary for those who either appealed to its sacred status or rejected it outright.

One solution was to do as Mulcaster did and avoid the religious issue except in a few observations in Positions and focus instead on the judicial aspects. Scepticism may be shed upon this strategy especially when used by a member of the clergy itself [12] but, in fact his taking up of church office may have resulted from the discreet opportunism imposed by economic distress.

The reliance of common law on custom was tarnished by the claims that this rendered it unmethodological and bereft of scientifically grounded principles. Mulcaster's claim that custom, far from being a hodge podge of disparate gleanings of knowledge was capable of being submitted to the laws of logic was not unique. Abraham Fraunce in The Lawiers Logike (1588) set about to reduce the practice of English common law to a logically and scientifically self-conscious discipline. He draws a telling analogy between lawyers who practised common law with "good Catholics and modest minded men, [who] beleeved as the church beleeved, but why the church beleeved so, it never came within the compasse of their cogitation" (qtd. in Halpern, 1991: 199). Fraunce believed that even custom is constructed according to the principles of natural reason and so was susceptible to analysis by artificial reason. This posture is anticipated by Mulcaster whose defence of custom relies on the fact that its laws are not immediately perceptible but exist nevertheless.

An alternative which was more widely adopted was to discern between wise and ignorant custom. Although Mulcaster lambastes those who defile and denounce

[12] Mulcaster had held two recorded benefices, albeit *in absencia* between his retirement from Merchant Taylor's and his appointment to St Paul's.

custom, he, like Hart offers a limiting, elitist definition of the term: fruit of the use of the wise. The complexity of the situation is well exemplified by Hart who becomes entangled in a Catch 22 situation. While denouncing custom and usage, he has no other option than to appeal to them for acceptation of his own reforms. He goes on to state, in apparent contradiction, that while words must represent the sounds of the voice, they must be arbitrary and under this premise, asserts his own right to "chuse and use fit new markers or letters fro everye of them" (Scolar Press, 1969: 5). In this way he can clear himself of possible taunts of being irreverent or rebellious. Hart appeals directly to the king, hoping he will not fall prey to "whatsoever use, and coustume hath long maintained" (qtd. in Goldberg, 1990: 193). His rejection of it: "I am not so much bounde to custome", has religious overtones.

Mulcaster sets himself up as the sole defender of custom in the English spelling debate. It is, he staunchly proclaims, the "surest guide", the first variable to be taken into account when considering reforms in spelling. Custom rules with "hir imperiall voyce" (186). Change meant growth but only when firmly rooted in tradition and operating within its clear but unwritten parameters. In the immediate context within which Mulcaster's defence of custom was carried out, its imponderable, conservative force was seemingly being lambasted by those who championed complete and thoroughgoing reforms of English spelling on a phonetic basis. As Mulcaster says, reformers "appeall to *sound* , as the onelie soverain & surest leader ... & fly to innovation"(93).

This is a blatant distortion of the truth, fruit of Mulcaster's own misrepresentation of the phonemic reformers' attitude to custom when he says they call it "vile", "corrupt", venim", "poison", "beastlie", and "filthie". It is Mulcaster's rhetoric which created the impression that he was its sole defender.[13] Bullokar makes much of his adhering to the traditional alphabet. Mulcaster and Hart were much closer to agreement than the former suggests. They both defended wise custom and criticised "ignorant custom". Sir Thomas Smith paid at least lip service to the concept and saw his spelling reforms as a return to and a confirmation of what had been established by mutual consent and a covenant of men. However, he also attributes to "blind custom" the insidious errors that snuck into the writing of English. Mulcaster's spirited defence of custom therefore is not in principle very different from that of his contemporaries. In practice, however, whatever lip service paid to custom was obliterated by the blinding conviction that the relationship between letter and sound was on a one - to - one basis.

Both Mulcaster's and Starkey's defence of custom are couched in similar language and highlight the same qualities. Language and common law represent the culmination of the customs devised by men. They are diverse and variable, reasonable and natural, simple and flexible, adapting facts of pure reason to those of time. Custom or tradition mediates between change and stability, innovation and stagnation and thus ensures regulated growth. Laws based on custom were framed according to the exigencies of everyday life and the requirements of the particular community, with its unique traditions and practices. The legal system and the

[13] Mulcaster was an old hand at public manipulation and the serious nature of both the Elementarie and Positions does not foreclose his self-promotion.

language find a common denominator in custom. The spelling rules Mulcaster proposes can thus rest confidently on custom, foundation of common law and therefore guarantee of commonweal; foundation of spelling and hence, the establishment of right writing.

Mulcaster points out the inconsistency of the spelling reformers claims. How, he asks, can they denounce custom when it is the marrow on which the English constitution is based ? How can they defile custom when so much of everyday life runs on this principle? They are doing a disservice to their own country, an accusation which in the context in which it is made was of no mean significance.

Mulcaster's attempts to modify English spelling following the road between the poles of custom and change are a practical illustration of the compromise he adopted between flexibility and stability. Two examples will serve to illustrate his approach. While on phonemic grounds the digraph <ou> has no justification, Mulcaster concedes that, as it has been used by the wise, it must be accepted. As to the invention of new characters - proposed by Smith and Hart; they are found unacceptable on the grounds of their strangeness and lack of historical background. Mulcaster was aware that language is essentially conservative but simultaneously formed through continuous and imperceptible changes. This is what he calls prerogative, the quicksilver and lifeblood of language: its ability to change, to shape itself to new circumstances and serve new purposes. The same was true of the Tudor monarch and especially Elizabeth I. They were literally a self-made monarchy who kept themselves afloat through spontaneous improvisation.

This view of the monarchy's capacity to reinvent itself, just as the function of letters has to remain open to adaptation is succinctly dealt with in the treatment of the letter <e> to which Mulcaster pays homage, highlighting its adaptability rather than its inconsistency. Goldberg (1990) points out that the celebration of <e> can be read as an indirect endorsement of the reigning monarch. <E> stands for Elizabeth and is a synecdoche of royal rule. Like the monarch, language is incessantly changing, and it is through this permutation that both monarchy and letters maintain themselves. Letters are in possession of the same prerogative as the Queen. The ability of the letter to re-form and consubstantiate itself reflected the same capacity in the monarch. The letter <E> in his opinion, stands at least partly for Elizabeth and what Mulcaster is doing in his eulogy to it, is to praise his Queen who has been able to represent one thing to one group and another to another - chameleonic in character like the letters of the alphabet, a virtue not a defect. Whether this was merely a strategy designed to pander and palaver to his benefactor or not is, however, a subject for speculation. In Book 5 of The Faerie Queen Spenser refers to Elizabeth as she who "mirrors more than one". She has been described as a "great desciphrer"and the blank wall onto which the nation's desires were projected. Some of this is present in Mulcaster's characterisation of the variable and changing letter <E>.

A further example of how terms of state and language are used interchangeably appears in the analogy made between borrowed words and the enfranchised citizen. Mulcaster transposes the term "enfranchised" to the borrowed lexical item, in

order to demonstrate that the word, once incorporated into the language acquires all the rights and duties of the natural citizen: "as the stranger denizens be to the lawes of our cunntrie" (174). This also describes the process of submission that foreign words have to undergo:"let them take an othe to be trew to our tung, and the ordinances thereof' (175 -76). Finally, it is the English language which exerts dominion over the foreign: "we make them mere English"(174). These analogies are carefully crafted rhetorical devices designed to emphasise the links between language and nationhood. Mulcaster's use of the term "denizen" had a precedent in Elyot's use of the same term which he employed to express his confidence that borrowed terms could be embraced by the language just as émigrés or religious fugitives were. There are, moreover, positive connotations implicit in this analogy, given that a high percentage of refugees from the Continent brought with them valuable skills such as weaving, goldsmithery and jewellery making. They enriched and embellished the English economy both literally and figuratively.

The borrowed word, like the "enfranchised citizens" must take the oath of loyalty, which implies that they can be successfully incorporated into the language. Du Bellay too, employs the analogy: words which are absorbed into the poetic register from science, medicine and the crafts are "d'etrangere citadine de notre republique" (Terreaux, 1972: 47). Hart, arguing against the retention of the original spelling of the word, compares it to a foreign mercenary in the service of a Prince:"for lkye as every straunger that any prince receyveth to be imployed in his service, what arms soever his house doth give, he beareth notwithstanding the generall marke wherewith the Princes subiects are knowen from his adversaries"

(Scolar Press, 1969: 17). Mulcaster reiterates this concept in similar terms: "let it wear our colors, sith it wilbe one of us" (246).

Events of Mulcaster's days contributed to the impact of his metaphor. The Huguenot refugees returning from Marian exile formed a substantial community in London and it is documented that Mulcaster was in close contact with Holyband one of the first teachers of English as a foreign language. Thus, when he advocated that borrowed words adopt the laws of pronunciation of their new language (as did Hart), he may have been making reference to the overall adaptation demanded of the enfranchised citizen.

Mulcaster was not unique in drawing the linguistic question into the arena of politics; it was *per se* part of that world. What should be pointed out, however, is that Mulcaster's stance on spelling reform was, although publicised by himself as a great deviation from the norm, a basically conservative measure; one which reinforced the established order. He, like many other reformers desired to reform from within rather than branch out in directions which others would not follow. The pragmatic principle governed from the start. The Elementarie, in its entirety was drafted on political principles. It is through the allegory that Mulcaster states his reserved allegiance to the Crown. The stance he adopts in his propagandistic work is slightly modified in The Elementarie where the monarch is granted a role which is hemmed in by Custom and Reason and reduced to that of mere executor.

Querying the standing of classical authority, attempting to incorporate change into a paradigm characterised by stability and achieving a balance between the two, were challenges to be faced in all spheres of life. This is the mood that Mulcaster brings to his discussion of language. He treads the precarious middleground, charting a course characterised by compromise and synthesis.

He attempted, like Starkey, to reconcile the changing condition that was part of the human lot with absolute unchanging verities. Therefore, "bare and primitive inventions, being but rude" (75) must yield to more sophisticated devices. Starkey had essentially voiced the same opinion: "To say that a custom was reasonable in origin is not to say that it must remain so in an enlightened society" (Ferguson, 1963: 23) There must be constant adaptation, revision and review.

Both Starkey and Mulcaster wrestle with the dilemma facing all humanists. Working within a conservative framework, they were forced to expand the boundaries of traditional thought in order to account for and analyse the new patterns emerging in society. The sacrosanct social model championed by humanists and reinforced by Tudor monarchs did not go uncontested by enquiring minds: tensions and ambivalence provided a stimulus for political debate in the last decades of the sixteenth century and also informed and formed the linguistic issue, concentrated almost exclusively on the sole bone of contention - spelling reform. It is here that attitudes to custom and change are crystallised and enact the larger drama in which English society was involved. Mulcaster bolsters his defence of

tradition in spelling with arguments which appear repeatedly in the debate on common law and its relation to the figure of the monarch.

Mulcaster was radical in his conservatism. The manner in which he presents and justifies his spelling amendments yield insights into his views on the political issues of the late sixteenth century. His specific conception of reform was ostensibly put at the service of the establishment and in that context he provided, as in his propagandistic role, a prop for established authority. The arguments he proposes were, however, also self serving insofar as they promoted his private ends: to thoroughly discredit the phonemic reformers.

In his attitude to the ideal nature of monarchy, we find the same ambivalence and sudden swings in ideology that have been seen to characterise the work. The conjugation of custom and change, as well as being imputed to the baser motives of sheer survival offer a nobler interpretation. Mulcaster's chief insight was to avoid placing custom and change on opposite poles of a continuum.They were complementary forces working on and through language. Custom channels change rather than opposing it.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ELEMENTARIE AND THE DEFFENCE: PARALLEL TEXTS

5.1 Introduction

It was R. N Renwick who first drew attention to the similarities between the philosophy of language of Du Bellay and Mulcaster in a short paper in 1922 where he states that Mulcaster's theories "are precisely those of Du Bellay's Deffence et Illustration" (283). He goes on to enumerate the assumptions they share; the innate equality of all languages, the importance of the industry of the linguistic community, the questioning attitude to the classics, the right of the vernaculars to participate in the heritage jealously watched over by the former and the expediency of borrowing. In short, "the necessity of labour, freedom and boldness in the improvement of the mother tongue" (287).

In Edmund Spenser: An Essay on Renaissance Poetry (1925) he fills out the initial sketch and establishes a clear lineage which began with Speroni, was extended by Minturno, practised by Dante, Du Bellay and Ronsard and transmitted to Spenser via Mulcaster. In Spenser, Ronsard, and Du Bellay A Renaissance Comparison (Alfred Satterthwaite, 1960), the weight of Mulcaster's debt to his French counterpart is increased: "It was not only in the matter of his linguistic theories that Mulcaster borrowed from Du Bellay; he also borrowed the manner, the forthright

exhortations, the pithy, categorical statements of the value of the vernacular" (20 - 21).[1] Both critics tend to see Mulcaster as the point of inflection between the progressive attitudes to language in Europe and the static, conservative posture of the English. Much has been made of the putative connections between The Elementarie and the Deffence. Indeed, the relationship has become emblematic of the chasm separating Mulcaster from his contemporaries. It is therefore imperative to examine the relationship between the theories of language postulated in The Elementarie and those which had appeared thirty-three years before in the Deffence, to establish as far as is possible, whether the similarities between the two treatises are a result of near plagiarism or if they are strands rescued from the common treasure chest.

The theory that Mulcaster was directly influenced by Du Bellay is appealing in its simplicity, subscribing, as it does, to the theory that posits a series of stark differences between English writers on language on the one hand and Mulcaster, aligned with the Continental battalion, on the other. Therein lies one of its faultlines, placing too much emphasis on contrasts and oppositions which, however handy they may be for retrospective theorising, rarely conform to reality.

In the first place, what this theory takes for granted is that Du Bellay was the sole source of Mulcaster's "Continental" theory of language. To contest, prove or disprove this is to tread on shaky ground and as in much of Renaissance studies,

[1] See "Critical Evaluation of Richard Mulcaster" for additional discusssion of the context in which Mulcaster was evaluated by both Renwick and Satterthwaite. This judgement appears rather too blaise. Although Mulcaster's prose is on the whole dense, he does show in both Positions and The Elementarie certain sparks of brilliance and pithy pronouncements which cannot be all attributed to Du Bellay's influence.

the proof must perforce remain conjectural. There is no reason to assume that Mulcaster would not have had access to Du Bellay's own immediate sources and that his ideas were not necessarily filtered through the French poet. Mulcaster would have had access to Hoby's very popular translation of Castiglione's Il Corteggiano. Machiavelli's works were known in England and knowledge of Dante's Divine Comedy was widespread even if De vulgari eloquentia is less doubtful.[2]

Renwick's observation is borne out by an analysis of the issues touched on by each author and this supplies ample grounds for assuming that together they form a composite picture of the issues which were repeatedly raised during the later sixteenth century. This is further strengthened by the fact that the context within which their opinions were developed was quite different. The framework within which the Deffence was inserted is present in the full title: Du Bellay was defending the French language as a fitting vehicle for a national poetry in the first twelve chapters and lays down norms for versification in the second part. The defence of the vernacular in the Elementarie, in the same way, lays the groundwork for Mulcaster's spelling and educational reforms but on the other hand, it neither sets out to specifically defend the vernacular, or its use in versifying, but provides a much more ample framework.

Both texts share two additional features which are more circumstantial in nature: timing and originality. It must be queried whether such spirited defences, coming

[2] The work was not popularised until 1529 when Trissino published an edition.

when they did, were really necessary and if they were in fact anachronistic. How far was it necessary to appeal for the use of English at the end of the 16th century? The first edition of the Shepheardes Calendar had been published in 1579 and Sidney was at work on Arcadia and Astrophel and Stella throughout the eighties.The numerous tracts being written in and on the language, even by avowed classicists, and the steady flow of ever more ambitious translations vouched for the existence of a healthy and flourishing language. Both the Book of Common Prayer and the Anglican liturgy were well established, and by the time Mulcaster wrote, the language had already got a firm foothold and was emerging from its swaddling clothes. His exhortation for its use and practice, given this panorama, rings slightly superfluous. He was by no means a man before his time in his recognition of the potential of the vernacular. English literary practice which is the most reliable barometer of attitudes bore testimony in his day to the vigour and life which poets and playwrights were discovering. The vernacular had already worked its way into the marrow of people's consciousness and occupied an unassailable position in their emotional and sentimental life. Waswo (1987) Hall (1977) and Blank (1996), both conclude that this is the explanation for the absence of a bugle-blowing gathering of the hosts in England to defend the language: the vernacular was first established through the Word and not through words. This is how Waswo describes the process of the Renaissance in England:

> Crossing the channel the ambivalences with which continental humanist writing was riddled dissipates and are harmoniously absorbed into the fabric of humanist pedagogy with little theoretical fanfare. The English humanists implemented the strategy to ennoble

> the vernaculars without defending it. That the vernacular was equal in beauty to Latin is merely stated and they adopted the method of assimilation without theorising (1987: 199).

Although no other author treats the theme on the same broad and comprehensive scale, this silence cannot be interpreted as indifference. It was merely a reluctance to state the obvious. Was not Mulcaster then preaching to the converted? He himself undermines his own defence when he states that the language had long been weaned from the breast of its milk nurse and had even passed the teething stage.

Attempts to explain the appeal of Du Bellay's text have dismissed both timing and originality as pertinent factors. Aulotte concludes that the whole field of exhortations to the use of French and rousing declarations about its possibilities had been well tilled by mid century. In the 1540's, "rien n'etait aussi banal en France ... qu'une apologie de la langue vulgaire" (1965: 513). There is also general consensus that the most appealing ideas in the Deffence were by no means fruit of his own loom: "l'originalité des revendications de Du Bellay en faveur de la langue francaise ... est ... a peu près nulle" (qtd. in Terreaux, 1972: 119).[3] This is easily confirmed by even a hasty survey of the French writings on language of the first half century. From as early as 1509 in Seyssel's preface to his translation of Justin, a series of writers systematically launched defences of their language in quick

[3] Waswo draws attention to the fact that the richness of Speroni's arguments "suffer considerable loss" when adopted by the Pléiade school. Furthermore, he asserts with considerable plausity, the uneasy marriage of Perotto's and Bembo's arguments which Du Bellay attempts to weld together in support of his central premise. See Waswo, 1987: 169 - 71. For a complementary view, see Terence Cave 1979: 74 -75.

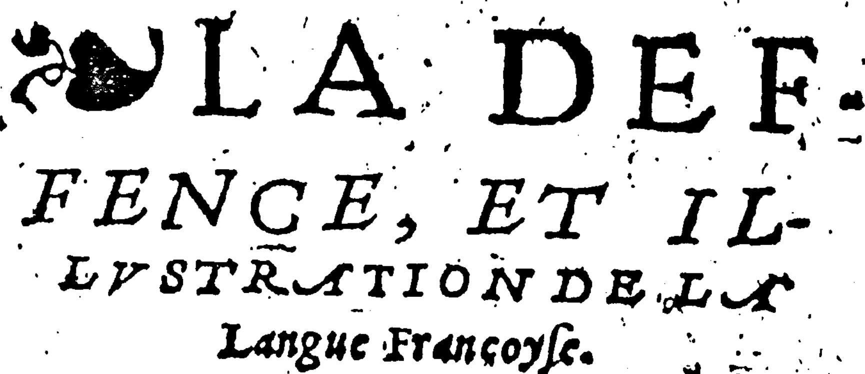
succession: Sainte-Marthe (1540), Canappe (1541), Dolet (1542), Charles Fontaine, Jean le Blond (1546) and Jaques de Beaune (1548). Geoffroy Tory, writing in 1529 had expressed the same confidence that the language would be easily ordered if the French applied themselves with the same diligence as the Latins and Greeks had once done: "Notre langue est aussi facile a reigler et mettre en bon ordre, qui fut iadis la langue Grecque" (Rickard, 1968: 87). Jaques Peletier Du Mans (1545) also pleas for the practice of the language as a remedy for its poverty, recommending that men should apply themselves to "illustrer & enrichir leur demaine hereditaire" (Rickard, 1968: 120). Not only was Du Bellay continuing a strong tradition, he also grafted onto his text most of the main ideas of his predecessors, putting into practice the process of assimilation he expresses throughout his work through imagery of digestion and construction.

Apart from feeding on the writings of his fellow country men, Du Bellay drank copiously from the fountainhead. Speroni Sperone's Dialogo delle lingue (1542), was "a convenient digest of virtually all the issues that would continue to be disputed in the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns" (Waswo, 1987: 156). Book One is heavily indebted to the Italian, where the contributions of Bembo and Perotto, as they answer the conventional objections made against the vernacular are incorporated. Not only the spirit but most of his organic images are transposed to the Deffence in spite of the anti-Italian bias of much of the work.

Neither The Elementarie nor the Deffence are innovative or original *per se*. Nor do they mark a significant milestone or turning point in the development of their

vernaculars. Yet, they cannot be accused of bartering second-hand goods, nor of passing off as new what was common knowledge. The mere fact of uttering on the public stage what was universally assumed to be common knowledge had a value of its own. Mulcaster's merit then, must lie in the mere fact that he publicly expressed these ideas and formulated evanescent attitudes within a theoretical construct whereas others remained silent. Du Bellay managed to capture public imagination: published in 1549, the Deffence went through three editions before 1568 and quickly acquired the status of a manifesto, proclaiming the ability of the French language to produce poetry on a par with that of the classical authors. As in so many Renaissance texts, it was the status of the writer rather than original thought that made his ideas congenial.

Mulcaster's influence imploded rather than exploded. The self-evident arguments he put forward have a part to play in accounting for the lack of reaction to his work but, the fact that they are embedded in a project of wider scope could have worked against him. His influence hardly extended much beyond a small group of pedadgogues. Whatever the verdict delivered as to originality, their writings serve as a summary of the issues that had either been debated throughout the century or those which would come to the forefront in the next.



LA DEFFENCE, ET ILLVSTRATION DE LA
Langue Francoyse.

Par I. D. B. A.

Imprimé à Paris pour Arnoul l'Angelier, tenãt sa Bouticque au second pillier de la grand' sale du Palays.

1549.

AVEC PRIVILEGE.

Fig. 6 Title page of La Deffence, 1549. Rpt. in Terreaux, 1972.

5.2 The Issues Raised

The Deffence and The Elementarie are of interest from two perspectives. They form the starting point from which to begin to discuss attitudes to the vernacular in the sixteenth century and to tease apart the different strands that contributed to the shaping of these attitudes. The whole of the previous century is present in these works. The second approach to these texts hones in on the structure and language, taking as a point of departure the assertion that Mulcaster was deeply indebted to the work written in France forty years before his own came to press.

In order to study the issues raised a complementary range of texts were called into service. Those proceeding from the Italian and Continental Renaissance, as well as providing a diachronic perspective, serve as a petri dish to locate where these ideas originated, how they propagated themselves and what mutations they underwent as they migrated into a new habitat. It is not within the scope of this work to trace out a genetic family tree but to demonstrate with some degree of reliability the summarising nature of both these texts in the first place and to create a background against which to evaluate The Elementarie in particular.

A second corpus of work drawn from English literature and theory sheds a complementary and contrastive light on Mulcaster's achievement as the issues which invited speculation and discussion of language were articulated differently in England. In what way and why? Some of the issues that come up in Mulcaster

and Du Bellay were virtually ignored while others provoked reactions which, by their very difference from those on the Continent, beg explanation.

The supplementary texts are of three types: educational, rhetorical and sociological. The plurality however is overcome by their common purpose. Written in the vernacular, their aim, either through practice or precept or a combination of both, is to groom and fine-hone the language in order that it fulfil the social, cultural and literary functions required of it. Furthermore, they all cast about for the means to assuage and dispel the acute sense of real and psychological deficiency that had hampered its progress.

The language used is not the only aspect they hold in common. They are all didactic in so far as they lay down guidelines designed to lever the vernacular out of its abject state, thus combining description with prescription. They range from the unbending geographical and social parameters defined in The Art of English Poesie to the classically inspired norms of rhetoric as described by Wilson, from the observance of social norms which underpin Castiglione's work, to Mulcaster's set of rules, arrived at diachronically and characterised by their vitality and flexibility.

Moreover, the almost forced optimism in the promising future of the vernacular, openly expressed by some writers is, at heart, shared by all. The very act of writing in the vernacular is an unconditional acknowledgement of its potential, in spite of the emphasis placed on the difficulty of attaining this goal. Ironically, it was the

use of the vernacular that put its treachery into evidence. To do so was at once a vote of faith and the acceptance of a challenge, one which was taken up by isolated individuals who had little consciousness of forming part of a movement. One important point that must constantly be kept in mind is the timing of the texts. What may have been innovative or startling in one period loses its freshness and audacity in another, having been absorbed into the common chest of shared knowledge.

In order to conduct an analysis of Mulcaster and Du Bellay's treatises on language the umbrella term of "change" has been chosen as under its awnings a cluster of issues nest. It underpins, either directly or indirectly, all of the themes raised throughout the century. Acceptance and recognition of change both geographically and diachronically lies behind the theories of the nature of the linguistic sign, the origin of language and the possibility of a universal language.

These three themes form the backdrop against which other issues were discussed, some with greater enthusiasm than others. Borrowing, the most overt sign that languages were constantly changing was the immediate spur for much of the writing on language. When grasping this nettle, writers edged towards the development of a theory of semantic change. As a practice which was perceived as endangering the survival of the host language as a discreet entity it threw up and demanded greater definition of what constituted the uniqueness of each language, a discussion which swayed between indulgence in xenophobic sentiments of blind nationalism and a more reasoned attempt to define just what constituted the

"genius" or "itness" of each of the competing vernaculars. The section ends by examining the dawning of the recognition that languages are patrimony of their speakers by looking at the way in which the trends of passive acceptance of Latin's dominance, challenged on all fronts, were slowly replaced by calls on the linguistic community to cultivate their own language, to bring it to a peak of excellence. This is accompanied by changes in the attitude to grammar which was symptomatic of the undoing of the knots that equated the value of a language to its possession of rules and a deliberate severing of connections with medieval ideology. Underlying and instigating calls for active participation in the formation of language was the new sense of history which was taking root at the time. This led to an interest in the historical process by which languages took on different forms.

Attitudes to the vernaculars were designed and defined as a response to the immediate and pressing issue of linguistic change which puts into relief both the grounds of consensus and the disputed issues. The double perspective has been adopted in order to indicate that much that has been praised as original and innovative in Mulcaster's approach to language is merely an extension of a far reaching line of thought which had its inception in the Italian Renaissance and was subsequently adopted and slightly, but very slightly, adapted by Du Bellay, Ronsard and the members of the Pléiade school in its passage through France. Mulcaster fed on this tradition and transposed it onto the English context. The originality with which he was garlanded must be located not in the ideas he expressed but in the handling and expression of the material at his disposition.

The issues I propose to examine should prove the litmus strip for a diagnosis of the extent of the breach that ostensibly separated Mulcaster's ideas on language from those of his contemporaries. Was Mulcaster truly as radical, rebellious and distinct from the Cambridge humanists as Renwick and Satterthwaite claim? Was his position on language, as Renwick states, "utterly opposed" to that of Ascham and the Cambridge humanists? Have the points of confrontation been bloated out of proportion and if so, in what sense do they need to be modified and pared down? Differences undoubtedly existed but they must be described in the muted pastels of a Titian landscape rather than the bold definitive strokes of a Miró.

5.3 Change

> Proud Change (not pleasd, in mortall things,
>
> beneath the Moone, to raigne)
>
> Pretends, as well of Gods, as Men,
>
> to be the Soveraine
>
> Spenser, Canto VI

> yet being rightly wayd
>
> They are not changed from their first estate;
>
> But by their change their being doe dilate:
>
> And turning to themselves at length againe,
>
> Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate
>
> Then over them change doth not rule and raigne;
>
> but they raigne over change, and doe their states
>
> Spenser, Mutability Canto, VII: 58

The terms "change" and "chance" were virtually interchangeable in the Renaissance, reflecting the intriguingly ambivalent attitudes to the phenomenon held at the time. Although it was becoming increasingly apparent that language was a social construct and that it had imbedded in it mechanisms which allowed it to adapt to its milieu, change was a bitter pill to swallow. Language responded to external forces just as the life of the citizens of the state was influenced by forces beyond their control. Faced with a quick succession of unprecedented social and

economic upheavals, it was a force which raised the hackles of language and social commentators alike in Tudor England but also encouraged a re-examination of hitherto unquestioned ideas:

> the invention of moveable type, the collapse of a spiritually unified Christendom, the rise of science, the development of humanist philology, the recovery of ancient texts, the voyages of discovery. All these encouraged an examination of the grounds of knowledge and belief (Shuger, 1990: 25).

This fermenting brew gave the impression that eternal laws were becoming invalid and society run amuck. Security and stability were slipping out of the grasp of man. Change caused a splintering of the unified social structure and as far as language was concerned, an apparent free-for-all became the only rule of thumb. Starkey captures the feeling among intellectuals of the period:

> fortune and chance be now minished, now increased, now trodden underfoot, now flourishing, now in decay, none otherwise than the troublous and tempestuos sea which by every wind is tossed and tumbled from his stable quietness and tranquility. (Lamond, 1948: 66 - 67)

The adjectives "tempestuos", and "troubled" are reinforced by the verbs "tossed" and "tumbled". Buffeted by change, the ship of state and its symbols were in danger of capsizing. A sense of disorientation, a fear of running aground and a yearning for a charted course pervades all texts from the period. There is a groping

for a new understanding of the world by writers who were being swept along with the current, wrestling with new concepts, in the thick of the gale attempting to map out new directions and navigate the shark-infested waters into which they was sailing. The desire for control above all characterises the period; and extends from the highest ranks of government to the lowliest levels of everyday life. Change was only palatable when regulated and harnessed, not when it sucked them into a whirling vortex.

5.3.1 Shapes of Change: Cyclical or Linear Change: Devolution, Evolution or Repetition

There were two fundamental interpretations of linear change current during the Renaissance, one, part of the medieval heritage and the other, herald of the age of scientific realism. In the former they found the stability they craved and in the latter the necessary provenance of constructive policy. Viewing change as linear incorporated both the theological and scientific world views. The first was deeply influenced by Christian teaching which saw decay and corruption encroaching on the postlapsarian world where events followed a purposeful providential pattern. Hooker summarises this view, although dissenting from those who maintained that: "the first state of things was best" and "therefore it must needs follow, that customs, laws, and ordinances devised since are not so good [for the Church of Christ]" (qtd in Shuger, 1990: 33). He explicitly rejects a view of history which postulated the progressive diminution of everything from the physiological to the moral.

This gloomy linear view of history was increasingly modified during the sixteenth century and emerged, metamorphosed into one of continual progress, reaching its heyday in scientific materialism. The precepts of this philosophical movement had made their first timid stirrings in the early Renaissance when the inferiority of present-day man began to be rigorously questioned. Vives consistently admonishes those who believe that man was a dwarf riding on the shoulders of the giants, "for it is a false and fond similitude, ... that we are, compared with the ancients, as dwarfs upon the shoulders of giants, but we are all of one stature" (Watson,1913: cv). This idea was seized upon by Bacon who reverses the commonplace idea of the ages of men, stating that it is the present, with its accumulated knowledge that is the ancient age and not vice versa: "These times are the ancient times, when the world is ancient, and not those which we account ancient, *ordine retrogrado* by a computation backward from ourselves"(Kitchin, 1984: 31). Linear change therefore could be interpreted as both perpetual decay and a slippage from initial perfection and, in the more progressive thinkers, a movement out of the dark ages of the mind onto a new plateau with exciting vistas.

There was however an alternate conceptualisation of change, one which found its logical analogy in the vegetative world and which coexisted with the linear view. The cyclical pattern of the medieval mystery plays for example, betray a sense of history following a pattern or design. This movement depicted a boom-and-bust pattern, like the rotation of a point on a wheel. Everything has an infancy, a growth to maturity and then a decline and fall. The revival of interest in ancient history

and the new, more scientific attitude to the subject which moved away from the swirling mists of myth, legend and hearsay brought with it a clearer concept of the repetitive cycles of history. It was corroborated by the patterns visible in the fortunes of nations which grew to power and then disappeared into the dusty corners of memory.

Like most Renaissance theories it was by no means new and had appeared in Greek philosophy. However, while the Greeks had observed that things moved in cycles, they merely saw events as repeating themselves - they lacked a sense of progress and failed to connect one event with another in a cause-effect relation. This point of view which saw human nature as always the same, was clung to tenaciously and can be found as late as 1635 in Sir Thomas Browne's Religio Medici: "men and minds like those that first begat them ... are lived over again, the world is now as it was in ages past" (qtd. in Burke, 1969: 89).

The Roman writers of the later classical period do, according to Burke, have a "sense of anachronism". Varro, Cicero, Horace and Lucretius show an awareness of change and development. It is this latter point that was seized upon by the Renaissance scholars who integrated into the cyclical movement a sense of progress, converting it into a spiral pattern, moving towards perfection, something similar to the idea expressed by W.B. Yeats in Sailing to Byzantium: "perne in a gyre".

Vives ascribes to the concept of cyclical progress and sees history as the accumulation of knowledge, constantly surpassing the initial foundations from which it sprang. He does not see this progress as steady, but punctuated by irregularities and contingencies of time and place. Hooker also shies from strict determinism and introduces a fortuitous element. The history of the church he claims, demonstrated not pattern but diversity, a fact which he accounts for by reference to the specificity of time and circumstance: "Sacred history unfolds not as the repetition of timeless patterns but as the linear evolution of particular and culturally specific moments" (Hooker, Works, I: 398).

This shift towards a cyclical interpretation of history was the combined result of a more objective study of facts and a concern more with this world than with the spiritual. Eisenstein posits the theory that it was the continuous accumulation of fixed record which did much to alter the idea of change and progress. The amenities of print fostered "a new awareness of place and period "(1989: 58). New patterns were becoming evident. Machiavelli for example put forward a cyclical theory of political history where the rule of the prince degenerates into tyranny, which in its turn is replaced by democracy. This then degenerates into anarchy and is followed by the ascension of the prince again. Patrizzi in Ten Dialogues on History (1560) proposes the idea that nations have a beginning, growth, maturity, decline and fall. Bacon and Brown gave similar interpretations of history and this was in turn extended to the arts, painting, sculpture and architecture.[4]

[4] See Burke (1969: 42) for an account of Vasari's cyclical interpretation of the evolution of art.

The concept of cyclical change was adopted by the Italian humanists as it offered a more congenial perspective by holding out the possibility of renewal: "... muchos humanistas creían en una interpretación cíclica de la historia, según la cual una época podía ser una especie de reencarnación o reaparición de otra época anterior" (Burke, 1993: 33 - 34). They also, however, inherited the Roman sense of historical consciousness as can be seen from the accounts of the development of man from his primitive origins to the formation of society, many of which follow the eloquent account given by Lucretius c. 94 - 55 B.C. in his poem On the Nature of Things.

In England, Ascham takes this cyclical view of history to bolster up his view that a nation may preserve its language at its best and even improve it by incorporating the standards of some earlier exemplary era. Thus, the English may achieve Latin eloquence by incorporating and assimilating the linguistic conventions of Rome. In Ascham's historiography, classical Rome and sixteenth century England occupy the same position on the wheel of historical fortune and so the Roman linguistic model can be applied.

Although incipient in classical approaches to the history of art, language and social development, it was not, however, according to Jones (1922) until the mid seventeenth century, in the heat of the age of scientific realism, that the idea gained wide currency and culminated in the foundation of the Royal Society of London. [5] George Hakewill, in a treatise entitled An Apologie or Declaration of the power

[5] Jones (1922) makes the case for Hakewill's influence on the precepts followed by the Royal Society and draws this unsung hero out of the recesses of history to give him a prominent place in the direction of the paths the society would take.

<u>and providence of God in the Government of the World, consisting in an examination and Censure of the Common Error touching Nature's Perpetual and Universal Decay</u> (1627), set out to challenge the belief that all human endeavour is in vain and develops the idea of cyclical progress. Although his expression of the mutability of nature bears strong echoes of Castiglione's vision of linguistic change: " All things have their growth, their flourishing, their fading and within a while after their resurrection and reflourishing again" (qtd in Jones 1920: 109) as does Mulcaster's, "For everie one thing hath a certain ascent from the meanest to the height, and a descent again from the height to the meanest ... it becomes rude again and in a manner withered" (176), there was a fundamental difference. The latter two writers were not circumscribed by the mere repetition of a model but saw it inscribed within a pattern of progress. It was not merely a matter of reiterating old patterns *ad infinitum* but, as Vives had said, building on them.

5.3.2. Linguistic Change

Linguistic change has long been high on the agenda of peddlers in language. Language offers a patent example of mutability, a mirror image of the fate of man. Caxton, for example despairs of a language," Ever waverynge / wexynge", and put it down to the fact that the English had been born under the sign of the moon.[6] He typifies those who are gripped by a sense of loss, a line of thought that has been particularly difficult to eradicate; even today society harbours stubborn pockets of resistance manned by a few stalwarts. Even the optimistic mood of the

[6] Attributing linguistic variation to astrological influences was, if not ubiquitous, then at least quite common. Bovelles, (1533) writes off dialectical variations in French as a result of *horoscopus caeli*. See C. Demaizière and C. Schmitt, 1982.

Enlightenment did not discourage Charles Brinsley from assuming that change in language is a symptom of increasing corruption in men: "many [words] have bin depraved and corrupted by continuance and succession of time" (qtd in Donawerth, 1983: 34). Samuel Johnson in the mid eighteenth century gives the most resounding statement on change: "All change is evil", a thought at the back of many a linguist's mind.[7]

Equanimity, however, best characterises the attitude of Continental linguists towards change. The strident protests so typical of the English commentators on language mutability are absent. It is seen not only as an inevitable part of the human condition but, moreover, a principle of growth. Dante for example states that the principle of natural diversity lies in instability and the mutability of Man who changes speech as he alters habits of dress. Speroni offers a description of language in diachronic terms and Castiglione shows his sense of historical progress by prohibiting the use of archaic or obsolete words. Texts on language invoke either the analogy between plant life and languages or that between states and empires and the tongues. Castiglione, likens change in the lexicon to the effect of seasons on plant life: "Just as the seasons of the year divest the earth of its flowers and fruits, and then adorn it again with others, so time causes those first words to decline and then usage gives life to others" (Bull, 1976: 80).

George Puttenham, curiously, after having attempted to set down rules for and define proper diction, ends his chapter on language with a capitulation to the

[7] It should be noted that Johnson modified this outright denunciation of change, taken from the Plan of the dictionary, settling back into an attitude of resigned acceptance in the Preface.

inevitable by quoting the following verses from Horace. It is at once a stroke of common sense and a gesture of exasperation.

> Many a word yfalne shall eft arise
> And such as now bene held in hiest prise
> Will fall as fast, when use and custom will
> Onely umpires of speach, for force and skill
>
> (Willcock and Walker, 1936: 148).

The Horatian analogy between language and nature, one which left an indelible mark on humanist writings on language exemplifies the narrow space within which man could manoeuvre. It was a mark of inevitability, giving predominance to the organic rather than the social nature of language and thus restricting the territory within which man could impose his will. As the Renaissance progresses we see a decided swing towards the enhancement of man's powers over language, circumscribed by the social and contractual nature of language predominates.

The antidote to the poison of change was Art. Languages which were ordered, fixed and regulated by Art somehow lay in a timeless realm. They had, "put off flesh and blood, and are become immutable" (qtd in Jones 1920: 138). It was Art which, according to Dante, distinguished the classical languages from the vernaculars; the former being characterised by perfection and stability as expressed through rule. Hence, a language in possession of a grammar was, if not superior, at least on a different level than those which lacked it. The consciousness of the need for a grammatical norm was late in taking root in England and Art's jurisdiction

was restricted to legislating on proper words. Mulcaster and Bullokar are exceptional insofar as they are aware of the need for a grammar and in the case of the latter, actually produced a brief booklet at his own expense.[8]

Nowhere is the appeal to Art more insistent than in the work of the spelling reformers. Apparently random variation in spelling epitomised the antithesis of what the language should be. Art, a synonym of reason would give rise to a perfect notation which would "staie" the English language. Mulcaster too appeals to Art but allocates it a merely formulative or executive role; it is charged with codifying the self-evident facts observed in the language. He expresses the intertwining roles of Nature and Art thus: "the thing itself, shall com furth in hir own naturall hew tho in artificall habit" (84). Art or grammar is to allow the natural properties to shine forth and, in keeping with his theory of language is compared to clothing.

5.3.3 Mulcaster's Conceptualisation of Change

Mulcaster's concept of change swings between the linear and cyclical and moreover demonstrates other characteristics which differentiate him from his compatriots. Like his Continental counterparts, he views change with equanimity, starting from the self-evident premise that, "as all things else, which belong to man be subiect to change, so the tung also is"(176). There is little that is original in this observation. What is different, however is that it is uttered, not in tones of resignation and regret, but occupies the core of his theory of language.

[8] Bullokar mentions on the title page of his Short Introduction or Guiding to Print (1580) that he has a "ruled Grammer for English (not yet in print) ".

Moreover, he goes on to defer from the idea that in perfection lies immutability. On the contrary, absence of change is a symptom of death: "for if anie tung be absolute, and fre from motion, it is shrined up in books, and not in ordinarie use, but made immortal by the register of memorie." (177). A dead language *may* be a repository of knowledge but lacks the rising sap which will allow growth and adaptation. Mulcaster's definition of language concentrates on the process and its dynamism as is clear from the analogies he draws with blood, water, mercury and quicksilver.[9]

Mulcaster presents and conjugates the two shapes of change. At one point, (anticipating the positive view of human development endorsed by Bacon) he states that the language is on an ascendant path, progressively improving: "the finest tung was once in filth, the verie course of nature proceding from weaknese to strength, from imperfection to perfitnesse" (69). In a seemingly contradictory sense, at another point, he states that language progresses through repetitive cycles similar to seasonal and tidal movements. Custom:

> preserveth tungs in their naturall best from the first time that theie grow to account, till theie com to decaie, & a new period growen, different from the old, tho excellent in the altered kinde, and yet it self to depart , and make roum for another, when the cicular turn shall have ripened alteration (178).

[9] Montaigne refers to "the spirited metal" in a similar context.

A third simile directly relates it to the political and military fortunes of the state, as it grows "to better countenance" or falls off "to the more corrupt", so too will its language. The rise and fall of nations is reflected in the development or the deterioration of the language. Languages reach their highest perfection during periods of high political fortunes. The cyclical pattern of rebirth is also represented by the image of the phoenix rising from its own ashes, an image which introduces another dimension. Language is not merely a human institution or a biological entity but contains something of the mystical, an aspect to which he later refers to as, "the secret misterie".

The complex nature of linguistic change is evident in these four portrayals. There is no fundamental incompatibility between the linear and cyclical views of change because, in Mulcaster's view, while language is diachronically determined and will go through periods of flourishing and decay which resist man's volition, it is also synchronically determinable. Subject to the forces of history, language is impervious to human intervention. Synchronically, however, it yields to temporary improvements, modifications and adjustments which are incorporated into its development in future periods. This is the linguistic equivalent of Vives' accumulated knowledge.

The coupling of the diachronic and synchronic perspectives was not a new departure and had been dealt with in Speroni's Dialogo della Lingua where Perotto and Bembo thrash out the role assigned to man in language formation and change. Mulcaster intertwines the two time perspectives, the short and the long term, and

also two conceptions of language, one as a product of human society, deeply involved with human motivation and necessity, and the other as an autonomous, self-regulating entity. The wider temporal reference is cyclical: the shorter is linear. Fibres within the language can be modified but are temporally contingent and will succumb to the great pattern in the long term.

This does not mean that reform is in vain, just that its scope is reduced. It can never be either imposed or definitive and is severely circumscribed by natural cycles. Mulcaster never abandons this intriguing perspective: language as both a social construct and an organic entity, product and process. This gives the work a tone of mediation and even hesitancy because its celebration of the ceaseless fluctuations of the spoken vernacular undermines its very foundations. It concludes, like Spenser that mutability is part of a larger stability; just as the wind is constant in its changeability, so too is language. Change is both the bane and the boon of language

This acceptance of change and the recognition of its positive and negative consequences come together in the central position he grants to Prerogative. Paradoxically, it is this which both allows a language to evolve but at the same time prevents it from achieving perfect rule and stability. It is an emblem of the very freedom which leaves perfection dangling vexingly out of reach. On the one hand, Mulcaster hails prerogative and mutability as the twin engines which drive language onwards to improvement. On the other hand, he desires to rein them in and restrict their random workings. This is yet another of the dilemmas he finds

before him. Prerogative is positive as it represents the force of custom and accumulated educated judgement but its very life-giving possibilities foreclose permanence in the narrower classical sense.

His own attempts to reform spelling take place within this paradox. He is free to make improvements which are right for a specific time and place but their validity is limited both temporally and by the nature of the language itself. What he attempted to do in The Elementarie was to balance the forces of change with those of custom, to achieve an equilibrium which would allow the workings of change to respect the historical formation of language and its spelling.

There are two further points that demand attention. Firstly, change is neither positive nor negative - it is merely an impersonal, blind force which can be moulded one way or another by man. Being neutral it will yield good or bad results depending on how the linguistic community react to it. This is to submit it to the will of man and thus provide the vernaculars with an escape route from perpetual enslavement. Man appears on the stage as both shaper and shaped: he is at once the source and determiner of the destiny of his language, taking the reins of the future, deposing the omnipotent forces of blind fortune but this freedom is limited by the raw materials with which he has to work. Adopting a double time perspective and conjugating the linear and cyclical patterns of change allows him to make these two facts compatible.

The second aspect of Mulcaster's theory of linguistic change has been indicated in the second quotation which introduces this section and accounts for his lack of hystericism or nostalgia. In this view linguistic change never penetrates to the essence or affects the living core of a language. It is equivalent to changing styles and fashions and is therefore relatively superficial. The language's "naturall hew" remains intact. This concept puts the furore over borrowing into perspective

5.4 The Nature of the Linguistic Sign: Three Theories.

Like most Renaissance trends, there was nothing new in the idea that the linguistic sign was arrived at arbitrarily and was a product of convention. It lay at the base of Aristotle's theory of meaning but was resurrected during the Renaissance when it proved particularly useful in the hands of the cultural humanists for whom it became a catechism, representing as it did, a logical extension of their belief in man as maker. Moreover, it posited a theory which would account for all languages without either denying their peculiarity or putting the mark of Cain on the vernaculars. Embracing the theory of arbitrariness dignified those emergent vernaculars which could not prove a direct line of descent from either Latin, Greek or Hebrew. The theory also helped explain the variation which was observed between languages, a diversity which became increasingly evident as the Old World took to the seas and exploration of other cultures unveiled very distinct language systems.

The Aristotelian argument against the naturality of languages held that as all men have the same concepts, there would be in theory, one language but it is possible to use several names for the same thing, "As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the mental affectations themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind" (Cooke, 1938, p. 115). Part of the appeal of the theory lay in the fact that it did not deny a natural relationship between signified and signifier. On the contrary, it took this as a

starting point to explore the various expressions of the common "mental affectations".

There were three theories in the air in the Renaissance regarding the nature of the linguistic sign. The first, and least subscribed to, held that there was a real and natural connection, a marriage of words and things. The word or the speech sound was seen as a symbol of the idea in much the same way as onomatopoeias are considered today. There were few who strictly followed this Neoplatonic and Pythagorean theory but it was embraced by John Dee who believed that "the quiddity of the substance" lay within the word. John Donne would seem to agree: "Adam was able to decipher the nature of every creature in the name thereof", implying that the names came first and that they were referentially determined. Vives too seems to share the belief that words should demonstrate the nature of the signified: "For that language, whose words should make clear the natures of things, would be the most perfect of all, such as it was probable was that original language in which Adam attached names to things" (Watson, 1913: 111).

In the majority of cases, a compromise was worked out whereby the natural - conventional dichotomy was resolved by positing the idea that in each language there were some words which were divine in origin and others which were conventional. Hebrew was thought to have the highest proportion of divine words and therefore was nearest to the truth. An extension of this theory is found in the phonemic spelling reforms envisaged by Smith, Hart and Bullokar all of whom

held that the letter and the sound were connected by a natural bond and thus the letter should embody or symbolise the sound it represented.

The second possibility stated that words bore the human imprint, were designated by the wise and like all other human institutions were merely conventional. This idea had for long been an alternative to the natural origin of the sign. In Cratylus, Hermogenes maintains that the natural resemblance between the thing and the phoneme can only exist within a consensus. Numerous sources can be called upon to testify as to the predominance of this view. The evolution of Dante's thought offers another paradigm for the general trend. His earlier work begins by seeing Latin and the vernaculars on two distinct plains, as two static entities which did not hold any bonds in common. This view is gradually replaced by a more dynamic and homogeneous view of languages and an increasing respect for the vernacular as its possibilities became evident. It is this view which dominates De vulgari eloquentia, a work which sets the tone for future discussions of language. Erasmus in De pronunciatone,(1558) through the mouthpiece of Leo, affirms that words bear the imprint of human, not supernatural signification. "I judged them born by chance, or at least invented, according to the whim of teachers". According to Du Bellay, it is "la fantasie des hommes"(1980: 21) which gave rise to the variety of languages and his treatment of this issue affords a clear example of how the theory was used in the hands of the cultural nationalists. The fact that "les hommes sont de divers vouloir" provides ample grounds on which to construct a defence of each vernacular. Abraham Fraunce (1588), also attributes the common origin of all

language, not to a historical source but to "the imposition and fancie of man" (qtd. in Donawerth, 1983: 27).

The third and compromise belief, one shared by most Elizabethan humanists was that words were representative of things in a rational manner, neither arbitrary nor natural but reflecting man's *ratiocinio*. Vives, for example, states that speech "flows at once from the rational soul as water from a fountain" (Watson, 1913: 90) and on the opening pages of The Arte of Rhetoric, Wilson's use of "knowledge" as a synonym of "speech" suggests that both gifts are bestowed simultaneously on the chosen few and are the bases for the construction of a just society.[10]

This equation becomes a staple in the late Renaissance. Writers such as Bacon and Mulcaster affirm the close relationship between the essence of the thing and the initial name given to it but it is man's rationality which permits him to express this perception through the act of naming. One of the first acts performed in Paradise was the "view of creatures and the imposition of names" (Kitchin, 1984: 37). Adam's intentionality plays a major role in the naming of the animals. The theory of the arbitrary sign highlights intentionality, granting primacy to the mind of man, providing a nexus where external reality and internal cognisance are united. The first words were motivated by something other than their definitions and the linguistic sign is granted a life autonomous from its referent. Not all writers arrived easily at this conclusion and Vives is a case in point because his theory of the nature of the linguistic sign is a blend of Platonic and Aristotelian thought.

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[10] Vives points out that the Greeks used the same word for both knowledge and speech.

Words, therefore, became a repository of the accumulated wisdom of the past: as Vives affirms:"Language is the shrine of erudition" (Watson, 1913: 91). It is this concept of language as the treasure house of past knowledge or recipient of culture that figures large in Mulcaster's battery of arguments against innovation in spelling. Radical changes would rupture the links in the chain which anchors a people to their past heritage. It was especially convincing in the circumstances when the nation, its sense of self and its language were in a process of formation. The vogue of the arbitrary linguistic sign coincided with a call for linguistic independence and the liberation of knowledge from the gaol of a specific language. Vives, Du Bellay and Mulcaster insistently make the distinction between language and knowledge and use this distinction to deny the inherent superiority of any one language above another. The diachronic path a language has travelled and the use made of it by the linguistic community are foregrounded. The cloth is cut to fit the man and not the inverse.

The debate on the nature of the linguistic sign was moving in the direction of a secular, sociological and historical interpretation of language but one ultimately which had not fully cast off its medieval garments, demonstrated by the fact that it frequently hinged on the interpretation of the second book of Genesis. The interpretations were not always clear cut. Dante offers a telling example of the dichotomy of thought on the subject and how it evolved. He gives two versions of the faculty of language. In De vulgari eloquentia he claims that not only the faculty but the form of speech (Hebrew) was bestowed on Adam by God. However, in

Paraiso, from the mouth of Adam comes a testimony that it is faculty alone that has been granted to him: "it is a work of nature that man should speak, but whether in this way or that nature then leaves you to follow your own pleasure" (qtd in Cremona, 1965: 150). This argument was repeatedly used during the Italian Cinquento. Bembo for example states that man was given the gift by God to name the animals, "selon le principe du libre arbitre" (Demonet, 1992: 76). Bovelles, too held that Adam was given power by God to name things, not a pre-packaged language. Names are arbitrary, not mystical encodings of reality. He, too, locates the origin of language in human will, specifically in "the will of the first parent Adam" (qtd in Waswo, 1987: 286). Linguistic processes thus become contingent on human purposes and the meaning of words is not mysteriously bound to a given ontology, presumed consubstantial or congruent with reality. Mulcaster calls human purposes, necessity.

It is the socially established contractual element that is stressed in all commentaries on the sign. The principle of consensus is always operative: " Le nom n'est rien d'autre qu'un mot prononcé, institué par concencion entre les hommes pour signifier une chose" (Pierre Agricola, 1515). Valla (1515) declares that: "sa significacion vient de l'institution". Vives' *ad placitum* emphasises the sociological dimension, closely linking languages with their speech communities. Human will was interpreted as the motivation behind speech acts and was mediated through consensus.

This principle was widely embraced and became accepted policy even among the most conservative ranks. Thomas Wilson, having denounced borrowing with some energy concluded that inkpot terms may find a place in the language, "when all others are agreed to follow the same" (Medine, 1994: 191). The rift between the private and the public nature of language is what Blank believes to lie at the centre of the inkhorn debate and it accounts for the acrimonious clashes between opposing factions. The conservatives defended the social nature of language: Wilson calls for "one manner of language" (Medine, 1994: 190) where "dark words" and "obscure meanings" were universally condemned. On the other hand, the neologisers took advantage of their prerogative to invent and manipulate language. the debate can be reduced to the relative weight given to the arbitrary and social facets of the linguistic sign.

The arbitrary sign then, was characterised by both its rational or motivated nature and its social aspect. The term underwent a melioration in the new humanist climate. The negative connotations of *ad hoc*, whimsical or irrational were pushed aside in favour of motivated choice and deliberated decision. The terms *ex placitum* and *ex institutio* summarise concisely the dual nature of the sign, a reasoned choice taken within a social context.

5.4.1 Mulcaster's Position in the Debate

Having spent a large part of The Elementarie defending the social and contractual nature of language,and indeed building his theory of spelling around it, Mulcaster

apparently slips back into the referential mode of thought based on scholastic tradition with the puzzling observation:

> For even God himself, who brought the creatures, which he made, unto that first man ... that he might name them, according to their properties, doth plainlie declare by his so doing, what a cunning thing it is to give right names, and how necessarie it is, to know their forces, which be alreadie given, bycause the word being knowen, which implyeth the propertie the thing is half known, whose propertie is employed (188).

This would seem to overturn his basic hypothesis that language is constructed by its users through a social and historical process that simultaneously forms man and the worlds he inhabits. Here he is proposing that words reflect an external reality, not that they generate or construe their own protean meanings through usage and custom.

This abrupt about-turn does not imply that his theory is Aristotelian or scholastic and based on correspondence nor that he suffered from a type of semantic schizophrenia. It exemplifies Ferguson's conclusion that "the flexibility of Mulcaster's Elizabethan mind, its capacity to tolerate apparently divergent ideas, made it possible for him to get around logical difficulties" (1979: 326). He believes in the truth of Adamic naming but doesn't believe it inconsistent with the view that language is humanly instituted and stops short of claiming the divine creation of words themselves. The underlying meaning of spoken words as preserved in

custom is ultimately determined by its correspondence to the nature of things. It is similar to that proposed by Bovelles (1533): "Words be voluntarie, and appointed upon cause".

The concept of diachrony and the role Mulcaster assigns to it in the development of language provides the key to explaining such apparent inconsistency. In Mulcaster's opinion, words were initially assigned according to the original properties of the thing to be named and thus a referential relationship between them and external reality was established. However, as he himself states in reference to spelling, what was initially true or valid is not eternally so. Superimposed on this primary relation is the stratum which concerns language use and it is at this point that custom or tradition as the cornerstone of meaning intervenes. In this way, a theory of language based on things and reason complements, rather than contradicts, a theory based on convention. Over time words initially based on their relation to external reality, which represents a primitive stage of the language, have yielded to usage and convention. Waswo (1987) examines the dynamics of the Renaissance in terms of how the generation of meaning was perceived and concludes that it was a period of transition from "referential" to "relational semantics", that is, language as a construer of meaning rather than a mirror of an external reality. Mulcaster characterises this transitional stage.

This is analogous to the arguments he puts forward to prove that Sound can no longer be taken as a basis for spelling. While initially it proved the only parameter

by which to write, the language has developed to such an extent that it has been supplanted by custom and reason. Both the nature of the linguistic sign and spelling practices are ultimately determined by historical processes and what was valid for one period does not necessarily hold true for stages further along the line of evolution.

Unlike his contemporaries, the orthopeists, Mulcaster sees the arbitrary principle operating on all levels, between signified and signifier, both oral and written. He refuses to put the grapheme on a secondary level or consider it as contingent on the phoneme. If the vocalised sign stands in an arbitrary relation to the signified, so too does the written one. Mulcaster freed the letter from its referent in the same way that the speech sound had been liberated from its counterpart in reality. He thus extended the analogy one rung up the ladder. Hart and Bullokar, if their theory of the letter - sound relationship is brought to its full conclusion, were advocates of the natural relationship existing between sign and referent.

The importance that is attributed to diachrony and the cyclical progress of language also indicates that Mulcaster was fully aware of the wide-ranging implications of an arbitrary sign. His theory of change and acute historical consciousnêss together with the rejection of absolute standards of perfection further reinforce the impression that, not only did he profess a belief in the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign but also enforced it in his theory of borrowing and spelling reform.

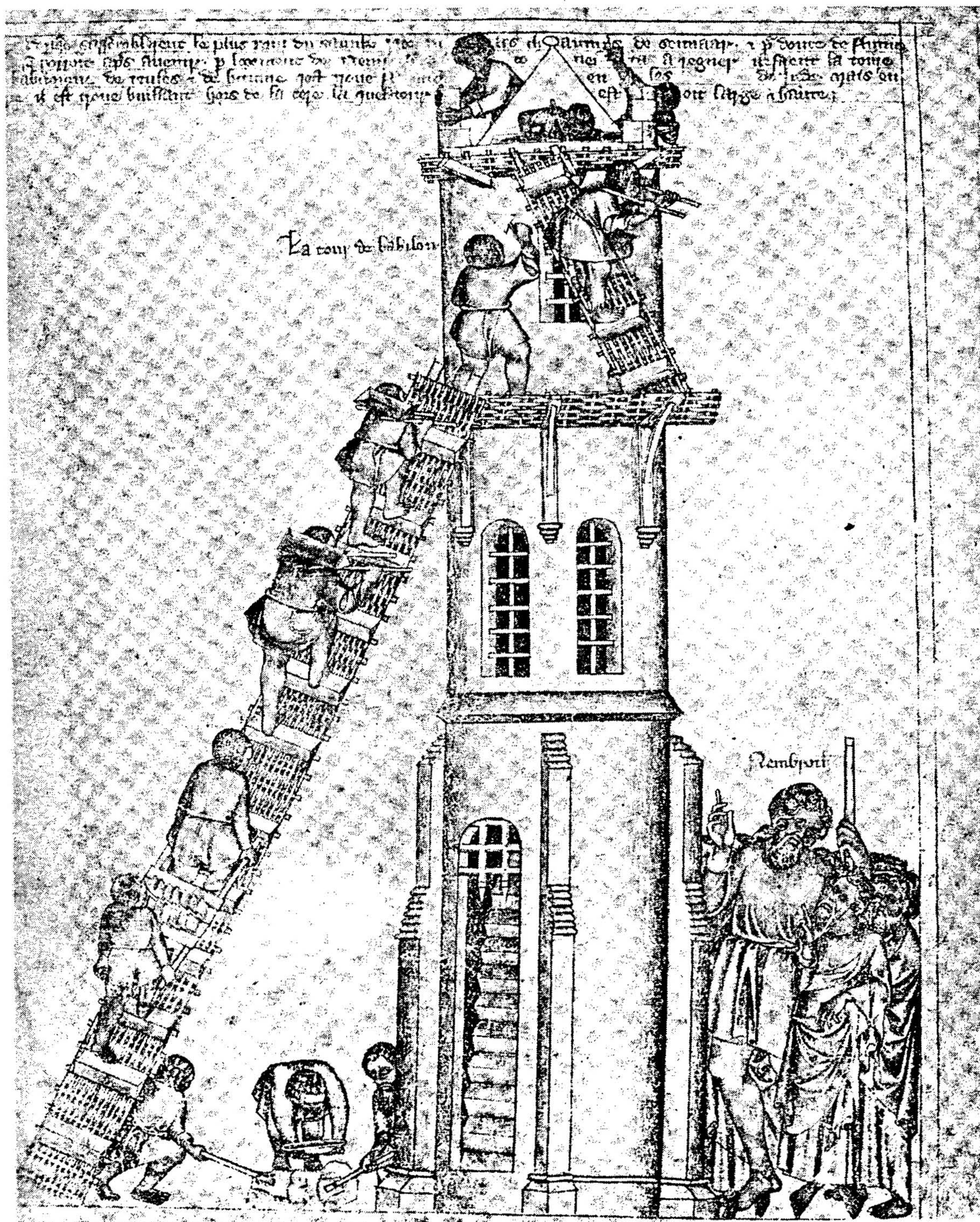

Fig. 7 British illumination of the Tower of Babel 1300. Rpt. in Bailey, 1992.

5.4.3 The Origin of Language

> The controversy about the primal origin of language can scarcely be rightly resolved by anyone (Bovelles, 1533)

Renaissance theories of language are beguilingly novel - one reason for their neglect was that there was no subsequent development of a continuous nature. The 15th century initiated basic moves but lacked the catalytic idea that would establish the vernacular in the 16th century. The first really in-depth discussion of linguistic change and its consequences appeared in the debate on the origin of language. Although this, in the sixteenth century was a theme which had burnt itself out and no longer figured as a centre around which language theory developed, it was important in that it prepared the ground for subsequent developments.

Interest in the origin of language was speculative, neither systematic nor remotely scientific and it was conducted largely within a theological context. Demonet states: "La réflexion sur les langues a donc besoin de légendes que d'autorites pour la confirmer" (1992: 22). The interest in comparative linguistics and diachrony put it on a sounder footing in the seventeenth century.

Initially, two contending theories emerged, both hinging on the interpretation of Genesis, 2 :18 - 25. The first followed the scholastic reading which held that God had bestowed on Adam, a language already constituted and therefore participating in the sacred and the mystical. While most writers date the division between divine

and convention based languages to the Tower of Babel incident, Dante proposed that it was after the Fall that the split occurred, thus illustrating how much was a matter of speculation.

Both versions posit a direct relation between sin and the development of the vernaculars. The first divinely inspired language was held to be natural while convention-based languages were a punishment imposed on mankind for its arrogance. This line of thought receded in popularity as the century wore on and after about 1540, the view that the divine and perfect language was Hebrew was increasingly undermined by the upsurge of the vernaculars. The interpretation of Genesis and the Tower of Babel lost their classificatory power and their mythical and symbolic function began to overshadow the historical aspect. Du Bellay's nonchalant dismissal of the theory: "Laquél diversité & confusion se peut a bon droit appeller la Tour de Babel" (Terreaux, 1972: 21) is symptomatic of this new perspective.

Although Hebrew was the prime candidate for receiving the garland of the first language, Renaissance enthusiasm for the classics drew Latin and Greek into the magic circle as they came close to prelapsarian truth. Exempt from change, in possession of a grammar and fine-tuned by Art, they stood outside and above the discordant voices and confusion of the emerging vernaculars. Roger Ascham's description of Greek as "faire woven broade clothes" as compared to other languages which "be all patched clouthes and ragges" (Mayor,1967: 52) although by no means a view shared by the majority in the 1540s, does represent the older

conservative view which began to taper off as confidence in the vernacular increased.

The revision of the theory of the original language can be measured by two parameters. Firstly, referring to Babel, the words "chaos" and "confusion" were substituted by the value free terms "division", "diversity" or "variation". Bovelles sees in Babel, not a rupture but a natural evolution, consistent with his theory that all languages are subject to change and variation: "Ce phénomène se produit égalment dans toute nation qu'abrite la voute du ciel" (qtd. in Demonet 1992: 100). This was the prism under which Speroni analysed language, holding that linguistic variation was the result of the interplay of language, social necessity and temporally determined needs. The principle of linguistic variation was thus assimilated into the mutability which affected all things human.

Writers with a strong classical background were faced with a dilemma, torn between their intellectual allegiances and the progressive spread of the new languages which were demanding acknowledgement. Vives' writing on the theme illustrates the wavering between the two positions and the attempt to reconcile the theological with the secular or historically derived view. While stating that the diversity of languages was a result of sin: "It was for the punishment of sin that so many languages became current" (Watson, 1913: 91), he nevertheless affirms that no one language is better than another intrinsically: "we have this or that language, by the gift of art" (Watson, 1913: 90). These two statements do not make for happy bedfellows and Vives demonstrates here the crux in which he found himself. If the

theocentric view is valid, how then can the question of language be determined by aesthetic or functional concerns? If the theory of Babel is accepted, how can the vernaculars be cleansed of the blemish of sin? This conundrum exemplifies what Waswo calls the "typically pendular motion of Vives' thought" (1987: 130), one which was shared by both Erasmus and Luther who doubted, "entre l'interêt exegétique pour la langue du texte sacré et le détachement moderne par rapport à la 'lettre' "(Demonet, 1992: 126). These are typical of the impassioned confusions about language characterised by controversy, not consensus.

The second parameter by which the move away from the divine concept of language can be measured is in the use of the term "natural". Initially it was applied to Hebrew in the sense of "original", the first, that which is derived from God and therefore invested with special powers. It had, thus, an absolute value. This acceptation of the term underwent a series of metamorphoses. This is first perceived in Dante who, although in general following the classical line of thought maintains that Hebrew was natural in the sense that it was Adam's mother tongue and therefore permits the qualities of Hebrew to be transferred to other languages on the grounds of biological priority. The vernacular could therefore legitimately be considered natural insofar as it is biologically and culturally the first language. Bembo,(1525) in defence of his native Toscan, maintained that the natural and proper language is the mother tongue. This was reiterated by Rabelais, (1534) who held that the natural language is that acquired in childhood. Peletier defines natural speech, "della boca": to speak with one's own mouth.

Castiglione (1528) redefines the term in a distinct sense. While admitting that the courtier is to respect the natural, that is, to avoid old or obsolete terms, he gives it an added sociological dimension by abandoning grammatical reference and proposing that what is natural is that language which accords with the social milieu in which it is used. The trend is towards a criterion of usage.

Sixteenth century writers use the term when referring to the mother tongue. Mulcaster refers to "naturall speche", E.K. urges people to use "good and naturall English words" and Ascham defends "plaine naturall English". In Positions Mulcaster, echoing Bembo and Elyot, relativises the term: "English is the natural language just as Latin was the natural language of the Romans"(1888: 242).[11] "Natural" moves from having one specific and identifiable referent to having many and indeterminate referents. It loses its philosophical nature and undergoes progressive relativisation which provided a basis for the vernaculars to increase their value and reach a higher rate of exchange on the linguistic stock market.

5.4.3 Mulcaster and the Origin of Language

Hart, Mulcaster and Du Bellay jettisoned the issue of the origin of language and writing; their three treatises all open by indicating that it is a moot point. Hart summarises their collective view on the subject thus: "I see not what plesure or profite it mought doe us" (Scolar Press, 1969: 9). This is seconded by Mulcaster's dismissal: "for what certaintie can there be had of so old a thing?" (72).

[11] In Castell of Health (1539), Elyot makes the following observation," ..the Greeks wrote in Greeke, [the] Romaines in Latin ... which were their owne proper and maternall tongues". (qtd. in Porter, 1992: 23)

Mulcaster rejects a hierarchy of languages on a scale of perfect to imperfect and refuses to analyse them from a moral and theological perspective - his description of language is surprisingly free from the religious terminology that characterise other texts of similar ilk. He denies that Hebrew is by some intrinsic merit superior and divests the mystery surrounding its superiority,reducing it to a question of physiology. Once placed on this level, all languages are equal: "yet the Hebrewes alone have not that distinction in nature, but everie peple also which have throte, tethe, rouf, tung ... " (99).

Mulcaster refers to the vernaculars as "secondary languages" which can reach perfection by means of imitation and analogy of the "very first tongue" (70). This initial language is not identified although it is made clear from the continual references to Latin that this was uppermost in his mind, as it was "exempt from custom" (1888: 31). His spirited defence of the vernacular would rule out any interpretation of "secondary" as implying being branded with the post-Babelian brush. It is simply used in the temporal sense and implies no value judgement, a fact which is further endorsed by his dismissal elsewhere of the truism that the oldest is not inevitably the best. Each language is judged on its own merits, that is, on how it fulfils the functions required of it by the linguistic community. In this sense he echoes Vives who gives equal weight to the functional aspect and the power of the community of speakers to fashion its own language.

5.5 A Universal Language

Both Mulcaster and Du Bellay shoot an arrow into the future, anticipating one of the main issues of seventeenth century linguistics - the idea of a universal language. This wish is couched cryptically and succinctly. In the same way that they do not enter into the controversy over the original language, neither do they make an issue of a universal idiom. They occupy an interregnum, a parenthesis between nostalgia for the past and hope in the future.

The search for a universal character was to become the holy grail of the first quarter of the seventeenth century, replacing humanist nostalgia for the original language but belying the same yearning for stability and order, manifested through rule and analogy. In this period, a universal language was seen to be a password into scientific rather than divine knowledge; reflecting the increasing secularisation of knowledge and, secondly, was projected into the future rather than being backward-looking in orientation.

Discussing the large amount of time wasted in acquiring languages, Mulcaster declares: "In time all learning may be brought into one toungue, and that naturall to the inhabitant, so that schooling for toungues, may proue nedeles, as once they were not needed" (1888: 240). This statement is not without ambiguity. In the main clause, Mulcaster implies that all learning be acquired in English, "naturall to the inhabitant", a proposal congruent with his general policy and his use of the term "natural" elsewhere.The following clause, "as once they were not needed" muddies

the water and puts the previous interpretation of "natural" in question. It is not clear whether it refers to the originary language or to English. In the light of his own crusade in favour of the vernacular, the first option can be safely discarded but the problem remains as to the precise meaning of "natural".

Taken within the context of his proposals for the junior school curriculum, a convincing and more cogent reading of this statement is possible. It is based on his firm advocacy of mathematics and music and it is not wildly fanciful to assume that he understood them as "languages" or ways of understanding and expressing the world. His principal argument in favour of the establishment of a college of mathematics lies in the fact that "they had the place before the toungues were taught" (1888: 242 - 48). His curriculum never foresaw the division between Arts and Sciences and he can move fluidly, establishing links between Mathematics, Philosophy and the Arts. He devotes considerable space to the praise of mathematics as a door into true knowledge and the subject was to have a prominent place on his revised curriculum.

In music, Mulcaster saw the same general principle operating[12] and he discusses its study in all its forms.[13] It is possible then that Mulcaster's use of the term "language" encompasses forms beyond those of the linguistic sign and that when he calls for a common language, he is referring neither to the classic staples nor to

[12] Mulcaster's inclusion of music on the curriculum was in direct opposition to Ascham who stated that "moch Muscick marreth mens maners"(Mayor, 1967: 15).
[13] Thomas Whythorn, another sixteenth century orthogapher was also a musician. It is significant that some of the universal language characters devised in the seventeenth century were inspired in either mathematical (Ward) or musical (Father Mersenne ,1629) notation. (See Salmon, 1979: 129 - 56)

any of the vernaculars but to a purely notational script similar to those devised during the seventeenth century.

Du Bellay expresses the hope of one day achieving a universal language for the same pragmatic reasons as Mulcaster: "Las & combien seroit meilleur qu'il y eust au monde un seul langaige naturel, que d'employer tant d'années pour apprendre des motz !" (p. 48). The interpretation of "naturel" in Du Bellay's text also poses a problem. In the opening lines of the Deffence, the author states that nature has distributed her gifts equally among all men, thus implying that natural language is the one spoken by each social or national group. This precludes reading "natural" here as equivalent to original in the biblical sense and more in the sense of mother tongue. How then, and this is the same problem that we face in interpreting Mulcaster's statement, can the mother tongue also be universal?

Neither of the two authors foresaw the hegemony of their native language or contemplated that they might acceed to the podium of *lingua franca*. Their overriding preoccupation is for a change in attitudes - that French and English be considered equivalent to the classical languages. Moreover, the possibilities offered by colonialism for linguistic expansion and domination had not yet made their insidious mark on the writers. It was not until the seventeenth century that England became a serious player in international domino and Mulcaster, whether from lack of foresight or whatever, apologises for the emphasis he puts on English: "it stretcheth no further then this iland of ours ... What tho? Yet it raigneth there, and it serves us there"(271).

What is clear, and what marks Mulcaster and Du Bellay as belonging to the late humanists, is that what prompted them to advocate a universal language was quite distinct from and indeed opposed to Vives' motivation. Neither of them entertain the idea that the natural, universal language is Latin which was the sense in which Vives understood "universal". There was only one candidate for this accolade:

> it would therefore be to the benefit of the human race that there should be a single language, which all nations should use in common. If this should be effected, at least most nations and peoples, certainly we Christians, might use such a language for the purpose of being initiated in the same religious worship. Such a language it seems to me is to be found in the Latin tongue (Watson, 1913: 91 - 92).

This is typical of a pre Reformation mentality. Then, there did exist at least a surface unity which welded the known world together under the linguistic, fiscal and ideological control of Rome, although this hegemony was beginning to totter. Vives conceives of a universal language as a tool for welding the Christian world together but by the time Mulcaster and Du Bellay came to write, this semblance of unity had been shattered and Latin, rather than being a centrifugal force had become a symbol, in England at least, of tyrannical dominion and slavery. Mulcaster makes this defiantly explicit in his rhetorical question: "Why should free men be slaves?", and his hope: "I wold English were fre" (269), referring to the dominion not only of the language but also of coffers and ideology. Although Latin

had lost its grip, it was a slow death and as late as the 1640's John Amos Comenius was still championing it as the ideal universal language, albeit with little success.[14]

Secondly, Vives' universal language would not unlock the doors to knowledge but on the contrary, seal them up. Such a language would prove to be an effective and insurmountable hurdle to access secrets and potentially dangerous knowledge: "Besides, it is also useful to have some language sacred for the learned, to which might be consigned those hidden things which are unsuitable to be handled by everybody, and thus become polluted" (Watson, 1913: 93). His universal language was for the initiated and would be a code to be deciphered only by a select few. The parallells between this concept and the philosophical language of the seventeenth century are strikingly close. It also finds its attitudinal counterpart in the loud protests made by the professions, medicine and law, against the use of the vernacular. His arguments differed in that Vives' concern is not that knowledge itself might be dangerous but that it is susceptible to corruption through dissemination. This marks him as a first generation humanist.

Mulcaster and Du Bellay share the same fears as Wilkins, Dalgarno and Lodwick: that words "push us one degree further of from knowledge"and so it was necessary to achieve "a speedy way to the attainment of Knowledge ... by making a shorter, and clearer cutt to the understanding ... then that which is travailed now by words"(qtd. in Salmon, 1979: 136).

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[14] See V. Salmon *op cit.* where she argues that Comenius' influence on the English language planners was not nearly so great as has been thought. His proposals in favour of Latin as a universal language fell on deaf ears.

Mulcaster anticipates Bacon on two scores: the mistrust of words and the excessive emphasis on languages to the detriment of what he calls "weighty matter". The climate in which he wrote did everything to foster suspicion of words. Their capacity to deceive had been confirmed by political and religious manipulation and as interest in things scientifical and technological grew, the power of the word as an exact instrument was also becoming suspect. Religious disputes reeking of bile and the excesses of pamphleteers had severely weakened the humanist belief in the *vir bonum*.. Mulcaster expresses this healthy distrust of words: "all those great observations of eloquence are either halfe drowned ... or halfe doubted" (1888: 240). The experience of the reformation in England had confirmed Machiavelli's worst scenario: that the word could be manipulated for less than noble ends.

Mulcaster had not quite come to terms with the opposition or duality between language and things. He criticises the inordinate emphasis placed on languages: "We do attribute to much to toungues, which do mind them more then we do matter" (1888: 240), anticipating Bacon's:"Here, therefore is the first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter;" (Kitchin, 1984: 24). However, the creed that humanism had fostered did not yield to the new philosophy without resistence and Mulcaster cannot completely shuffle off his faith in words. Vestiges of the humanist philosophy linger and mingle with the new. Words, like meanings and spellings, can be multifaceted. They are both "the waies to wisdom, the lodges of learning, the harbours of humanitie, the deliverers of divinitie, the treasures of all store" (1888: 5) and an obstacle course. This ambivalence marks the author as a product of his time.

Bacon's statement became the rallying cry of the seventeenth century but neither his nor Mulcaster's distrust of the reliability of language was without antecedents: Vives had pre-empted them in enumerating the causes of corruption in learning. Nor can Mulcaster be considered one of the pioneers who went forth to discover scientific knowledge.[15] His work offers promising but mist covered glimpses of the future, but the marrow was essentially humanist as the following statement shows: "how can thinges be properly understood by us, which use the ministerie and service of wordes to know them by, unlesse the force of speeche be thoroughly knowen?". The strong pull of the humanist exerts more magnetic force that that of the rationalist. He advocates the study of words as an entry into knowledge, as the key to understanding things whereas Bacon works in the inverse order, from things to words. In contrast, his emphasis on "orderlie seking", "sufficient observation" and experience, smacks of full-blown scientific realism.

Mulcaster was caught in the hangman's noose; the humanist's steadfast belief in the sanctity of words (note the semi-religious connotations attached to the terms "ministry" and "service") was unsettled by deepening distrust. Mulcaster lies somewhere on the spectrum between Ascham and Bacon. The former is adamant about the primacy of words: "Ye know not what hurt ye do to learning, that care not for words, but for matter, and so make a divorse betwixt tong and the hart" (Mayor, 1967: 137) although in Ascham's opinion, proper words were always linked with good matter: " for all soch Authors, as be fullest of good matter and

[15] See Foster Watson, (1913, ciii - cxi) who makes a convincing case for Bacon having been familiar with De causis corruptorum and having used Vives' text as a base for his discussion of the distempers in learning.

right judgement in doctrine, be likewise alwayes most proper in wordes"(136). Bacon argues from a contrary standpoint.

Attempts at devising a universal language aimed first to classify knowledge and then find a form in which the categories and classifications established in the real world could be annotated and recorded graphically. Mulcaster concurred with Bacon that, "as wordes be names of thinges applyed and given according to their properties"(1888: 244), "ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding". Both were concerned about what Mulcaster calls "the mistaking of meanings", or in other words, ambiguity.

It is on the question of ambiguity that they part ways and signal the philosophy to which they subscribe. The concept serves as a litmus strip by which to measure the degree of difference in perspective. Mulcaster not only tolerates but approves of ambiguity, which he uses as one of the columns on which to prop up his very modest spelling reforms, arguing that if one word can have several meanings, so too can a word with the same sound have different spellings. He acknowledges the sense of playfulness which lies at the base of much of the highest achievements of Renaissance literature.

Mulcaster himself, although somewhat clumsily and obscurely at times, in his own style, gleefully and at times spitefully, indulges in elaborate wordplay and linguistic juggling acts: "a bird flieth light, wheresoever she doth light" (1925: 102) or alliteration and assonance: "when shew is shrined, where stuff should be

enstalled, when sound learning is little sought for, but onlie surface sufficient to shift with" (262) and homophony: "naughtie custom, which because it is naught ..." (93).

This is not, however, to disparage the seriousness of purpose . He makes a clear distinction between the use of language in the Arts and the Sciences. This distinction allows a subdivision of language into two areas, those dealing with permanent and irrefutable truths which can be proved false or otherwise by recourse to reality, observation and experience, and those truths in the liberal arts which are not exact but relative. What was a literary merit in the latter, however, was considered a grave defect in the former and could not be tolerated, being the quicksands on which scientific theory would flounder and in which hard facts would sink.

Mulcaster was in one sense what Samuel Johnson described as, "the poet woken as lexicographer", the humanist who has begun to lose faith in the hegemony of words and shifts the emphasis ever so slightly in favour of experience. In this sense he is typical of those who lived through the turn of the century, when questions were refocused to target not the distant past, but the very precepts on which a century's progress been founded. This self-examination was painful, especially to those who had been nursed on the sweet smoke of rhetoric and on whom it gradually dawned that this was, if not entirely a insubstantial airy nothing, then at least highly questionable.

Mulcaster deals briefly with the possibility of having a common language but he infers that it would imply a return to and not the creation of a new language. Therefore, while he shares the same motivations as Bacon, the direction in which he looks for a solution is quite different. It is tempting to ascribe to him the status of forerunner of the movement for universal languages, but other than refer to a past linguistic unity he gives no indication of which language could take on the mantel. His reference to a universal language bypasses language *per se* and grounds itself on the purer forms of knowledge of more precision: mathematics and music.

5.6 Borrowing

Borrowing[16] was the most immediate spur, the bone of contention around which worries about linguistic change coagulated, ramified, were formulated and vehemently defended or denounced. It was an issue which penetrated all levels of literate society. The professional classes, too were drawn onto the field of combat - medicine and law were equally self-righteous in their resistance to use of the vernacular and became engaged in a similar series of attack and counter-attack. The debate dribbled down to the lower social levels and was taken as a symptom of social dislocation there. The unlettered had no voice but their rights to accede to knowledge were defended by ostensibly concerned humanists, who saw in the large number of borrowed words an obstacle to understanding.

While the English academics were in the throes of a bitter battle over the expediency of borrowing and who had the right to legislate on it, Du Bellay and his school were extolling, not only the virtues of the practice, "c'est pas une chose vicieuse, mais grandement louable" (36), but grounding it on historical precedent: "si Virgile & Ciceron se feussent contentez d'immiter ceux de leur Langue, qu'aurent les Latine outre Ennie ou Lucrece, outre Crasse ou Antoyne?" (Terreaux, 1972: 40). Mulcaster uses the same argument, advising the English to "worship foren speche that ye maie take from it" and become "borowers of the borowers themselves" (274). Du Bellay allowed ample leash to the practice and although addressing himself to the upcoming generation of new poets, not only endorses it

[16] Between 10,000 and 15,000 words found their way into the language in the period from 1500 to 1659, and the heyday of the practice is located between 1580 and 1619, when more than 10,000 new words were introduced. Ascham, according to Knowles (1997) was probably the first to use the words, "inkhorne termes" (70).

"Ne crains donques, Poëte futur, d'innover quelques termes" (85), but places the whole range of language at their disposal, giving licence to import words from the lexicon of the trades and the professions. For Du Bellay all language was a continuum and it was the use made of the word in its creative context that invested it with a special power and not the intrinsic quality of the word out of context. All language could be admitted through the hallowed doors of the poetic register. This is in sharp contrast to Puttenham who expressly banishes from the ranks of acceptability "the speach of a craftes man or carter, or other of the inferiour sort"(Willcock and Walker,1936:144).

Although Du Bellay does place certain limits on borrowing - the conventional ones: the avoidance of affectation and ostentation, he asserts that refraining from borrowing, "seroit retraindre notre Langaige" (85), and leaves all else to the discretion and judgement of the poet, creator and maker of language. In this, as in so much else, he echoes the attitude adopted by the Italian humanists. Castiglione's Count sees the necessity of borrowing, inventing and deriving new words in order that society continually reorder and remake itself in the light of contemporary taste and new knowledge.

Along with Mulcaster's pithy nationalistic aphorisms, his attitude to borrowing is one of the aspects of his writing that has been seized on as novel and forward looking. His wholehearted endorsement of the practice seems to strike a note of harmony with Continental linguists but such conclusions are precipitated and must be modified on a number of counts. Firstly, at the time of writing much of the heat

had dissipated from the debate and there was a consensus, at the very least, as to the need for moderate borrowing. In this sense his text can be seen as a kind of closure rather than an opening. Cheke, Wilson and Ascham were writing a full thirty to forty years before Mulcaster and seen in this light, his endorsement of borrowing was a late start. By the end of the century, defence of borrowing was virtually unnecessary; it had been assimilated, albeit somewhat uncomfortably by the majority, although dissenting voices would continue to be heard. It was in the heyday of borrowing that guidelines needed to be laid down. Chronology is of utmost importance and Mulcaster's support of neologising contributes little to the debate although it merits attention for the light it throws on his philosophy of language.

Secondly, the register with which he is concerned is not that which engaged the opponents to wild and unbridled borrowing. Indeed, he mentions the literary only in passing: the language should introduce foreign words "to garnish itself withall"(286). Hall (1977) classifies borrowed terms into three categories; on the fringe lie simple concepts or terminological jargon and rhetorical flourishes which did not incur the wrath of critics as did words "at the centre", that is, those items which could be incorporated into English without disturbing the tones and rhythms of the language and which unleashed the ire of the academics.

Mulcaster deals only with those terms from the first category, that is, technical terminology for specific aspects of knowledge which come into the language through experience, specifically mentioned are war, trade and commerce as means

of expanding the boundaries of a language. His defence of borrowing was conducted on practical and pragmatic grounds and he did not address the question that caused so many violent reactions among the rhetoricians who were trying to establish the grounds on which to decide what "proper words" consisted of. This does not imply that he side-stepped the crux of the problem. His approach and the types of words he referred to were dictated by the register of language he was dealing with.

This distinction is of utmost importance for upon its shoulders rests in part the myth of modernity created around Mulcaster. The equanamity with which he accepted borrowing cannot be attributed to a more liberal outlook than his contemporaries. It must revert to the terms of reference. They are dealing with two entirely different issues and registers of language. His area of concern was far removed from the dilemma the English rhetoricians faced - the problem of fixing a centre and determining what types of lexical change could be comfortably accommodated by the English language. Mulcaster's liberal stance is no more than a facade critics have erected and it is necessary to separate registers before delivering a verdict. It is one thing to establish norms for a literary language and quite another to do so for language in general.

That Mulcaster refrained from venturing onto the rocky terrain of dogmatic prescription is therefore a consequence of the way in which his work was tailored to necessity, and not a virtue. The Elementarie is an arena where the allied forces of necessity and circumstance enter into hand to hand combat with the precepts of

the ancients. Necessity took the upper hand as it did for Du Bellay: "aux nouvelles choses sestre necessaire imposer nouveaux motz, principalment és Ars" (Terreaux, 1972: 86). This is an invincible argument for borrowing - but of a specific and limited kind. There can be little reposte to justifications which ground themselves in the necessary co-ordination between objects which exist in the real or mental world. Mulcaster specifies the type of words he had in mind: "The necesitie of these foren words must nedes be verie great bycause the number of them is so verie manie" (173). Ralph Lever almost twenty yeas before, speaking about new terminology states: "new occasions brought furth new words, as either more cunning made waie to more terms" (Lever, 1573: 173). However, unlike Lever, who attempted to find analogies through compounding, Mulcaster converts borrowing into an accolade, a badge of honour, a symptom that English society, hitherto confined within its own limited geographical and mental space, had begun to venture further afield, occasioning a need to express hitherto unknown things, ideas and concepts:

> The desire of learning enflamed studie, the longing for gain brought in great traffik, the delight to range, did cause men travell, new occasions brought furth new words, as either more cunning made waie to more terms, or as strange devises did seke strange deliveries (1925: 172)

Borrowing is vitality, a parameter by which to measure the academic, military and mercantile prowess of the nation. Mulcaster interpretes it as a symptom of the rebirth or Renaissance of the English nation but, like Du Bellay, can claim

precedence in the ancients, using them to lend weight to his position: " tho we use and must use manie foren terms, when we deal with such arguments, we do not anie more then the bravest tungs do"(274 - 75).

The traditional perspective adopted by the naysayers is reversed. Far from seeing the language in abject want, he places it on a par with other vernaculars in a give-and-take situation. This balances the scales; just as English borrows from others, so too do they receive from English: "as their people ar to thank our tung, for returning the like help, in cases of like nede" (173), although he does admit that there is a deficit between importation and exportation: "tho their occasions to use ours be nothing so often, as ours to use theirs"(173)

In addition to this assertion, which removes any need to be apologetic about the number of foreign terms in the language, Mulcaster adds another novel shift in perspective which establishes the English language in a position of power. Once they have been borrowed it is the host language which exerts power over words, "making their termes become ours ... theie vouchsafe to becom English to serve our nede" (173). It is this very slight shift in perspective, singled out by the repetition of the possessive pronoun "ours"and the adjective,"our" which reverses the contemporary attitude to borrowing. Foreign words are not slave masters but subservient to English necessity.

Mulcaster's linguistic agenda finds its parallel in Spenser's question as to why English could not have, "the kingdom of our own language" Spenser was, it is true,

referring to versification rather than borrowing *per se* but this plea, declaration and protest highlights the choice which lay before poets and dramatists of the day: whether to adopt the foreign or native model for the development of the language. Conscious of identity, opposed to subjection and inferiority, ambitious to achieve new heights, Mulcaster claims: "We maie aspire to a pitch" (272 - 73). Faced with the options of building on the home patch or casting abroad for an alternative mode, the situation was resolved in compromise. Just as much is testified to by Spenser's work itself which returned to archaisms to fashion a new poetry but used models imported from the Continent.

> And when the foren word hath yielded it self, & is received into favor, it is no more foren, tho of foren race, the propertie being altered (87).

Mulcaster's understanding of the process of semantic change provided further and indiscutible grounds for acceptance of borrowing and banished fears that it would undermine the integrity of the language. Implicit in the expression "the propertie being altered" is the recognition that the semantic content of the loan word is modified on its incorporation into the new system's series of oppositions. Like De Saussure he realised, although he lacked the terminology to express the idea in anything other than very general terms, that the content of a word is determined in the final analysis, not by what it contains but by what exists outside it in its linguistic environment. De Saussure states that "a language is a system in which all elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous existence of all the others". Meaning "must be assessed against

comparable values, by contrast with other words" (Harris,1995: 113). Words only acquire value in association with and disassociation from other words.

This awareness that meaning was contingent has a notable precedent in Sir Thomas Elyot. Measuring the borrowed word semantically against existing words was one of the strategies used by Elyot in his crusade to enrich the language. His gloss of the difference in value between "ripe" and "mature" demonstrates this aptly. The latter, on being accepted into English, took on a meaning which contrasted with "ripe" which was restricted to "other thinges separate from affaires" (Craigie, 1946: 122). The adoption of "maturitie" therefore led to the displacing of the former word.

Meaning accrues around words in another way. It is not "a fixed and impenetrable object but the provisional result of the incessant and re-creative transaction between the text and the interpreters" (Waswo, 1987: 178). Mulcaster implies this when he refers to the reader having to "construe my meaning", as if meaning is produced by the complicity of writer and reader. The interactive nature of interpretation is underlined by Berowne: " A jest's prosperity lies in the ear / Of him that hears it / never in the tongue / Of him that makes it (Love's Labour's Lost).

Shakespeare utilises the contingent nature of meaning to achieve both comic and ironic effects in his plays. Falstaff, for example, is a blacksmith of words, a forger and master of changeable meanings, creating and re creating language each time he

talks. This figure mobilises a contemplation of language and its multiple meanings as the product of speaker - hearer interaction on the one hand and as a by-product of the nature of language itself on the other, and reflects back on the very process which lies at the heart of Shakespeare's own use of language.

The King and his courtiers in Love's Labour's Lost make words mean what they want them to in each context but in this particular case they overstep the boundaries of both decency and semantic propriety. The oaths and vows they make in Act I scene i have no social value as the terms in which they are made depend exclusively on the caprice of those who make them and their individual idiosyncrasies are established without communal consent. The whole play, in fact revolves around the meaning of words and the right of those in positions of power to deposit meaning in certain words and withdraw it from others. The play points out the darker side of the playfulness with words and was no doubt influenced by Wilson's Arte of Rhetoric which advocates one manner of language for all as a remedy to the dissolution of the social bonds that bind men together in society.

Donawerth's reading of the play interprets the song at the closure as an affirmation of the wisdom of the community as overriding the knowledge of any one member - that the voices together create community and the cuckoo and the owl contribute to make whole the seasonal song, emphasising the gift of sound in language as open to individual interpretation and also expressive of the community. Mulcaster's comments on semantic change fall along the same lines and he sees in the personal and communal, language as a system and a process, two grounds for confidence.

Borrowing was an issue for the spelling reformers who contested the practice on the grounds that, as Hart stated, people would talk chalk for cheese. This point is illustrated by the three anecdotes recounted (or invented) by Wilson and with which he concludes: " And thus we see that poor simple men are much troubled and talk often times they know not what for lack of wit and want of Latin and French" (Medine, 1994: 190). The breakdown in communication is brilliantly portrayed and the neologisers parodied in Love's Labour's Lost through the mouthpieces of Moth, Dull and the lower characters who are completely at a loss to decipher the verbal acrobatics of Armado, Holofernes and Nathaniel.

> Holofernes: *Via* Goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while
>
> Dull: Nor understood none neither, Sir (5. 1: 153 - 55).

The plight of the unlearned, however, was by no means the main focus of attention. Attitudes to borrowed words are defined almost entirely within the context of their use in literature. This was the issue which caused the Cambridge humanists to take up arms and invoke the laws of classical rhetoric as a means to slow down the rate at which the language was changing.

The question for the spelling reformers centred on the way in which foreign words should be naturalised or incorporated into the language in order that they conform with "the frame of our speche"(173). Mulcaster's views represent a compromise between complete naturalisation and retaining spelling which would indicate

etymology: " the English rule for writing, must be the right thereof, tho it kepe still manie signes of a stranger"(175). This argument was used by the French proponents of traditional spelling too. The linguistically justifiable argument for recording the lineage of each word in its spelling had social consequences: only those with a strong classical training would be aware of and perceive this. Writing was seen as a privileged code accessible to only an elite few. Laurent Joubert maintained that:"il faut qu'il i èt, quelque diferance antre la maniere d' ecrire des gans doctes et des gans mecaniques" (qtd. in Citton, 1989: 83). This view was shared not only by known conservatives such as De Bèze but also more moderate phonemicists like Peletier. Joubert continues to argue that etymological letters indicate that those who use them are "lauriers de bonne culture" who in this way "moutrer suffisans et antandus par dessus le vulgaire" (qtd in Citton, 1989, p. 82). Mulcaster is of a similar mind, restricting the written text to the upper echelons of learned society. "If all things be hard, where is the prerogative and benefit of studie? What helps it us to studie, if what we get by travell, be condemned as to hard for them, that studie not?" (284).

Hart deals with the subject at some length and works out his position by drawing on the analogy between a mercenary soldier who, in the employ of his king should " appeare and be in very deede, naturall in everye condition, as wee are, and leave all his colours, or markes of straungenesse" (Scolar Press, 1969: 16). It is not necessary to know the word's origin, on the contrary, it serves only as a continual reminder of the debt English owes to other languages and can "certifie us, how we are bound unto it" (16). Moreover, conserving the original spelling might cause "a

malice conveyed against us for writing of their speach"(17) on the part of the donor nation. Hart concludes that bulldozing away marks of distinction is symbolic of the liberty of the language to freely borrow without stigma of inferiority. It in fact becomes symbolic of linguistic expansion. Borrowed words therefore should "be written accordingly, without any scrupulositie" (Scolar Press, 1969:18). It is clear that whether the retention of etymological markers or their abolition is favoured, the justification embraces much wider issues than the purely linguistic as the nationalistic flourish in Hart's argument shows.

5.6.1 The Cambridge Humanist's Stance on Borrowing.

The Cambridge humanists, writing in mid-century provide a counterpoint to Mulcaster's equanimity. They denounced neologising and borrowing in the strongest moralistic terms: it was corrupting, vicious, wanton and vile. Their diatribes against the practice were fuelled not only by a sense that it brazenly flouted the norms which they upheld with tenacity but also because imported terms violated their sense of national sovereignty. By the time he wrote Mulcaster's nationalism was strong enough to bear up under the influx of words and, as has been pointed out above, was capable of casting the practice in a totally favourable light.

The Cambridge group have tended to emerge in an unbecoming light. They are labelled "narrow-minded" and blemished by "extravagant servility to their masters" by Renwick (1925, p. 65, 71). This judgement appears unduly harsh and

in need of revision. Their texts represent the intellectual effort of coming to grips with a new situation. Jones (1957) is more even-handed in his verdict, conceding that the difference between them and the neologisers was merely one of strategy. The term moderate is perhaps more fitting than conservative as they were acutely conscious of the need to enrich the language. What constituted a yardstick by which to grant or deny admission of new words proved the crux of the question. Their pursim often appeared in a more watered-down version than it would at first seem. The strain between the norms to which they were committed and the necessities facing the language was resolved by yielding, to a greater or lesser extent, to the force of practice and necessity.

Necessity as the mother of invention, poked holes in the arguments of the defenders of classical rhetoric as applied to the English language. Necessity is invoked, frequently added on as a grudgingly conceded afterthought. The concessions made, however, make the arguments against borrowing less watertight and grounds them in reality, doing much to dissipate the aura of utopic dreamers that has sometimes characterised them. Wilson's enumeration of the norms to govern borrowing in a loose rendition of Tully:

> they should be proper unto the language wherein we speak, again, that they must be plain for all men to perceive; thirdly that they be apt and meet, most properly to set out the matter; fourthly, that words translated from one signification to another ... be used to beautify the sentence, as precious stones are set in a ring to commend the gold (Medine, 1994: 191).

is immediately undercut and modified by his own more subjective criteria of necessity and consensus. Du Bellay likewise accords them high priority: "avecques modestie toutesfois, analogie, jugement de l'oreille ... esperant que la posterité l'approuvera" (Terreaux, 1972: 85). Classical criteria are supplemented by the exegencies of time and this points to the mediatory position occupied by the Cambridge humanists. Both Mulcaster and Cheke put the same limits on borrowing: only when the native wordstore proved insufficient: "for if we have our own, as significant and as proper, what nede a rich man be a thefe" (175).

All writers were conscious that if their own prose were to be examined, it would reveal a surprising number of loan words. Mulcaster asks: "yet how manie foreners am I constrained to use?" (175). Puttenham provides example of the uncomfortable, no win position in which they became entangled with resulting ambivalence and incompatibilities. He is eventually unable to define clear parameters as to which words are admissible and which not, giving only the broadest subjective criteria. While he can clearly outlaw those borrowings which hint of affectation or academic snobbishness, the surrounding area is disturbingly grey and he ends by conceding that certain words deserve admission in order to fill in gaps in the native lexicon, citing *maiordomo*, *scientific* and *politien* as examples (Willcock and Walker, 1936: 148).

The aim of the Cambridge humanists and the social commentators of the time (often one and the same person), were almost identical: not to block change but to

regulate, codify and harness it. This is the theory put forth by Alvin Vos (1976) His conclusion, that they were a valuable brake on the indiscriminate and wholesale fever that gripped the period, balances out Renwick's. They were the only ones capable of providing theoretical principles which reached beyond the law of improvisation. They recognised necessity but were steeped in the classics and could not conceive of a theory of language which departed from the canon. The group's adoption of the norms of classical rhetoric was an attempt to provide a systematic and well proven code by which men could decide what the "proper" words were and to act as an antidote to the bewitching spell cast by foreign terms. They provided, Vos maintains, the only voice of reason in a period when there were no norms which regulated the vernacular.

This is precisely the point that Hall (1977) seizes on to take issue with the group. She concludes that they were mistaken in attempting to apply a set of rules transposed from a language which had a corpus of work and a standard procedure to which to appeal, and attempt to impose them on a language still in the process of growth, without even a grammar to guide it. The attempt to transfer norms from one age into another she imputes to a lack of historical perspective which made the frenetic battle to stem the tide by placing sandbags and valiant fingers in the dikes futile. The "proper words" they appeal to are too vague a classificatory tool, too wide meshed a sieve to serve as a filter:"The rhetorical position which they inherited did not provide them with the critical terms to articulate a moderate position on diction" (287).

It is therefore a combination of lack of terminology and contextualisation which led them along the paths of the forest of error. When Cicero speaks of the word born with the thing, he has not specifically got only literary language in mind but the whole register, including simple terms and non-literary language. When Sir John Cheke or Sir Thomas Wilson adopt this as a maxim, they were referring to literary language only. Their apparently narrow interpretation of the classics is a function of the register they were dealing with.

To judge English by classical standards was the only option that presented itself as viable but it led to a situation which Mulcaster for one finds unacceptable: "An English profit must not be measured by a Latinists pleasure" (275). Hall's verdict, that their error lay in not adopting the humanist maxim of accommodating rules to time and place may be unduly harsh. Although English was an emerging language caught in the buzzing confusion of birth and therefore incapable of being fashioned in the classical mode, it was their only point of reference. Her verdict, issued from the clarity bestowed by hindsight does not allow for their close identification with the ancient past. They felt justified in their transposition of classical norms to contemporary society as their cyclical view of history placed English on the same point of the wheel of destiny as classical Greece and Rome had occupied earlier and so it could benefit from past knowledge through analogy.

> Acrimonious and sugar-tongued fellows labour more for fineness of speech than for knowledge of good matter (Ralph Lever,1575)

Affectation affected not only the language but became a norm of behaviour in the constant struggle for recognition and attention of those at Court. Court manuals all give instruction in dissimulation and feigning, whether through dress or modes of address. A second point which has skewed value judgements about the Cambridge humanists project lies in the fact that the target for their arrows was not borrowing as such, but affectation which seems to have reached plague-like proportions. Universally scorned and resoundingly condemned linguistically and socially, it was like a puss-filled boil.

Love of finery was associated with over-indulgence in "affected rhetoric". Hence, Castiglinoe's Count is dogmatic on the subject: "Affectation ... is deplorable.(Bull trans. 1976: 80) "Steer away from affectation at all costs as if it were a rough and dangerous reef" (67). Du Bellay appropriates this image to express the same fear of excess: "... de peur que le vent d'affectation ne pousse mon navire si anant en cete mer, que je soye en danger du nauffrage ..." (Terreaux, 1972: 84). Wilson insists "that we never affect any strange inkhorn terms" (Medine, 1994: 188) and Puttenham deplores the "peevish affectation of clerks and scholars"(Willcock and Walker, 1946: 144). Sidney complains that words are often used with "courtesan-like painted affectation" (Jones, 1975: 49) and Mulcaster denounces "folie in words"(27).

Affectation is also the target of irony and satire in Love's Labour's Lost. Armado, an exemplar of what Wilson calls "the unlearned or foolish fantasticall that smells but of learning" (Medine, 1994: 188-89) the phantom at the Court, has caught the

disease and his words are all meaningless show. Holofernes and Nathaniel's abuse of learned words has reached the chronic stage and is all the more damming given their supposed learning. Armado's affected speech is a product of ignorance while theirs is a conscious decision to parade their learning, "delighting much in their own darkness, especially when none can tell what they say" (Medine, 1994: 188). The development of the play demonstrates the extremes over-indulgence can reach. The abuse of language, is revealed to have serious political, moral, emotional and communicative consequences. There is a complete breakdown in communication between the learned and the unlearned, between the sentiments and the rational faculty, between men and women. What is ultimately opposed is truth and falsehood, honesty and duplicity. The verdict issued at the end is that the words one uses can be manipulated for less than noble ends, a spin off from the use of "strange inkhorn terms".

The presumptuous courtier who personifies affectation surfaces frequently throughout Shakespeare's drama and is identified by both clothes and speech. Touchstone, who runs verbal circles around William the slow witted rustic in the attempt to gain Audrey's hand in As You Like It is condemned, not only for his social presumption: the moral and ethical consequences of his linguistic behaviour are also examined and condemned, his language betraying a morally flawed individual as is evident in Audrey's final decision. He pairs off each of his elegant borrowed terms with a synonym of Old English origin in order to underscore his social superiority:

> Therefore you clown, abandon - which is in the vulgar leave - the society - which in the boorish is company - of this female - which in the common is woman, which together is, abandon the society of this female, or, clown, thou persihest; or to thy better understanding, diest (5.1.46 - 52).

However, his too obvious parading of learning is shown to be a hollow shell by the humble William who throughout the scene shows exquisite courtesy to his superior and does not rise to the bait, either because he does not understand the verbal insults flung at him or because he represents the honest common sense values of country life as opposed to the falsity and rancour of the court.

Oswald, the finical, foppish, flattering courtier in King Lear provides another example of affectation, this time criticised as social dissimulation. He is described as "three-suited", denoting on the one hand, his love of finery and on the other, his indeterminate social status. Reference to clothing continues, a further insult hurled at him is that "a tailor made thee". He is depicted as a more sinister character than Touchstone - his moral flaws are more deeply ingrained and their high seriousness is underscored by charges of effeminacy and illegitimacy.

On the other hand, while affectation was condemned as a symptom of lack of proportion, as a breach between the heart, mind and word, there is an implicit recognition of the value of oratory and the necessity of language being adequate to handle the social and institutional. This is dramatised when Cordelia, although

correct in refusing to use the high flown, empty rhetoric of her sisters, errs on the side of paucity. Here two modes of speech and being are contrasted and both found wanting. Goneril and Regan illustrate the divorce of heart from words: "I love you more than words can wield the matter" (1.1. 54). Their professions of love are ultimately to be proven false by their deeds but Cordelia's refusal to "heave my heart into my mouth", is also an infringement of propriety, a naïve lack of *savoir faire* in ceremonial and social circumstances. Her full heart and empty tongue, her "Nothing" is also a violation of social norms for which she is cruelly punished.

Lear's language of the heart too is inadequate as it degenerates into the socially meaningless language of madness, similar to that of the recognised madman, Tom O' Bedlam. Between meaningless and deceptive rhetoric and the communication between heart and mind in words there is exists a balanced equilibrium, a mediation between the interior and exterior, between what one feels and what one should express. In this initial scene of the play, Shakespeare defines the exigencies of personal, moral coherency, and social or ceremonial contract as consisting of a negotiation of exterior and interior, personal and social, individual and society in the language one uses. Cordelia's excessive economy leaves her at a disadvantage in a world where the word is supreme. Juliet had similar advice for Romeo "Conceit, more rich in matter than in words / Brags of his substance, not of ornament" (Rom. 2.6.30 - 31).

Affectation, then was seen as a disproportionate swing of language towards the social at the expense of self-expression and frequently manifested through abuse of

borrowed words. The flip side of the coin was a purely private and uncommunicative language, that of the heart. In between lay a language governed albeit by imported norms derived through analogy, but which achieved a balance between the two.

The norms of the Cambridge humanists, diluted and modified, became those of the majority of writers, the point of intersection lying somewhere between affectation, the useless frittering away of words and the language of meaning, of the heart and self expression. This is the point on which Mulcaster finds common ground. Although he was doing no more that reiterating the commonly accepted viewpoint of the late sixteenth century, he endorses the basic points defended by the Cambridge humanists. This was that borrowing bred of necessity is admissible but must be conducted with a modicum of common sense and respect for the nature of the language itself:

> For mine own words, and the terms, that I use, theie be generallie english. And if anie be either an incorporate stranger, or otherwise translated, or quite coined a new, I have shaped it as fit for the place, where I use it, as my cunning will give me" (287).

Mulcaster calls for the marriage of content and form "tongues to speake with and stuffe to speake of! (1888: 221), a union violated by affected use of language. This had always been one of the tenets of rhetoric but between Vives' call for"solid things"and Bacon's matter over form, there had been a proliferation of the topics discussed in the vernacular. Mulcaster lies mid-way along the path from rhetorical

art to scientific investigation, from witty paradox to philosophic speculation, advising the writer "to seke more for sinewes and sound strength, then for waste flesh" (281).

Fig. 8 Frontispiece of <u>Pedantius,</u> 1631. Rpt. in Bailey, 1992.

5.7. From Orality to Literacy

Technological innovation interacted with and modified current theories of language. The increasing availability of texts in written form breathed new life into an "alternative" theory of language which challenged the primacy of speech. This theory conceived language as primarily written script and was based on a tradition which had its roots in the interpretation of the Hebrew Masoritic and cabbalistic traditions. Here, the spoken word is circumvented by the printed word. The classical tradition had continued to analyse language as oratory in spite of the fact that learned Latin had long been separated from its oral base. Indeed, this formed part of the quandary in which Renaissance humanist pedagogues found themselves: their promotion of teaching spoken Latin was forced to rely more and more on the printed text. This caused a readjustment which pitted the oral and manuscript culture against the typographical, leaving the period in a marginal position where "the oral and written word met in a creative, dynamic tension" (Elsky,1989: 114). The influence of the oral residue lingered on: "An exacting devotion to the written text ... struggled in the subconscious with commitment to rhetoric and to dialectic, symbolic of the old oral - aural frames of mind" (Ong, 1967: 61 - 62).

Rhetoric gradually migrated from the oral to the chirographic world, very often without any concession to the new medium other than a downgrading of that part of rhetoric, although still featuring in the rhetoric manuals, which dealt with memorisation and delivery. The importance assigned to the oral quality of language slowly began to give way to the visual. Mulcaster's celebration of writing

glories in the fact that through it " she makes the eye, the paragon sense" (1888: 32). The press in effect opened up vistas that had to be accommodated initially within understood patterns of thought and only slowly did they yield to new horizons as it was popularised and its clout became more evident: "By the Renaissance, the notion that writing follows speech was in fact becoming a conceptual metaphor rather than an actual description of how a text is composed" (Elsky, 1989: 113 - 14).

Mulcaster's praise of writing and his defence of its primacy is, however, shot through with a strong streak of the oral residue. He too participated in the inbred and unconscious orality behind rhetorical processes of thought patterning. This is reflected in his teaching practice. He gives high priority to the practice of oratory and devotes five chapters to it in Positions. His inclusion of dramatic presentations in the form of plays, some of them penned by himself, with the boys of St Paul's was considered iinnovative. Singing was included on the curriculum and reading aloud given parity with silent reading. His own education was in the true rhetorical tradition and such habits of mind are not easily cast off. As Kristeller states: "Rhetoric holds the key to Renaissance humanism and to Renaissance thought and civilisation in general (1983: 2). It was not, as it is now, in an academic backwater but occupied a central position in professional and social life and lay at the heart of the education system. Although the late sixteenth century witnessed the beginning of its demise, as society slowly moved from oral to written-based modes of perception, it was still central. Once the shift to literacy had been completed,

however, it "was no longer the all-pervasive subject it had once been"(Ong,1982: 116).

Mulcaster's testimony provides an insight into the nature of the transition through his observations on the differences between the written text and oral discourse. His aim is to alert the reader to the competing demands of each, to establish the superiority of writing and rally against potential complaints about his own style. Whatever personal crusade he may have been pursuing, he shows a consciousness of the influence of the medium on the message and the necessity to adapt the norms of rhetoric to the relatively new means of transmission.

5.7.1 Defining and Defending the Difficulty of the Written Text

> If theie must be made a lure for learning, to discend ... or rather to degenerate hir self, then to desire them, to learn to look up, what state standeth skill in? (Mulcaster,1925: 283).

> clearness is of course considered from the point of view of the language itself and not from the understanding of the listeners, for if anyone is ignorant of the language and therefore is not influenced by our words, it does not follow that we have used obscure language (Watson, 1913: 111)

Mulcaster's discussion of style shows a realisation of the fundamental differences between the oral and written media. He was conscious that the message and its

formulation were necessarily affected not only by the subject matter but also the medium of transmission. Writing demands a different strategy on the part of the writer and different mental skills on the part of the reader. It cannot, therefore, be made an equivalent to speech: "But where the musings must be, & the matter is no currier to passe awaie in poste another currant must be kept, and yet the maner of deliverie must not be thought hard, not be compared with the other"(282). This argument was one of those most frequently used by the conservative branch of spelling reformers in France and with it goes the opinion that writing is more noble than speech, which is transitory and, by its nature must limit itself to concepts which are easily and quickly assimilated: "Planeness is good for a pleasant course"(283).

Mulcaster's basic argument is that the parameters by which an oral discourse be judged cannot be transposed to the written text without substantial modification, a transition made rather too easily by the Cambridge group which advocated plainness, naturalness, clarity and simplicity in language, indiscriminately. The norms of rhetoric as applied to speech do not always hold good when applied to writing: two factors curtail their scope: the subject under discussion and the channel of communication., the latter holding the most weight. The written text "contains a matter, which must be thrise lookt on, ear it be once gotten" (283). It is in reading, " where no hast is enioyned, but to read at leasure, & not all at once"(289) that "difficulty" may be overcome.

Reading is an activity which allows more reflection, can be perused at will and as often as was necessary, facilitating "increasingly articulate introspectivity"(Ong, 1983: 105). Mulcaster was correct in identifying this as important. One result of this transition was that the very term "reading" underwent a perceptual change. Up until the advent of print it had been closely related to dictation, placing it secondary to speech, and considered a communal activity: broadsheets and other printed material continued for long to be read aloud by a literate member of the community and were rarely truly disseminated until spoken. All texts were oral until the word became an image, retained in the visual memory rather than in speech sounds. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, the output of titles doubled those of the previous half century. There was a veritable explosion of publications and, as a consequence, writing came to be recognised as intrinsically potent; new modes of thought developed and textual scholarship was born. Literacy ushered in new modes of thought, reorganised the system of communication, the field of social relations and attitudes to the text.

As modern research has shown, the cognitive processes involved in the production and reception of speech and writing are different. The reader does not map each letter to its sound image but captures the shape of the word. Efficient word recognition becomes more important than itemised reflections or similarities between letter and speech. Of this too, Mulcaster shows some insights. Advocating the retention of traditional spelling practices, he maintains that the shape of the word rather than its individual components is the key to correct spelling: "as the eye will help manie to write right by a sene president" (60).

Mulcaster's defence of the style of the written text is conducted on the basis that, being distinct, they are forced to adopt different registers. Speech is associated with speed, transitoriness and slight matter, while writing is the corollary, depth, contemplation and the cultivation of man's intellectual abilities. Those who complain about the difficulty of writing are dismissed off-hand. Mulcaster is against the syndrome of instant gratification: "or is their maner of penning to be disallowed as dark, bycause the ignorant reader, or the nice student maie not streight waie rush into it?"(283). This does much to justify the use of "obscure" and "dark" terms. The meaning of these terms is challenged, alleging that the pejoratives pasted on them come from no intrinsic difficulty, but originate from either incorrect use by the writer or ignorance in the reader.

They are a refutation of the pervasive demands that the language be transparent enough to allow easy access to knowledge by all. Mulcaster puts the weight of the onus not on the writer but on the reader to reach understanding and this can be read as a manifestation of his elitist tendencies. In his refusal to concede to the reader, he is in fact invoking one of the norms of rhetoric and applying it to the written text. That the style and language fit the subject matter, outweighs clarity and plainness. This posture is also to be found in the words of Castiglione's Federico:

> if the words used by the writer carry with them a certain, I will not say difficulty but veiled subtlety, ... they give what is written greater authority and cause the reader to be more attentive and aware, and so

> reflect more deeply and enjoy the skill and message of the author (Bull, 1968: 72).

Mulcaster sees the written text as posing an intellectual challenge to the reader and it thus becomes a medium of cultivation, but only when the reader collaborates with the writer: "A little hardnesse yea in the most obscure, & most philosoficall conclusion, maie never seme tedious to a conquering mind" (289). He echoes the arguments used by the first great neologiser, Thomas Elyot; that: usage and custom breed familiarity: "He must take acquaintance and make the thing familiar" (281). He argues that when the subject matter is deep and complex, then it is the duty of the reader to make the intellectual leap to understand and not for the author to spoon-feed his audience: "For if plane humors must still be please, and be delt withall, so daintilie, as theie be put to no pains, to learn and enquire" (283), then the art of writing is debased. It is the reader's disposition to the text, the mind set in which he approaches it that is of overriding importance: that "the partie receiver be willing, & not weiward" (278).

In this respect, Mulcaster is at cross purposes with his own declared aims and those of the phonemic reformers. Although he states that he is writing for the benefit of "the untraned and unskilfull multitude"(276), "plane people, as cannot entend the understanding of a rule" (60), he makes no concessions to them. He is, of course, careful to set his intransigence in a favourable light, maintaining that his refusal to talk down to his readers must be interpreted more as a mark of respect for their intellectual abilities than disdain. However, he repeatedly inveighs against the

shortcomings which the reader projects on the author; the former is accused of "unnatural idlenesse", "blinded understanding" of being "pevish ignorant" and having "mere ignorance", "small knowledge" or "corrupt affection". He suggests that the definition of "hard" comes from the unaccustomed reader: "But maie not this dark falt, be in him that finds it, & not in the matter which is plane of it self?" (283).

He is also aware that the reception of his work will be influenced by the wide dissemination afforded by the medium of print and this too is a potential pitfall, the reverse side of the coin. He expresses doubts about this: "I know not to whom I have delivered it" (1888: 293). The fact that the audience is great in number implies diversity, which in turn increases the likelihood that the subject matter will be unfamiliar. The "simple plowman", "warie merchant" and "subtill lawyer", those from "manuarie trades" together with those practised in "metaphysical discourses" have little in common but all form part of a potential readership. He is affirming that the dissemination of knowledge should not lead to its debasement or dictate the style in which it is presented.

The written text has more permanence than the spoken discourse and by virtue of this allow more width and depth: "where he penneth for perpetuitie, where the reader may at leasure, either look upon the book, or laie it down by him, neither is so straited as to read all at once, or to forego the book" (281). In contrast, spoken discourses, "as be altogether popular, or upon present dispatch, & soon after to dy, maie well abide slight, bycause their life is short"(282). Therefore, he makes a

distinction between speech and writing which points out two chief differences: the in-depth handling of the matter and the manner of reception. Words which "salute but the ear, and so to execution, without further delaie, then the more plane at sodain, the more plausible in dede". Speech is "without anie thing to muse on, where there is no time to muse in".(282).

Mulcaster's observations from another perspective, lend weight to the thesis that he was an elitist, defending literacy as the prerogative of the chosen few, jealously manning the gates to knowledge in the face of the rabble. While all and sundry, in England and France are preaching the simplicity of spelling, he defends its difficulty - one which would restrict the extension of the capacity to read. It is true that his attitude to the receiver is one tinged with disdain. His refusal to simplify and descend to the level of the reader does everything to reinforce these impressions. Undoubtedly, defence of some obscurity is a strategy to defend his own somewhat obtuse style, one which he himself recognises as posing certain difficulties. But there are hints here of the supremacy of the writer, the writer as creator who is one of those with good judgement, representing wise custom and who sets the standards for the improvement of the language.

Writing on writing Mulcaster shows himself at his most intransigent and most self-confident, allowing a glimpse of the overweening pride and haughtiness of which he was accused by some of his ex-students and for which supposedly he was caricaturised as Holofernes.[17] In all spheres where Mulcaster touches on the subject

[17]See Richard Lee Demolen's Richard Mulcaster: An Elizabethan Savant (226 - 239) for a discussion concerning the possibility that Mulcaster was the inspiration for Holofernes. The arguments presented supporting this analogy break down on one important point, however: Mulcaster was not

of language he assumes a considerable knowledge on the part of the reader. His statements are often marked with the ambiguity which characterised the age. There were vexed confusions about language as new thought schemes were introduced. Virtually ignoring the origin of language, while briefly touching the theme of universal language, he swims between two shores. His ideas on meaning and the relation of the linguistic sign to the external world represent the magnetic pull of the past. Even the very scaffolding around which he defends his spelling reforms is not free from instability as he reverts to a referential mode of meaning. The fruits of a rhetorical education are yoked together with a belief in print and the power of writing, moving from seeing the word as spatial rather than acoustic. The distrust of words barely disguises his delight and belief in them, his love of English does not smother his love of Latin. He craves unity, order and stability but makes much of the idiosyncracies of the vernacular: he writes ostensibly for the masses but then ignores them, places his faith in the people and then just as lightly withdraws it. This analysis then shows that he was indeed a figure, if not schitzophrenic then tending towards a double personality.

As to his modern standpoint in regards to his contemporaries, attitudes to change if measured by reactions to borrowing would seem to confuse two different factors: one was the practice of borrowing itself, dictated by pragmatic functions and the other, working in the more specialised field of literature, how this practice fitted in with the norms of classical rhetoric. The latter dictated the policy of the Cambridge

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in favour of phonemic spelling as is his dramatic counterpart. It has also been suggested that John Florio, author of Worlde of -Wordes (1598) and known for his pomposity is the butt of the parody. It is much more probable that Holofernes is a prototype or compendium of trends rather than a specific cariciature of either Mulcaster or Florio

group. There were not in fact two distinct attitudes to borrowing but scales of intensity along a continuum and differences are best classified by degree, not kind. All parties admitted borrowing in principle; it was when these principles had to be put into practice that it became less clear just what words should be admitted.

Mulcaster's brief statement that words should have the following characteristics; "commonesse" for every man, that is should be part of the national heritage, "beawtie" for the learned, "braverie", to garnish and borrowing, to enlarge the word hoard all united in "rediest deliverie" marks a synthesis of those characteristics outlined by Wilson above. They unite the principles of communality, the distinguishing of registers, marking off a section of the language for the learned alone and aesthetic principles as well as the nationalist bent of such discourses.

Allowing for the fact that Mulcaster does not appear to have literary language in mind, there is a fundamental difference between him and the Cambridge humanists - the role of human creativity in the making of language and as a result the specific character it acquires. It is human volition and social necessity that grants status to words, not watertight rules imposed from outside. Just as Speroni had argued that the old classical languages dampened spontaneity and freshness, so too did their rigid norms. It was up to the vernaculars to seek out the rules dictated by their own systems - just what Mulcaster advocated. It was a question of looking to the system itself and building on what was found there.

What then can be concluded about the degree of difference between the Cambridge humanists' and Mulcaster's theory of language?. Much of what Renwick and Satterthwaite claim has a firm base in fact but the differences cannot be measured one against the other until there is a clear distinction established between the registers of language with which they are concerned. It is true that within the Continental perspective, Mulcaster was firmly mainstream. Likewise, it must be acknowledged that the Cambridge humanists were neither as conservative or as doggedly reticent to change as has been insinuated. Finally, both sides appeal to necessity as the ultimate justification for borrowing and neologising.

5.8 The "genius" of Language

The uniqueness of languages was a core theoretical issue as it worked on the assumption that the linguistic sign is arbitrary and directly related language and culture. Moreover, it called for the inclusion of the diachronic dimension in order to explain this uniqueness.

In a Europe dividing and uniting, busily forging out national identities, language became the flagship of expression of cultural differences. It produced stereotypes skewed by nationalist rivalries, the remnants of which are deeply ingrained and have never fully been weeded out. Difference in words and constructions was at root, an equation between forms of language and forms of thought, that is, between different cultural entities in competition with each other. Peletier du Mans, (1545) in L'Art poetique d'Horace suggests that one's own language and one's own experience have mutual significance and their meaning is not capable of being expressed in other languages.

Mulcaster mentions only Greek and Latin as typifying certain qualities, indicating by omission that the brother vernaculars were beneath mention. There is no indication of the type of classification given in Carew's eulogy, "The Excellency of the English Language" (1605)[1] where he sketches the defining characteristic of the French language: "delicate but over nice", Spanish, "maiesticall, but fulsome" and

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[1] D.N.C. Wood (1977) claims that it was written in response to Richard Verstegan's A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence (1605) and sets the date of composition between 1605 and 1614, ten years after the date set by G.G. Smith.

Dutch, "manlike, but withall very harsh" (Smith, 1904: 292). Camden on the other hand, defines French as "courtlike", Italian as "amorous" and Latin as "courteous". Such characterisations, which played a key role in nationalist self-assertion at the beginning of the seventeenth century, were either considered superfluous or unnecessary by Mulcaster who was single-minded in his promotion of English as the language of the English people. He did not wish to be seen as a self-appointed magistrate of the language who launched into a defence of their linguistic heritage with bulldog determination and zeal and states that he has no desire to appear dictator-like. He was, like these writers on the defence but from forces within rather than without.

Renaissance writers were deeply conscious of the differences that separated their vernaculars one from the other although they lacked specific vocabulary with which to formulate these differences. The perception is embryonic, more intuitive than rational and is best articulated by Du Bellay's imprecise term, "je ne saye quoi" or Mulcaster's no more precise, "certaine misterie". The term "genius" did not become current until the 18th century but the intuition existed well before and was nudged into articulation by translation. There emerged a sense of linguistic distinctiveness together with an apprehension that the specific qualities of a language constitute unique meanings which are not directly transferable to other languages without some degree of loss.

Discussions on translation attempt to synthesise and address the problems encountered and all place the uniqueness of each language as an inviolable

principle. Dolet in La maniére de bien traduire, (1540) states that "chasune langue a ses proprietiés, lesquelles si le traducteur ignore, il facait tort a l'autheur" (Rickard, 1968: 103) and goes on to recommend that the translator use the global intention of the text as the chief guideline, "gardant curieusement la proprité de l'une, a l'aultre langue" (105). Ascham implicitly acknowledges the specific character of each tongue through his insistence that translations be rendered in "natural" English.

Vives' tract De tradendis disciplinis (1531) departs from the hypothesis that languages are simultaneously both comparable and very different and for this reason, the particularities of each language can pose insurmountable problems in translation: "Est in unaquaque lingua sua loquendi proprietas", (qtd. in Coseriu, 1977: 90)[2] His three-fold classification of levels of translation makes this point explicit and maintains that there is inevitably a certain loss involved, especially in literary texts, where both form and content are of the same importance. The absence of exact synonyms, among other factors, brought the realisation that in translation, especially of the third type, a total and faithful correspondence between the original and the translation was impossible to achieve. There always escaped some spirit, an elusive factor which could not be pinioned down through words because, as Gelli (1548) stated: "each language has its acuities and capricious turns" (qtd. in Stankiewicz, 1981:182). Vives is unable, however, to satisfactorily account for the nature or the source of this specificity and vacillates between two different hypotheses. Like Varchi (1570) he attributes it to grammatical structure,

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[2] St Jeronimo had also perceived this specific character: "ipsum postremo suum, et, ut ita dicam, vernaculum linguae genus".

locating it, "sólo aquí y allá en la estructura lingüística", but concludes that, "en el fondo, sólo afecta al plano de la expresión de las lenguas" (Coseriu, 1977: 91).

Du Bellay's, "je en say quoi propre seulment à elle" (Terreaux, 1972: 33) identifies the defining characteristic of each language with the emotional climate generated. His Italian predecessors had also appreciated this subtle and inimitable quality as, "acose bellezze", "certi propi tesori", "un certo che di scelto", "un particolare modo di favellare". Dolet identifies it with "diction, loucutions, subtilitiés & vehemences à elle particulaires". This figurative language masks the inability to locate and define just what constituted uniqueness.

Castiglione's efforts to identify the specificity of languages is equally unsatisfactory. In a direct confrontation between Federico and the Count, who, having tossed the issue back and forth, are unable to give more than a negative definition, timidly concluding that: "the genius and strength of a language does not consist in such trifles [words]" (Bull, 1976: 85). Federico vaguely declares that it resides in "carefully observing its [language's] properties, in adopting the same meanings, and using the same style and rhythms, as all the best writers" (84) but this does little to clarify the issue and would lead the debate onto quite different territory if the Countess had not abruptly cut the discussion short by pointing out that as neither style nor rhythm were sufficiently defined to start with, further debate would be fruitless. This interchange neatly demonstrates the ill-defined notions which plagued attempts to describe and define the uniqueness of each language. The Count's initial foray is more a definition of a standard than specifity.

Speroni offers a similar negative version, criticising slavish imitation as responsible for cramping the language by insisting that everyone should imitate only a select number of canonical figures, "instead of enriching our language in its own genius, ... "(83).

Definitions remain vague except in the unanimous conclusion that it is not to be found in words alone. This recognition sanctions borrowing which, on the Continent, was never perceived as the blight it was in England. The family tree of incestuous relations legitimised the practice and words slipped more easily from one language to another. The attitude is best explained by an analogy borrowed from Samuel Johnson, although taken it out of context: borrowed words do not alter the architecture of the language but merely the placing of the stones in the building.

The wave of borrowing that threatened to engulf English sharpened fears which forecast the ripping of the fabric of the mother tongue and simultaneously threw into relief the uniqueness of the language whose virginity had to be protected by its mentors from rape by foreigners. This is best expressed by Richard Verstegan who feared that the language had borrowed so much, "that it is of it self no language at all" (Freeborn, 1993: 124). Terms such as "gallimaufrey", "hodge podge", "mingle mangle", "gobbledegook" and "illegitimate progeny" reflect the fear that from the loins of the thoroughbred a mongrel would emerge. Mulcaster harbours no such paranoiac fears, bolstered up by his confidence both in the mechanisms of language and national pride. He recognises that over a third of the words in English

are of foreign origin and applies the historical principles of naturalisation, incorporation and integration to soothe the fretful opposition to the practice and exorcise the demons of xenophobia.

The identification of monarchical with national sovereignty had far-reaching and deep-seated consequences, setting the tone of the debate on the vernacular and achieving a closer identification between culture, nation and language than was present on the continent. Language was increasingly defined along religious and political lines and was turned into a badge of national identity and cultural distinctiveness.[3]

Defence and maintenance of Englishness became a potent reason for bypassing foreign authority. Spenser states as much with his call for " a kingdom of our own language" as does Mulcaster with his attempt to fashion English spelling according to the development of the language itself over time. Aided and abetted by the necessities of an English-speaking religious community, Latin metamorphosed into the ensign of papacy, subjugation, foreign dominion and enslavement while the vernacular became an outward manifestation of political, theological and financial independence.

What then was the English typification of the characteristics that defined the language from other vernaculars? Initially it was defined in negative terms - what it

[3] Tony Crowley in The Politics of Language (1989) maintains that it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that the language assumed the status of symbol of the nation. It could be argued that the seeds had been planted and taken root in the sixteenth century, the first time that the language assumed the value of symbol of independence.

was not, rather than what it was. Early prefaces to translations and apologies to the reader tend to focus on the poverty of the mother tongue, rather than enter into questions about the fidelity of the translation; Caxton complains of the "English rude and brood". In a first phase, worries about faithfulness to the original are only expressed in regards to the treatment of proper names as in Willes' preface to History of Travayle. Later, the impalpable property in language is conveyed in the terms "nature", "fabric" or "fibre", and is centred almost exclusively, in the absence of other points of reference, around the lexicon.

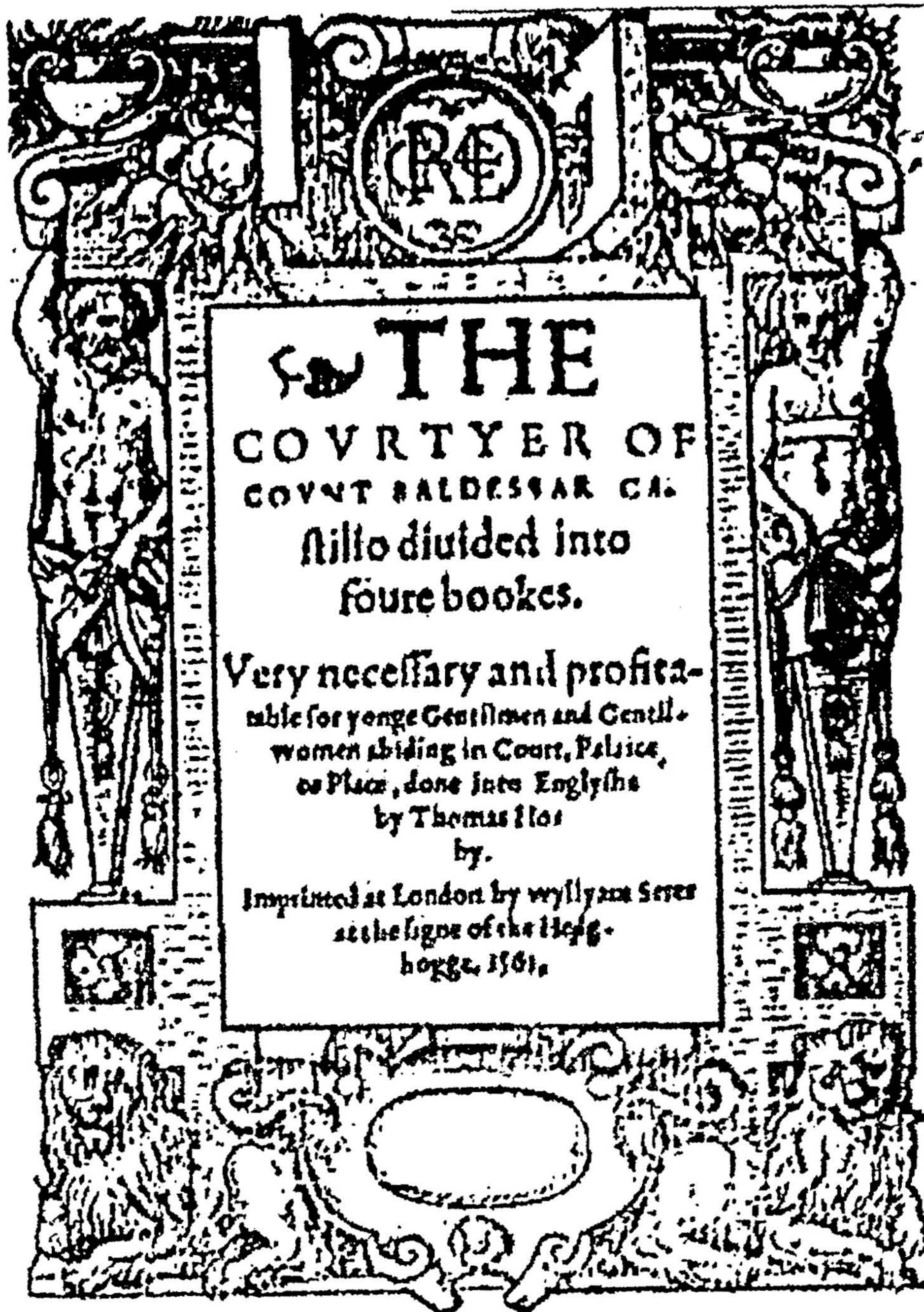
Apart from vague terms such as "natural", "plain" and "simple", it was the monosyllable that best defined the character of the language although its standing went through pendular highs and lows according to whether poetic or nationalistic concerns were uppermost. The elevation of the monosyllable was in part due to the work of the Antiquarians but their perspective was by no means shared by all. Poets criticised their unsuitability for poetry written according to the Latin models. Nash, an unrepentant neologiser, writing in 1594, complains that the language: "swarmeth with the single money of monosyllables" and resolves to "convert a number of these small little scutes into great peeces of gold" (Craigie, 1946: 143). George Gascoigne (1575) it was who made the link most directly: " ... the most auncient English wordes are of one syllable, so that the more monosyllables that you use the truer Englishman you shall seeme" (Craigie, 1946: 134). Camden, while admitting that they are "unfitting for verses and measures" declares them "most fit for expressing briefly the first concepts of the mind" (Tucker, 1961: 18). Carew, makes a biological comparison: "as every individuum is but one, soe in our

native Saxon language wee finde many of them suitablye expressed in woordes of one syllable". (Smith 1904, 2: 287).

For Mulcaster too, the monosyllable has a defining quality which invests the language with strength and sturdiness: "In the staie of speche & strong ending it is verie forcible and stout, bycause of the monosyllable, which is the chefe ground and ordinarie pitch of both our pen and tung" (286). This idea was developed in the seventeenth century: In 1674, N. Fairfax commends English for speaking, "manly, strong and full". As late as 1910, Otto Jesperson takes up this line of characterisation, praising the "masculinity" of the language: "[It] is more manly than any other language I know" (1972: 2)

Mulcaster's recognition of the particular nature of the English language is not only confined to his lyrical references to the "secret misterie" but runs as a guiding principle throughout his work on spelling reform which seeks an English solution for an English problem. While he maintains that the language is a system which is immune to human fiddling, it is not this aspect but the cultural and historical anvil on which the language was forged that is stressed as being the source of its particular nature. It is through the diachronic lens that the true nature of the language can be appreciated and, in fact, a large part of his opposition to phonemic spelling rests on the fact that it would imply ignoring its genealogy and erasing ties with the past. The search for the individuality of the language does not lie in a synchronic analysis of the forms and functions but must be sought in its development through time. It is ironic that one who bases his reforms on the

idiosyncrasy of English, cannot or does not find the terms in which to express this and merely indicates but does not define its essence. Perhaps, however, one should not judge him or his contemporaries too harshly or rashly as the problem remains with us and one would be hard put to define it even today in logical and concise terms. What is surprising is the fact that he does not take refuge in xenophobic nationalistic clichés.



THE
COVRTYER OF
COVNT BALDESSAR CA-
stilio diuided into
foure bookes.
Very neceſſary and profita-
table for yonge Gentilmen and Gentil-
women abiding in Court, Palaice,
or Place, done into Englyshe
by Thomas Ho
by.
Imprinted at London by wyllyam Seres
at the signe of the Hedg-
hogge. 1561.

Fig. 9 Title page of Thomas Hoby's translation The Courtyer, 1561.

darkwing.uoregon.edu/ rbear/courtier/courtier. html.

5.9 The Questioning of Latin's Hegemony

> It is the supreme irony of literary history that the Roman authority that most inspired humanism, and so became the chief Roman progenitor of a humanist poetics, also initiated its demise (Kinney, 1986: 436).

> Toutes les Langues sont d'une mesme valeur, & des mortelz à une mesme fin (Terreaux, 1972: 47).

Even while classical knowledge was being revived it was being subjected to fierce scrutiny and being tested against the criteria of observation and comparison. Vives is one of the first to adopt a healthy critical attitude to the ancients, stating that: "if we are to strive earnestly ... we can build on their knowledge". He warns that men should not "merely acquiesce" and "receive everything on trust from others" (Watson, 1913: 209 - 10), but test the validity of past knowledge through experience. Uninhibited questioning was the path towards the advancement of knowledge and the emergence of mankind from the shadows of a faded glory. In his attitude to rhetoric too, he not only rejected the five part division of the art but affirmed that: "We shall not repeat the ancients, but in fact we shall teach something entirely new" (qtd. in Murphy, 1983: 94). In this way he underscores the absurdity of accepting past usage as a limit on present practice and gives a vote of confidence to his own generation.

This attitude, behind which lies the concept of historical progress and linear change, was widespread especially in the glory days of early humanism of which Castiglione is a fitting mouthpiece: "Nature nowadays produces men far more capable than in the past" (Bull, 1976; 110). The Count goes on to criticise the barren nostalgia for things past, citing how the ancients themselves were selective and used their critical judgement when deciding what should be imitated and transmitted: "Even though they revered antiquity, they did not regard it so highly as to wish to be limited by it in the way you want us to be today." He concludes that by insisting on imitating the ancients men fail to imitate them. Dante modifies his initial opinion of the absolute supremacy of Latin and concludes that its only claim to supremacy rests on it quality of *nobilità*", that is, its immutability. The other aspects of language, *vertù* (the capacity to express ideas) and *belleza* (the use of appropriate and adequate terms), had nothing to do with *nobilità* and therefore could be present in the vernaculars. The idea that blind allegiance to Latin would stifle the spontaneity and freshness of the vernaculars is defended by Speroni on sociological and diachronic grounds.

Conflicting allegiances however, produced a tug of war in men who had not yet been fully weaned from the breast of classical learning and who were still intellectually dependent on their linguistic and cultural milk nurse. In his discussion of the relation between the classics and the vernacular Mulcaster develops this imagery of motherhood and weaning, holding up as an example for English the European vernaculars which "do alreadie wean their pens and tungs" from Latin into their own natural language which, he claims is no "dry nurse, being

so well appointed by the milch nurses help" (273). He adds that "our hole tung was waned long ago, as having all her tethe"(89). Through these images Mulcaster recognises the debt owed to Latin but at the same time, follows the organic model when urging the offspring to strike out on their own. The dominance of Latin is attributed by Mulcaster and Du Bellay to a set of historical factors which have little to do with intrinsic superiority. They coincide that Latin's dominance comes from two major sources; historicity, "so great a forestart" (270) and usage. If English is uncouth then it is so because it is unused. This is formulated into a universal law governing language development:. "And so it was in *Latin*, and so is it in ech language" (270).

Mulcaster feels that it is time that Latin hand over the mantel to some other, denying that its role is determined by inheritance but "committed for a term of years" (269). Du Bellay's aggressiveness is targeted more at the race and the disdain they show for other nations than at the language, which inspires respect. This sense of ruffled national pride is what lies behind the extended discussion on the origin and use of the term "barbarous" in chapter two, designed, ironically, (as he himself is engaged in nationalistic one-upmanship with rival vernaculars) to point out its xenophobic tendencies and finally to return the insult, boomerang style, to the Latins themselves.[4]

Mulcaster's attitude to Latin as a scholar is even-handed and intellectually honest but his text also reflects the contentious times in which he lived. He sees the

[4] A similar argument had been used by Bembo in Speroni's dialogue when he points out that Latin in its origins can itself be classified as "barabrous" and is used as an argument to apologise for defects and supposed uncouthness in the emergent vernaculars.

predominance of Latin to have had a subversive and even tyrannical influence on the vernaculars and warns against the model being hoisted to the level of idol. While the classics can provide examples, they should not be slavishly copied. He proposes that it is the way of proceeding, the method, that he will emulate, not the end result itself, "by following their president, and marking that course, which was used in them" (69). Mulcaster refers to Latin in the past tense, torn between the love of the language that his education and specialisation has inculcated in him and his national affiliations. Again, his mental agility comes to the rescue and he is capable of making allegiance to both compatible.

An analysis of Mulcaster's use of the two terms "honour" and "worship" brings into focus how he manages to separate his intellectual allegiance to the language and his instinctive love of the vernacular. He is capable of maintaining a sustained opposition between the two while avoiding conflict. "I honor the Latin, but I worship the English" (269) becomes his slogan and he draws a neat distinction between the semantic load of the verbs "honour" and "worship". The latter carries emotional connotations associated with faith and devotion as opposed to the rational and objectively arrived at judgement implied in "honour". The difference is between the cool dictates of the mind and the hot passion of the heart. This distinction is confirmed by Mulcaster's usage of the two terms throughout The Elementarie where "worship" is used consistently in referring to the vernacular, and becomes part of a web of such emotionally charged terms such as "cherish" and "love": "We can honour latin not so but that we maie cherish our own. (268),

reaching a pitch with the statement, framed by two proud possessives: "Our English is our own" (271).

His second objection is fuelled by religious and political motives. Mulcaster appropriated the imagery which was current in the religious controversy by juxtaposing the terms "freedom" and "liberty", "bondage" and "slavery". English bears: "the ioyfull title of our libertie and fredom, the Latin tung, remembering us, of our thraldom & bondage" (269). The difference is between dependence and independence, self fashioning and slavish imitation, following pattern or opting for precept. These terms are applicable equally to the language and the state, the state as language and the language as a pillar of state.

Life and death are contrasted. The verbal imagery associated with English is dynamic and pulses with energy; "Our brains can bring forth, our conceits will bear life, our tungs be not tyed" (272). English is caught in "furie of water", unruly but alive. Latin, however, is "fre from motion", "shrined up in books" and made immortal only through the "register of memorie" (177). It inhabits a bygone time, feeding parasitically on its past record, associated with dusty library shelves and moth-eaten volumes sucking the oxygen out of the air, exerting a suffocating and strangulating oppression. Mutability and truth are not considered antagonistic or mutually exclusive terms and Latin is an anachronistic model

Du Bellay too refers to Latin in the past tense: "tout arbre qui naist, florist et fructifie bien tost, bien tost aussi envielliss & meure" (43). Latin is "ces paroles

mortes" (50), like ruins which modern man attempts to restore to a weak shadow of their former glory.[5] Du Bellay also attributes the fact that present day man is less learned than his ancestors to the excessive amount of time spent learning Greek, Latin and Hebrew, a surprising statement in a text which defends the French language. "En consumons pas seulement nostre jeunesse en ce vain exercice ... returnons encor' en enfance, par l'espace de XX ou XXX ans en faisons autre chose qu'apprendre à parler, qui Grec, qui Latin, qui Hebreu" (48). He repeats Speroni's thesis that to return to Latin would be anachronistic as to return to infancy subverts the natural progression of things. Du Bellay here is also playing with the sense of "*consumer*" which through imitation, the act of ingesting and absorbing gives life. However as a reflexive verb, it involves self immolation and destruction.

Closely linked to the reverence for custom on the one hand and the principle of usage wherein it was rooted were the evolving attitudes to grammar. Grammar was synonymous with Latin and Greek. Appeals to custom opened a chink in the armour and allowed the vernaculars to infiltrate the bastions of nobility. Paradoxically, it also led to the conclusion that those languages caught in the currents of change could not possess grammar, thus denying them a passport into the exclusive club. Vives sees no need for a grammar in languages in the throes of constant change: "in a language which is in continual use, there is no necessity to frame systematic rules" (Foster, 1913: 79). Bovelles also believed it impossible to

[5] The courtier in Speroni's dialogue uses the same terms "dead Latin words", comparing Latin to decayed and rotten relics.

stabilise the vernaculars as they lacked an archetype or underlying principle that could regulate seemingly uncontrollable growth..

Reinforcing this opinion was the humanist backlash against the excessive stress placed on grammar and logic in the medieval syllabus. The attitude to grammar was ambivalent, swinging between the extremes of distrust and reverence with a middle position which called for more flexibility and relativised its use. In Pseudo-dialectica (1520) Vives condemns the scholastic approach as practised at the University of Paris, on the grounds of the "meagre and penurious prescript of grammar rules which all too often ignore both observation and experience" (Ijsewijn and Fritsen, 1991: 27). He adds: "We do not speak Latin in a certain way because Latin grammar commands it but because that is how the Latins speak." (qtd in Waswo, 1987: 121). Attitudes to Latin grammar were changing and this in turn had repercussions for attitudes to vernacular grammars. Vives' statements point to the direction and principles that would eventually become the foundations for grammar. It was to be the principle of *"usus loquendi communis*", a fact which assigns to Latin a status similar to the vernaculars.

Mulcaster was pulled between two contending forces. He makes his attitude to grammar explicit when he states that "grammer of it selfe is but the bare rule, a very naked thing" (56), echoing Ascham's disdainful reference to "naked rewles of Grammarians" (Mayor, 1967: 126). He concludes that we must "leave many peculiarities to dailie practice" (120). However, in chapter five of The Elementarie, he refers to it as the "keie to all cunning" and states that the purpose of his treatise

is the "entrance of language and the iudgement thereof which is wrought by Grammer" (54). It is likened to an anatomy, an interpreter, an artificer but basically as an aid to learning a foreign language and a translator's tool, rather than as an auxiliary to the native language.

In the above statements can be scented the waft of vacillation between the absolute and inflexible security guaranteed by grammar as opposed to the intuitive and more pliable but less sure rules generated by custom and usage. Using the latter two criteria as the basis for grammar gives Mulcaster hope for the development of a grammar of the vernacular. Usage and custom were gaining the upper hand and as Montaigne states: "those who would combat usage with grammar make fools of themselves" (qtd in Waswo, 1987: 175). Erasmus was equally firm in his views: "For it is not by learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to express themselves with exactness and refinement" (qtd. in Halpern, 1991. 31). All of them opt for the informal, flexible and implicit rules operating in everyday speech, the internalised self-regulating code which replaces the explicit, external, sovereign, absolute and consistent law. It is inflexible rules rather than grammar per se that excites these dismissals. Mulcaster did not want a language "clogd with rules but to generate a grammar from usage, "applyed to matter". Together with Bullokar, he saw that they could not be transferred from one language to another. In the same way, his spelling amendments are merely the codification of current and past usage.

Bullokar's attitude to grammar is anachronistic. He continuously plugs his pamphlet on three points, claiming that it will prove an aid to translation and help the acquisition of foreign languages. Children would first be well versed in English grammar which would make the mastering of Latin "more easy". The first reason he gives for the necessity of a grammar of English is the most diffuse and flimsy. that it would make the English the most eloquent and consequently the most learned nation. The overall impression given by Bullokar and to a lesser extent by Mulcaster, however, is that a grammar of English is conceived principally as an aid to further knowledge of Latin and in the face of the world.

But as ever in Renaissance attitudes, there was an inherent dichotomy. which affected both the pedagogical model for Latin and vernacular grammars and was manifested in different ways. Even though Erasmus and Vives inveighed against the stranglehold of hard and fast rules and advocated a model of ordinary everyday speech, they were adamant that everyday speech should not infect the purity of the classroom. Their aim was to teach classical Latin as if it were a colloquial language which it had long ceased to be on two fronts: it was taught through the written word and it was on its death bed. This explains the popularity of the colloquy which attempts to imitate the natural speech setting while providing allure for the young who found rules of grammar repulsive.

With respect to the vernaculars, they too were caught in a vicious circle. If a vernacular grammar were to be codified, based on usage and custom then a standard form of the language would have to be agreed on and this as yet existed

As the Renaissance is a process rather than a product which emerged in a specific set of circumstances in a particular time period, the texts will show fissures where the old and the new do not marry happily, where theory is out of joint with practice. What was changing was the mind set and this is slow to absorb all the consequences. This variegated whirlwind of ideas, the evident mismatch of theory and practice, the clinging to old accepted doctrines as expounded by the ancients while endeavouring to alloy them with circumstantial evidence to formulate a more adequate explanation of man and his role in the world epitomise the intellectual effort of trying to come to grips with change.

Mulcaster typifies in many ways this state of affairs. This weaving into the discourse of threads from many looms, combining imported silks and taffetas with home spun kerseys and russets, an essentially medieval view of society with a consciousness of social imperative and reality, does not always make for an even fabric. The waft and the weft are at times not well blended: Mulcaster's two treatises are more a process than a product, "more of a gerund than a noun, more a thinking than a thought" (Shuger, 1991: 16). In his theory of language, of its relation with society, of its spelling there is something old, something new and something borrowed and these three skeins must be carefully separated and unpicked in order to re-evaluate his position, allowing the revolutionary to cohabitate with the elitist conservative as a fitting characterisation of one representing the "world of contingent purpose, of perpetual cognitive dissonance, [and] plural orchestration" (Lanham, 1976: 44).

Mulcaster, like the honey bee mentioned by Carew, or that of Baret (to whom he dedicated verses in Latin in the 1580 edition of The Alvearie), roamed among the gardens of Europe and suckled the best and most appropriate nectar for the home plot. It is his discriminating use of the classical and continental heritage that marks him off from his contemporaries. His perspective on language sharpens the realisation that classical theory was inadequate to explain the English of his day. His adoption and adaptation of the well-worn ideas from the Continent stresses the dynamic, rather than the static, and with them he fashioned, not a new theory of language, but one tailored to the circumstances of the emergent vernacular.

In order to reach an understanding of the distinctive texture of The Elementarie and to examine in which ways the text marks a transition, to look into the dynamics underlying it, three broad lines of investigation have been followed, moving from a wide-focused contextualisation towards a more detailed examination of the core issue - spelling reform.

I begin by briefly outlining the structure and thematic concerns of the works under discussion. The chief focus of attention here is his second work The Elementarie written in 1582, one year after Positions which outlines his plans for the reform of elementary education and where some of the themes developed in the second work appear in embryonic form. It is important in a marginal way as it sets up a plan for a unified and standardised educational system and shows how Mulcaster viewed school and society, especially through his comments on social mobility and its relation to education.

The next chapter situates the work within the social, economic and educational climate of the time. Rather than providing a description of the forces at work in society, the analysis focuses on the ways in which extralinguistic concerns impinged on and set down the terms on which the debate on language was conducted. This brings to light the extent to which language, society and its overriding concerns were identified in the minds of the humanist writers, providing not only a background against which to judge the texts under discussion but also conveying and, in a sense dramatising the turmoil and uncertainty, the dislocation and disorientation which formed the backdrop against which debates on language developed and how attitudes to change were transposed and applied to language. The transition was not smooth, the marrying of a concept such as the commonweal to a new more fluid society, the break from set rules to allowing individual freedom all called settled dogmas into question. It is particularly relevant to Mulcaster's treatises which are eminently and consistently practical and pragmatic, keeping one eye on what is desirable but clipping these ambitions by reference to what is implementable. This chapter also aspires to give a sense of the flavour of the time, a taste of the mind set.

The second thematic block approaches the work from a political point of view, analysing the views of the nature of ideal government presented there under the guise of spelling reform. The nature of The Elementarie itself provides the most compelling reason for broadening the field of reference. Far from being a monographic treatise on education and the vernacular, it has a highly political

complexion. Mulcaster's defence of the English language relies on precepts which were being hotly debated in other spheres of life. Furthermore, his concept of language as a social entity determines the organisation of the discourse around a series of images, metaphors and rhetorical devices which both illuminate the language question and place it in its social matrix. Using language as a vehicle, a critical eye is cast on society, its institutions and the constitution.

Mulcaster uses spelling reform to tackle issues which were assuming importance in the late sixteenth century but which would not come to a head until the middle years of the seventeenth. His use of politically inspired language in the presentation of his spelling reforms and the denunciation of those of his rivals demonstrates how deeply political the issue was. Two themes are specifically relevant to The Elementarie; the debate on custom and that which centres on the nature of monarchical power. Both are addressed in the allegory which acts as a preface to Mulcaster's spelling reforms. Taken within the wider context which includes Mulcaster's occasional role as Elizabethan propagandist, the attitudes to monarchy implied here are not compatible with those of the polished spin doctor. Fissures are visible below the surface and the religious and political implications of his defence of custom or tradition are complex and can only be fully appreciated when placed in the context of the Reformation when it took on theological significance. The defence of custom invalidated this rupture, but at the same time was at the very foundations of English common law. The appeal to tradition which was at the centre of the spelling reforms thus looks back to points made by Starkey in the 1540's and forward to those of Richard Hooker in the last decade of the century.

A reading of the allegory of the development of writing forms the basis of the thesis that the work is shot through with ambivalences. It is in fact his juggling of the two seemingly antagonistic terms, tradition and innovation, absolute or parliamentary monarchy, and his planned ambivalence towards them which separate him from both his fellow spelling reformers and informed opinion of the time.

The texts consulted to contextualise Mulcaster's political ideas range from the first third of the sixteenth century to the first decades of the seventeenth and are religious and political in nature although, in an osmotic society, where boundaries were blurred and shifting, there is much overlap. Language, politics and religion form a trivium which went into the formation of the national identity: "Protestantism was virtually identical with English patriotism" (Caspari, 1954: 159). Language did not mask political queries but was integrally part of them. The analogies evident between state and language allowed one to be analysed in terms of the other. The native substratum shaped the work, not only in respect of ideology but it also provided the arsenal of rhetorical devices at his disposition.

The principal texts which will be referred to are: Sir Thomas Elyot's The Boke Named the Governour, (1531) and Thomas Starkey's Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset, (1533 / 36). Richard Hooker's On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1612) also provides valuable insights into Mulcaster's ideas on progress and change.

While the previous chapter focused almost exclusively on the English context, the scope expands both geographically and temporally in the next one, where the main issues which engaged Renaissance writers on language are discussed. My aim here is to examine the themes brought up in The Elementarie within a continental perspective and to demonstrate that what Mulcaster was doing was to, like Yeats, "enumerate old themes" with a long and intermittent tradition in Continental humanism. The early humanist period serves to contextualise Mulcaster's contribution to humanist thought on language. The ideas which have attracted much attention in The Elementarie had been, it will be seen, in circulation for at least a century. This is not to detract from the merit of the English schoolmaster's work. On the contrary, it confirms Terence Cave's assertion that to search for originality in texts of this period is akin to the quest for the alchemist's stone. Originality and creativity are not features which can legitimately be used to evaluate a Renaissance text: "The publication of a particular point of view at a particular moment has an importance which bears little relation to its originality (or lack of it) when seen in a wider context. It is the text that matters, not the putative qualities of the author's mind"(Cave, 1979: 75). Each text is a mosaic, a collage and the objective is to examine the fragments, how they are reassembled and interact in the new design. This, and not any intrinsic originality is what makes his work appear out on a limb when compared with his contemporaries. Again, the transitional nature of his work comes to light, revealing a working out of conventional themes in new circumstances.

As a point of departure, The Elementarie is taken in tandem with Joachim Du Bellay's Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse (1545). This coupling serves two purposes. The relation between his linguistic theory and Mulcaster's has been discussed by W.L. Renwick (1925) and A.Satterthwaite (1972) as an adjunct to Spenser's poetic development. It will be analysed here outside the Spencerian perspective. While the aims of the two texts are different, the two authors address themes which were fundamental to the development of a Renaissance theory of language. Moreover, they were near contemporaries and Du Bellay's text provides the most obvious link between Mulcaster and Continental humanist thought.

Working outward from these texts, the themes addressed are grouped together under the global concept of change in the following manifestations; the pattern and nature of change as it affects language, the original language, the nature of the linguistic sign and the consequences it entails for the concept and nature of language and meaning; looking to the future, the call for a universal language coupled with its corollary, the sharpening awareness of the individuality and specificity of each language, bathed in a bath of linguistic nationalism. Other points of a not strictly linguistic nature are raised; the challenge thrown down to the idolisation of the classical languages and the correspondent calls on the linguistic community to improve their own heritage. The issue of borrowing demands special attention and attitudes to this issue in England and Europe are compared and contrasted. Each of these issues serve to show how close to the Continental school of thought Mulcaster was but at the same time, do not reveal him to be so different from his English contemporaries as has been maintained.

These two texts, however, hold an added interest insofar as they provide a unique opportunity to give a more in depth reading, one which puts in evidence and seriously questions Renwick's verdict that Mulcaster was a mirror image of Du Bellay. This will prove true on the level of the thematic concerns but an analysis of the range of borrowing, both of ideas and imagery and how and where it is incorporated into the host text reveals that Mulcaster used Du Bellay's text in a summarising role, in the same way quotations from an authority are used to support personal hypotheses. He borrowed from many sources but it is the way in which the ideas are configured and conjugated, supplemented and complemented that account for the symmetry and coherence of his discourse.

In this section, I shall be making a journey through Renaissance Europe, drawing on sources which reach from the first stages of the Italian Quattrocento, beginning with Dante's De vulgari eloquentia, (1303), as representative of nascent humanism. Castiglione's Il corteggione (1528) and Sperone Speroni's Dialogo delle lingue (1542) cover the first half of the sixteenth century and the full-blown stage of Italian humanism. Speroni's dialogue is particularly important because of the importance he gives to the diachronic contingency of language, a theme which lies at the heart of Mulcaster's theory of spelling. Belonging to a second period are the treatises of Du Bellay, and the numerous tracts of Joan Luís Vives on linguistic questions, De causis corruptarum artium, "De tradendis disciplinis" from his educational work, De disciplinis (1531) and passages from De anima et vita (1538) and De ratione dicendi (1532).

It is historically demonstrable that Mulcaster had access to some of the aforementioned texts but for others the connection remains speculative, the channels of transmission putative. Hoby's translation of Il corteggiano, The Courtyer of Count Baldesar Castillo (1561) produced thirty years after the original, fulfilled a great need in English humanist society as is witnessed by the fact that it went through three publications in 1577, 1588 and 1603. It is a compendium of all the major issues of the time although its linguistic content seems to have been overshadowed by the beguiling portrait of the courtier. While citations from the book confirm that it was a virtual handbook for speech and behaviour at Court, there are no references to its observations on language.

Speroni Speroni's dialogue, written between 1530 and 1535 and published in 1542 may have been available to Mulcaster in the original but most likely, his knowledge of its contents was filtered through Du Bellay's and Ronsard's work on poetic theory.

Having situated the work in the framework of European humanism, the focus can be narrowed and The Elementarie studied in its more immediate context. This was evidently a factor of some importance for the author himself who tirelessly remits the reader to the overwhelming force of circumstance: "I am servant to my cuntrie. ... hir circumstances I must consider (267). The domain within which he moves and the direction he is headed is clearly defined from the outset. His scope of vision

was restricted to and relentlessly focused on the problems of both English elementary education and its near synonym, the teaching of literacy.

Two reference groups have been chosen with which to compare and contrast Mulcaster's observations on language. It is presumptuous to speak of an English "school" of language theory for the reasons discussed above. The term observations is more accurate, in the absence of any elaborated and coherently developed "theory" as such. The most prolific body of writing on language comes from the Cambridge humanists around whom the inkhorn debate raged. The furore spilled over the main texts into a lively exchange of letters in a spontaneous reaction to the new literature and translations. Sir Thomas Wilson's The Art of Rhetoric (1553), Roger Ascham's The Scholemaster, (1571) and George Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie (1589), (although published after The Elememtarie in 1589, it carried on in much the same spirit as the Cambridge group) enunciate the philosophy of the group. To these must be added Gabriel Harvey's commentaries on the poetry of Spencer and the interventions of E.K., Harvey and Thomas Nashe. The fervent views expressed therein, represent a fruitless attempt to stuff the gangly adolescent body of a nascent language into the stiff shroud of classical *rigor mortis.*

The third focus of interest is spelling reform itself, which I approach from three angles, the social, educational and theoretical. The social value of literacy, determined by both religious and economic factors, together with the humanist emphasis on rhetoric made it central to all educational projects. This is the

framework within which Mulcaster presented spelling and its reform. It is also important to clarify terms such as "spelling", "reading", "letter" and "sound" as a preface to attempting to distil exact meanings from a maremagnum of definitions. Having done the groundwork, the question of why the issue assumed the importance it did at that specific time and the evolution of the term "orthography" sheds light of a sort on the motivations behind the spelling reformers initiatives.

The third perspective on spelling reform, that of the more strictly linguistic serves to explore what the essential differences were that existed between the phonemicists and the traditional spelling reformers. This analysis will begin with a general contemplation of the significance of writing, if seen as a representation of speech or as a system in its own right.

The spelling reformers are represented by the work of Sir Thomas Smith, John Hart and William Bullokar. By taking the practical measures the phonemic reformers proposed as indicative of an underlying theory of language, I wish to examine if the extent of the divergence between the two groups is as wide as has been implied, to see if their base starting points shared anything in common or if as I suspect, the difference lies in the methods used and applied to language. There is no question but that they shared a common goal but it is the means not the end which reveals the basic assumptions about language

Reference will be made to Smith's De recta et emendata linguae anglicae scriptione dialogus (1568) written in Latin and published in Paris. Smith's line of

thought was followed faithfully by Hart who published two works on spelling, An Orthographie in 1545 and A Methode or Comfortable Beginning (1570). His successor, William Bullokar, has met with less favour among linguistic historians but his contribution to the spelling reform movement has been considered, if not within his reforms *per se*, at least in the preface, introduction and ancillary comments he makes in the two works Booke at Large (1580) and A Short Introduction or Guiding, to Print, Write, and Reade Inglish Speech ... (1580). These shed light on the motivations and ultimate aims of the movement and are valued from the comparative point of view.

As the English spelling reform movement had its French counterpart as an immediate predecessor, and as one of the aims of this work has been to place Mulcaster's contribution to language and spelling theory in the wider continental context, an account and evaluation of the form which the debate assumed and the terms on which it was worked out in the French context was seen to be important for a number of reasons. Firstly because the phonemic reformers were, as is acknowledged in their writings, aware of and influenced by their counterparts in France. They had, by means of a forty year time lapse been equipped, in theory at least, with the full benefit of the experience there. Secondly, the spelling reform movement in France provides one with a much more balanced picture as the conservatives were more equally represented than in England, albeit indirectly through their representations in the treatises of the phonemicists. They thus set Mulcaster's arguments in favour of traditional spelling in a new light - one which conforms closely to the conventional arguments offered there in favour of writing.

only as a vaguely defined model. Secondly, they had trouble in casting off the format and procedures inherited from the classical models with the result that the earliest grammars failed to live up to the pedagogic and theoretical principle of usage and custom.

5.9. 1 Nurture versus Nature - Appeals to the Linguistic Community

If the linguistic sign is taken to be conventional, then defects have their origin in man and are not genetically imprinted in the language itself. Dante's De vulgari eloquentia criticises those who blame the language rather than the skill of its users. The continuity and persistence of this argument is demonstrated by Camden (1605) who, likewise, attributes blame for English spelling's "offending in defect, excesse, or change of letters" to "the persons & their education"(Craigie, 1946: 122). The argument worked both ways: linguistic prestige was something attainable by all and not the inevitable result of a "natural" claim to dignity or "puissance". Calls to the linguistic community increase as the century progresses. Castiglione's Count maintains that:

> if among educated men living today, of good intellect and judgement, some were to take the trouble to write in Italian ... we should soon find our language adorned and enriched with fine phrases and figures of speech, and as good a medium for literature as any other (Bull, 1967: 78).

Federico endorses this verdict, urging the Tuscans to rework their language: "you Tuscan gentlemen ought to renew your own language and not allow it to die as you are doing" (74). Speroni follows the same line of argument and attributed the prestige of a language to nothing more than the use it has been put to by the linguistic community, especially writers. Such appeals form a veritable chorus in the writings of French humanists: from Tory through Peletier and Dolet; the message is relentlessly driven home and is summarised thus by Du Bellay: "l'industrie & diligence des cultiveurs" (1972: 30), holds out hopes for the future "illustration" of the language. Mulcaster echoes this belief, with similar agricultural imagery: "as the soil is fertile, bycause it is applyed, so the wits be not barren if theie list to brede"(272). Bacon was later to use the same image: if the tree is to bear more fruit, "it is the stirring of the earth and putting new mould about the roots that must work it" (1984: 64).

If the language is only as good as the speakers, it involved no great intellectual leap to conclude that a nation's cultural and social life would be reflected in its language. Du Bellay looks to the history of the Romans to explain the dominance of the language, arriving at the conclusion that its prestige is intimately tied up with the military and political fortunes of the empire and secondly, that it has reached such heights only because so much has been written in it. It is therefore through usage that value is acquired. He concludes: "toutes les langues sont d'un mesme valeur, ... qu'à chacun sa Langue puysse competemment communiquer toute doctrine" (47). Ascham states as much in the preface to Toxoplilus and Elyot,

is indefatigable in calling on the principle of usage as the means to enrich and foster linguistic growth.

Mulcaster's argument that one should cultivate one's own plot rather than disperse one's talents abroad was thus one which formed part of the conventional battery of arguments used to promote the vernacular. It was, however, used in other fields of social life as well. It forms the backbone of the argument presented in Cholmeley's plea to the King (1553), calling on his fellow countrymen to actively help the cloth industry by investing their time, money and ingenuity in advancing it: "if every man were wyllyng, the matter woulde be founde lyght ynough, for nothynge is harde to them that be wyllynge" (1853: 16).

OPERE

DI M.

SPERONE SPERONI
DEGLI ALVAROTTI

TRATTE DA' MSS. ORIGINALI.

TOMO PRIMO.

IN VENEZIA, MDCCXL.

Appresso DOMENICO OCCHI.

Con Licenza de' Superiori, e Privilegio.

Fig. 10 Title page of Speroni's Opera. Rpt. in Fink Verlag, 1975.

5. 10. Historical Consciousness as Applied to Language

Mikhail Bakhtin describes the general result of the process of displacement during the sixteenth century as a newly acute awareness of the boundaries of time and space: "a new consciousness ... born out of the intersection of many languages and at the point of their most intense interorientation and struggle" (qtd in Waswo, 1987: 135). Early humanists saw in the study of history an aid to virtue:

> the careful study of the past enlarges our foresight in contemporary affairs and affords to citizens and to monarchs lessons of incitement and warning in the ordering of public policy. From history we also draw our store of examples and moral precepts (Charlton, 1965: 29).

Cicero provided the humanist historians with ample justification for this interest: "as history, which bears witness to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence" (qtd in Charlton, 1963: 246 - 7). Ferguson concurs: "Above all the humanists bequeathed a sense of history - of history considered not primarily as the memory of great deeds or the source of useful examples, but as process" (1971: 146). The same author, (1963) identifies changes in the sense of history as twofold: a growing sensitivity to its conditioning force and the development of an awareness of relativity. An offshoot of this new consciousness was the realisation of the impossibility of vouching for a system of permanent values. This in turn led to the abrogation of absolute judgements and the situation of all facts in the stream of historical development. The past was thus placed in a direct relation with the present which in turn posed the question of how

valid it was to superimpose past value systems on present conditions and use them as a template:

> For if men's senses can no longer be trusted, then surely men's hopes and dreams cannot be taken seriously; if observations show only change, antique models become irrelevant, devoid of any use as a repository of meaning and significance.(Kinney, 1986. 452)

The source of this new awareness of both the continuity of history and, at the same time, the rupture as determined by time and place came about as a result of the serious study of the subject which was moving from the terrain of flimsy myth, legend and hearsay towards analysis of objective facts. Significantly, the first serious attempts at the systematic periodisation of history appeared. Vasari (1550) the art historian explicitly states that he has divided the history of the discipline into periods, "each with its own recognisably distinct character" (Burke, 1969: 42). The Reformation was both the result of and engendered a new historical consciousness with the awareness that the Church had changed over time and it was the church historians who unwittingly fostered and promulgated a sense of historical consciousness based on factual data.

This led the way to the realisation that there was no one model which could hold, like the magnetic north, for all societies at all times. Mulcaster's allegory of the invention of writing makes the same point: what was once fitting and adequate may, as time and society progress become less so. He asks why, "we must cleve to the eldest and not to the best" (274). The contingency of time and place ran

roughshod over absolute values and threw down the gauntlet of continual adaptation, examination and reorientation.

Mulcaster's highly developed sense of history as progress underlies his approach to society, education and language. Ferguson attributes to him a "disciplined, historically conditioned imagination", one "in which he was surpassed by few, if any of his generation" (1972: 326 - 7). So deeply does his historical consciousness impinge itself on his methodology that he devotes one of the preliminary chapters in Positions exclusively to a discussion of the interaction between authority and circumstance, concluding that "their agreement doth promise successe, and their disagreement doth threaten defeat" (1888: 6) The past must at all times be evaluated in relation to two parameters, independent observation and prevailing conditions. Seen in this perspective, the absolute opposition of the concepts "good" and "bad" dissolve into blurred fringes. Their meaning can be determined only by human judgement and measured against circumstances. "In diversitie of states, there be diversities of staie" (10). Past wisdom then, cannot be transferred wholesale to the present without first assessing the needs of the present and evaluating how the past authorities can be applied. The value of ancient wisdom can be measured, submitted to judgement and is often circumscribed by the conditions prevailing in any given society in any given place. "What if our cuntrie honour it in them, and yet for all that may not use it her selfe, bycause circunstance is her cheke?" (11). He concludes that the ground "is [so] slippery to deale by authoritie"(10).

This attitude to the past is best exemplified by Hooker whose Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity [6] explicitly reject the analogical manner in which writers such as Calvin believed Scripture and the laws of the early Church could be applied to present society: "as in a mirror the reflection of that divine plan". His work had its very being in the atmosphere of historical relativity, asserting that the English church was a product of its own history. Adaptation to variable circumstances becomes a veritable leitmotif in his work, characterised by accommodation to diversity: Hooker argues that:

> scriptural examples are normative only insofar as present circumstances are identical to the earlier ones. Arguments based on precedent work only if the historically specific reasons justifying the prior continue to support its subsequent application (qtd in Shuger, 1990: 31).

Putative isomorphism and historical analogy were dismissed. Models and precepts, not idols and patterns were adopted and experimentation, not prescription was called upon to explain man's lot. This is reflected in the changes that occurred in the writing of history. Medieval chroniclers had done little or nothing to develop the analysis of cause, seeing history as a series of acts not the formation of a society. There was no analysis of human motive. During the Renaissance the emphasis began to shift in this direction.

[6] The first four books were published in 1594, the fifth in 1597. The sixth and eighth books were published in 1648 and the seventh in 1662. See J.W. Allen,1928: 184 - 98.

Historical context and circumstantial particularity now stood where normative example once prevailed. The circumscribed and contingent origins of all laws was the first consideration to be examined: that all change through time is culturally specific and therefore not extrapolable to other societies. In a similar vein, Vasari (1550) puts forward a theory of historical relativism, "my intention has always been to praise not absolutely, but as the saying is, relatively, having regard to place, time, and other relative circumstances" (qtd in Burke, 1969: 43). This was also Mulcaster's stance: to "honour good writers but without superstition" (1888: 13).

Language studies were not exempt from this new tendency. The diachronic aspect of language assumed a new importance, Speroni being one of the first to give it serious treatment. He maintained that linguistic change was explained by its social context.

Awareness that the past was cast in a different mould from the present and that the elements of time and place were all-determining was reflected in the style of humanist texts, which moves from, " balanced disputation, explicit or implicit, to the treatise which, moving inductively, gathers up facts to substantiate a hypothesis that remains in the end problematic (Kinney, 1986: 451). Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Du Bellay's Deffence where allegiance to classical authors is balanced by scepticism towards them, where imitation is prescribed as the solution to the lowly status suffered by the French language but at the same time rejected as being futile, similar to trying to reconstruct a building in ruins from disperse and scattered fragments. Paradoxically, in order to overthrow the dominance of Latin,

the writer must subjugate himself to its terms.[7] Du Bellay is enmeshed in the dilemma which attempted to conjugate the need, "to remain loyal to the venerable past while honouring the vitality of the present" (Waswo. 1987: 139).

The debate on the origin of language, the first language and the nature of the linguistic sign had prepared the ground for the exhilarating discovery of the diachronic contingency of language, a realisation which not only opened up new vistas and possibilities for the vernaculars but went a long way to legitimising them. The growth and development of language followed the path of all other human institutions, and in fact, "the history of language served as an object lesson in cultural development especially pertinent to the humanist mind" (Ferguson, 1971: 142). That this is so can be implied by the prefacing of many Renaissance works on a wide variety of themes with an account of the growth of man from his primitive beginnings to the formation of society. Erasmus, Starkey, Elyot, and More preface their respective works with similar accounts. Vives, Smith and Wilson link the development of man, the social animal, to language. Wilson uses the parable to point out the role played by rhetoric in the creation of a civilised society, Smith puts it at the service of his plans to reform spelling and Vives, the most philosophical, highlights the role played by language in the growth and development of increasingly complex social structures.[8]

When language began to be seen as a product of the human mind rather than a gift made to man by a transcendental power, the nexus between the historico-social and

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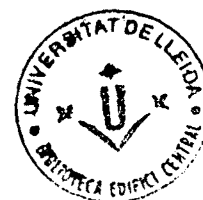
[7] A similar dilemma faced by Mulcaster will be dealt with in the following chapter.
[8] A.B. Ferguson in his essay "By Little and Little", analyses these prefaces as evidence of a growing sense of historical relativism in the humanist writers. Florelegiu, 1971: 126 - 50

linguistic development of man was tightened. It was not, however, something self-evident to the early humanists and they were forced to work their way painstakingly towards a historical perspective which incorporates a developmental and progressive view of the vernaculars which, as Dante concludes in De vulgari eloquentia , were "inherent in man's nature and evolving with the many changes in his needs in time and space" (Grayson, 1965: 70). Speroni it was, however, who provided the most systematically worked out and complete expression of the importance of the diachronic perspective and explored the implications this held for the vernaculars.

His treatise, in dialogue format has two central propositions: the defence of the respective dignity of languages, their semantic strength, ability, and right to express intellectual contents on the one hand and on the other, the validation of this proposition through an analysis of the diachronic and social aspects of language. He attempts to account for the different degrees of prestige by historical and social processes

He begins by demonstrating the radical social nature of languages which, in turn justifies linguistic change. If language responds to particular needs and these needs change, then languages perforce will follow suite. Linguistic change is therefore transposed from the field of fickle fortune into a realm where it can be justified and legitimised on rational and observable criteria. Once it is capable of being explained, it finds a safe niche within the territory of reason and logic, a fact which renders the complaint that the vernaculars are not capable of grammar, or of being



submitted to the rule of Art, void. Within this context, a return to Latin would not only be impossible but would also work against the very basis of language itself. Furthermore, if each language is the product of specific historical circumstances incapable of being repeated, this bestows a dignity and validity on them.

While in The Elementarie the rivalry between Latin and English never acquires the compelling urgency that characterises the discussion of either the Italian or the French writers and is in fact marginal, Mulcaster, nevertheless rests his arguments for both the right of English to assume the entire range of functions and to reject spelling reform based on phonemic principles on the diachronic view of language. Picturing the language as a river transmits this sense of continued evolution and places the synchronic view within the wider context, seeing it as a transient state within a larger process. For this reason, a kind of historical determinism subordinates free will. Linguistic strategy must be conditioned by what he calls "circumstance", the ultimate parameter for deciding which classical precepts can be applied to the mother tongue and which thrown overboard.

The fact that although circumstance may be invoked to satisfy immediate needs, it is dictated to by historical development is central to his spelling reforms. Spelling practices, no matter how haphazard they may seem, are the result of an evolution from original principles and have become so ensconced within the language that they cannot properly be ignored. Linguistic change, moreover, does not pertain to the realm of chance - it is a reasoned response to necessity. By rationalising custom, Mulcaster converts it into a principle of continuity. It becomes the agency

by which all linguistic problems are made relative to time and place. Thus, like Speroni, change is not negative but a positive manifestation of the vitality of the vernacular. A language's worth is not something predetermined but subject to a historical perspective.

Achieving a historical perspective is similar to the climber arriving at the crest of a mountain: it changes one's perspective and instead of viewing things through a pin hole, ideological blinkers are removed. It is a revelation but not one without an accompanying sense of vertigo. The valley, the river, the mountains and the village are seen not as isolated, localised features but as part of the whole. The landscape takes on a new format which requires a new cartography. Old maps were seen to commit gross solecisms and have serious inaccuracies, new points of reference had to be located.

The new perspectives, however, did not go uncontested by old beliefs. Orientation was not a sudden revelation but punctuated by flashbacks, disorientation, philosophical dissonance. That is why the new formula of authority, divided by circumstance did not work out smoothly. The solution was by no means a foregone conclusion or readily self-evident but had to be arrived at through trail and error, rechecking, verification and this in effect was the cultural and philosophical enterprise of the later Renaissance scholars as they elaborated and incorporated the new insights which had unfurled in the early period. Mulcaster's concept of historical progress, of man's innate capacity to develop himself in society is countered by his apparent belief in a kind of historical determinism. His

philosophical ambivalence and his failure to reach ready-made solutions were the result of the fact that new theories were slow to be incorporated into old paradigms.

5.11 Imagery in the Deffence and The Elementarie: An Analysis

Both texts are marked by transition in content and the format. They were penned by linguistic adolescents who swing unexplainably from allegiance to their parents to disowning their reliance on them, eager for change while fearing it, still conservative with momentary outbursts of contemptuous rebelliousness, attempting to use an autonomous language of their own and to fashion it in their own terms; attempting to break free from what they see as the tyrannical yoke of parental authority while simultaneously resorting to models from the very figures of authority they denounce. They are also transitional, especially in Mulcaster's case, there is the realisation that the medium is changing and with it the way in which a text , its author and its reader interact. They look for peer support to reaffirm their ideas, take up old themes and dress them in new clothes and most of all, despite the air of self confidence are riddled with contradictions and internal conflict. As all adolescents do, they rework old themes, form part of a tradition and continue it while at the same time breaking loose from it. Mulcaster was not a poet in an attic; he was very conscious of the changing needs of his society and the contingency of language. If Du Bellay was his main source, and he did dip into his text, it cannot be denied that it was hardly the only source of his ideas on language and the weight of his own experience and field work was not inconsiderable.

Moving from thematic to formal or stylistic concerns, the following analysis of the two works attempts to demonstrate that even if Mulcaster used his near contemporary's text as a model he imprinted on his version a distinct interpretation

of language. Beneath the homogeneity which the rehashing of the conventionalised themes in the language debate of the sixteenth century seems to imply lie two substantially different visions of language. These will emerge through examining the figurative language used in each text.

The Elementarie is not renowned for its striking figurative language but the imagery used shows two characteristics. In the discussion on language, there is an almost complete avoidance of natural and organic imagery. Secondly, when images derived from the world of nature are used, they differ significantly from those employed by Du Bellay. The type of natural imagery and the context in which it appears projects a vision of language which differs considerably from that proffered by Du Bellay. By concentrating on this aspect of the text, it becomes clear that, while sharing the commonplace ideas of the time, Mulcaster's concept of language was fundamentally different from that of his European counterpart. The point at which they part ways turns on the role attributed to man and the scope of his powers in the process of determining the course of language.

A second objective is to examine the placing of ideas supposedly lifted from Du Bellay. How common material is handled, and the combination of copying with originality provides an insight into the process of *imitatio* as conceived in the Renaissance. It substantiates Kinney's verdict that: "what may seem to us at first harmfully confining or dismayingly reductive was for the Tudors a liberating means to creativity. It was a habit of thought and composition beyond question" (1986: 11).

Waswo (1987) defines imitation as performance, recreation and a mode of self fulfilment. As Cave states: "the reproduction of tropes in successive texts causes a replacement or displacement of the meanings produced by the same tropes in other contexts" (1979: xix). Imitation involves a dismembering and then a reconstruction of what has been already written. If Mulcaster used Du Bellay as a source, he followed him selectively and with discretion. What links the texts is more the spirit and tone than the content.

Cave makes a tripartite classification of the imagery in the Deffence: agricultural, digestive and architectural. The semantic field from which the majority of images are drawn, however, pertains to the area of cultivation. The terms in which Du Bellay discusses language and man's role in its shaping are presented, in a direct transliteration of Speroni, in the opening lines which deny biological determinism in languages by contesting the idea that they, like plants, are arranged in a hierarchy, some of which are by nature strong and robust while others, victims of their genetic makeup, are destined to be puny and weak. These organic terms of reference are maintained throughout. [9] Language is compared to a plant in need of cultivation and care if it is to bear fruit: it can be made stronger by fertilisation and pruning, cutting off superfluous parts and even be made to change by grafting on a new and alien twig. This latter image vouches for the necessity of assimilation, both of the past and of other contemporary cultures and is repeated in terms of digestion, where the language absorbs the alien and transforms it into a source of

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[9] See Pierre Villey (1908) Les Sources Italliennes de la Deffence, Paris: Champion

nutrition. Man is an oversize figure occupying the centre of the stage and language is put at the mercy of the linguistic community which can train it as desired. It is through these images of agriculture and cultivation that Du Bellay reinforces his initial statement that language is born out of "la fantasie des hommes". The speaker is the gardener, grafting, pruning and mulching; the health of the language depends on the assiduity with which he carries out his tasks.

On the other hand, when referring to the inevitable life cycle of vegetation, Du Bellay becomes caught in a contradiction which arises from the view of language as shaped by man as opposed to the language dictated to by the larger cycles of decay and rebirth. Waswo (1987), in his discussion of this aspect of Speroni's use of natural imagery, points out that the use of the metaphor of the divinely ordained, inexorable cycle together with that of organic process as humanly directed implies that human will can intervene when languages are considered as individual organisms but this power of intervention is denied when they are considered as species with their own life cycles and inherent natures. Speroni's Bembo takes both positions, the first in order to encourage cultivation of the language, the second to explain tardiness in coming to maturity. In this way, the sense that each language has a specific character can become a factor which limits its development. Neither Speroni nor Du Bellay, however, ever address the problem posed by the jagged interlocking of the two concepts.

It is precisely on this point that Mulcaster diverges from Du Bellay and reaches a conclusion which substantially diminishes the role of man in the destiny of

language. On the whole Mulcaster steers clear of organic imagery in his discussion of language. The political allegory which opens the section on spelling sets the tone for the figurative language employed in the work. The terms of reference are habitually those which involve either social institutions or socially orientated analogies: images of a judicial and political nature, references to land tenure and medicine, fashion and clothing. Through these images Mulcaster underscores the predominantly social and institutional nature of language while Du Bellay bypasses the institutional and consensual aspects of language change.

This generalisation must, however, be modified on two accounts. Imagery aligned to the semantic field of nature and cultivation does figure prominently in the discussion on education. The student is likened to a tree or plant which given the proper care and treatment will be formed as is desired. The malleability of the young has its natural analogy in the plant, with the schoolmaster as the gardener. Mulcaster, however, like other humanist educators is careful to point out that the work of the gardener is conditioned by the nature of the child: some are suitable for education, other prove less malleable and the teacher, like the gardener, must first pay attention to the raw material at his disposal. The same principle holds true for and is applied to language. One must first look to the nature of the material in hand and adapt strategy in accordance with its characteristics. Just as a child who is physically weak cannot be expected to fulfil a heavy programme of physical exercise, a language and its spelling cannot be poured into a mould fashioned along lines which were designed for another language.

Secondly, there is a set of natural images which are concentrated in the closing chapters of The Elementarie and are accompanied by a decided change in tone. They are drawn from a sphere of nature which does not imply domination but the contrary, subjugation. Natural imagery, when it functions within the text, assumes a distinct role from that in the Deffence.

It is in the passages of the *Prerogative* that the tone and style change and the appearance of natural imagery in this section is an intriguing departure from the work as a whole. As it circumscribes the power of man to influence the language in any more than a minimal way, it is in direct contrast to Du Bellay's vision of language which gives unlimited power to the linguistic community and especially the poets.

Mulcaster's natural imagery does not refer to the homely, domesticated scene invoked by Du Bellay but rather to the universal forces at work: the seasonal revolutions or the tidal ebb and flow against which man can do little or nothing. Mulcaster implies that although man can influence the course of the language, this power is severely constricted both by temporal concerns beyond his control and the inherent nature of the language when seen as a system of synchronised self-regulating forces. The fertility of the soil can be modified by man and the quality of the plants improved but the seasonal changes are beyond his control. So too in language, man can improve it for a time but the cyclical changes which bring it to a peak and then sweep it away will exert their powers no matter the degree of perfection reached at any one point of time.

Secondly, like the teacher, man is also constricted in his actions by the nature of the material he is working with. The inherent nature of each language places clearly defined limits on the extent of his modifications. He is therefore doubly hemmed in, by time and nature, like the bulrush bending with the current, offering only prudent resistance. Like the hydraulic engineer attempting to temporarily arrest and divert the flow of the river, his efforts come to nothing when the river is in full flood.

Mulcaster transforms the image of the river into one of perpetual renovation, turning on its head the conventional view which linked it to progressive degradation. The quietly rebellious touch! De Saussure too utilises this image to symbolise perpetual change, "the linguistic river never stops flowing" (Harris, 1995: 139). In The Elementarie it represents inexorable change consolidated by tradition. Other natural images such as that of the seasons and the ebb and flow of the tide represent the cyclical movement of change. Combined with the onward thrust of the river, free will is not opposed to but confined by an inevitable destiny.

These are apt images with which to end his treatise, as Mulcaster's own spelling reforms follow these same principles. He conjugated change within tradition and allowed only a very limited freedom to the speaker to direct the flow of language. This is, of course, an argument that he uses to his own advantage, as it places his own moderate spelling reform proposals in a favourable light and what is more,

interprets those of his contemporaries as being fanciful products of personal conceit, oblivious of both the nature of the language and the forces of time.

Nature imagery when it appears in Mulcaster's writings then, has quite a different function and meaning from that in Du Bellay and replaces the latter's optimistic and somewhat naïve humanism with the more pragmatic mood that dominated the movement in its later northern stage. As Satterthwaite points out, Du Bellay who died at the early age of 38, had not yet been tinged with the scepticism which had begun to invade humanism towards the end of the sixteenth century.

It is ironic and self-defeating that Mulcaster's treatise on language and spelling reform should end with a macro historical perspective, the effect of which is to annul the whole work. The forces of sublunary nature and the exigencies of time are arrayed in battle against the feeble efforts of the individual, converting his proposals into a mere token or symbolic gesture. The aims and objectives Mulcaster set himself in the opening chapters are not even partially fulfilled: "Mulcaster's book is remarkable because it is unable to accomplish what it sets out to do" (Goldberg, 1990: 29). The failure to establish "right writing" he attributes in the first place to the nature of writing itself Secondly, the terms on which Mulcaster based his mission, that is, reform within a traditional framework, reform which would uphold the established power structure of exclusion and obfuscation, made his proposals, untenable from the start. Although Mulcaster claims that he will "thoroughlie rip up the hole certaintie of our English writing" (59), it is conditioned and ultimately defeated by his maxim to abide by, "what is commonlie

so, not [their] alwaie so" (113). He is plainly conscious that his rules are temporally contingent and that when conditions change, a new set will come into force, ousting his own. "Certainty" and "dogmatism" are not adjectives that can be applied to his reforms. What comes across most strongly through the text, except in moments of intransigent dogmatism is the constant hedging and drawing back from radical statements and abdicating his judgement to the forces of tradition. Put in other terms, it is the nature of the language which proves to be the insurmountable hurdle that cannot be cleared, a fact borne out by the imagery used.

Mulcaster's failure to fulfil his initial proposals, even if put down to the fact that he was working from within the Establishment, does not supply a water tight argument. Firstly, to what extent was he a member of the Establishment?. By all accounts, his role at Court and his official writing for the Queen would seem to place him firmly within the ranks of the power group but, in reality, he spent much of his life on the fringe, aspiring to full acceptance but hampered by economic restraints which made him dependent on charity when he did not resort to outright dishonesty. More compelling than this circumstantial evidence is the fact that the nature of the educational reforms he proposed, while appealing ostensibly to authority undermine the accepted social order. His appeal for a broadly based education attacks implicitly but systematically Ascham's theory that only the elite had a right to education[10] and thus revitalised a restless segment in society. This indeed was an audacious move and this is reflected in the language he uses. Although Positions was dedicated to the Queen, the reforms suggested were a

[10] Mulcaster was granted permission to publish Positions on the grounds that it should not challenge the premises of Ascham's Scholemaster.

direct challenge to the *status quo*. The enormity of the changes proposed is cloaked in a carefully crafted subtlety, a language guaranteed to cause no offence and to make his proposals palatable. His earliest pleas are couched in equivocal language as he was unwilling to antagonise public officials. That Mulcaster does not bring his aims to fruition cannot be attributed to the fact that he was trapped within a conservative cul-de-sac or hemmed in by prudent behaviour.

The reasons are other. It was his understanding of the combined forces of language as a product of historical development and as a response to social and cultural necessities of a historically specific nature, combined with the extralinguistic forces of cyclical change which restrained his scope. The natural images which appear in the concluding chapters of the work function to define man's role in guiding linguistic development but also to provide an ironic and reflective comment on his attempts. They establish perspective both on his own work and that of his fellow spelling reformers.

Therefore, the figurative language used reveals fundamental differences which modify the blanket statements made by Renwick and Satterthwaite. Mulcaster was not a mirror image of Du Bellay although he may have pilfered from the till of what was by all accounts a composite representation of Renaissance thought on language.

5.11.1 The Role of Du Bellay's Text in The Elementarie

Cave (1979), commenting on Du Bellay's debt to Speroni maintains that he did not merely transpose the theory of language but redistributed it, using it as a framework on which to pin and structure his own observations. What can be said of Mulcaster's use of the theory of language as presented in the Deffence? What redistribution does it undergo as it is assimilated into a text dealing primarily with education, and spelling reform? Where exactly is Du Bellay's influence located within the text and what can that tell us about the use made of it? The relationship Du Bellay - Mulcaster replicates the Du Bellay - Speroni relationship as examples of reciprocity of near contemporary texts.

Spelling reform lies at the core of The Elementarie and is flanked on either side by the allegorical representation of the development of spelling, and a lengthy justification of the use of English and refutation of arguments against it. The first is an enactment of the historical process in order to explain the current situation. It is followed by a conventional presentation of a description of the letters and their forces, current usage and proposed amendments. It is in the final section, after the introduction of the table, when the work is winding down that both format and content most closely mirror that of Du Bellay.

The *Prerogative* lists the conventional arguments against English, each with its corresponding rebuttal, accompanied by appeals to the speakers to exercise the language and bring it to perfection. Mulcaster uses a question and answer format

similar to the method used by Du Bellay who heads each chapter with a proposition which he goes on to refute. Mulcaster's version, however, is more abbreviated both in proposition (presented as a marginal annotation) and reply. What Mulcaster does is to excise and lop off all lyrical language and present the kernel of the argument in synopsised form.

Du Bellay's text is used in a sheerly summarising role. Mulcaster's text is not, nor can it be, constructed around the Deffence, given the entirely different nature of the two but manages to assimilate the central propositions to provide closure for his own text. This section is not merely an adjunct but is seamlessly annexed onto the main body and in fact gathers up the arguments regarding the language distributed in a disperse fashion from the beginning. The final defence of the language is as much an organic outgrowth of the text itself as it is an addition from an extraneous source. Imitation from Du Bellay then was used in The Elementarie as an uncited authority or the echoing of a kindred spirit whose ideas were in accordance with the author's. Mulcaster, however, as he cites the conventional objections to the vernacular and gives the standard replies may not have had Du Bellay directly in mind and may well have by-passed him to return to a more immediate source, Speroni.

Contrary to Satterthwaite's claim, there is no conclusive evidence that either Mulcaster's style or tone were influenced by Du Bellay. True, there is a noticeable change is tone when Mulcaster contemplates the dynamic nature of language and its powers of regeneration but that has no direct relation with the French poet's

text, being a product of one who loved language and was exploring, albeit timidly, the uses to which it could be put. Mulcaster's character, as recorded by contemporaries shines as forcefully through his text as does that of Johnson.

Although it cannot be denied that at times the prose runs on interminably and there is what could charitably be dubbed as undue repetition and labouring of points, the style is not without its appeal. Mulcaster is (perhaps unfortunately for some) at his best when working in the ironic mode and this is what saves it from pedantry. The honeyed invective against the phonemic reformers, is not only entertaining but also instructive. Positions and The Elementarie provide ample evidence of Mulcaster's occasional, though erratic spots of brilliance. He himself declares that the reader's challenge is to peel off the layers of meaning and that his ambivalence was deliberate.

The connections which exist between the Deffence and The Elementarie exist on two levels. On the level of content, there is an obvious link but such correspondences can be established between most texts of the period. The arguments put forth in defence of the vernacular were highly conventional. The distinctive factor is the context in which they were presented.

It is when the texts are examined in the light of the figurative language employed that substantial differences come to light. The repositioning of man in his diminished but no less noble role in the development of language in Mulcaster's theory reflects the more sombre humanist spirit which emerges after the

Reformation. This is not, however, the only explanation for the change in perspective observed. Perhaps, more importantly, the scales are turned by Mulcaster's insight into the nature of language, which shapes and is shaped by man.

Du Bellay's text, as it is taken up and reshaped by Mulcaster leads to the conclusion that the principle of imitation, was, as Kinney, Cave and Waswo observe, a principle for creation and reaching into new terrain. There are many points of contact but these act as feelers or antennae with which to probe new territory.

CHAPTER SIX

SPELLING REFORM

> men wold be verie glad to se wherein the right of their writing standeth, when theie sought it, and thought it to be further of (Mulcaster, 1925:111).

6.1 Introduction

To chart the genesis, growth and development of the spelling reform movement is to place Mulcaster's ideology within its context. Spelling reforms *per se* largely corresponded to preconceived ideas and have been extensively described and examined, not only in pivotal works on Early English pronunciation but also numerous doctoral dissertations. The perspective will concentrate on the social and cultural conditions which brought the impulse to reform to a head, the terms within which it was conceived, and its ultimate objectives. How the discourse on spelling reform was articulated, the contradictions it avoided or attempted to resolve and how it was presented to society shall therefore be the object of attention, drawing on material which is pedagogic in nature, focusing on the prefaces and introductions to the spelling reform treatises, referring to the reforms themselves only when they are illustrative.

In the sixteenth century, all spelling reform proposals, no matter how idealistic and nationalistic, could be authenticated by appeal to the patriarchs of classical antiquity and by a judicious pillaging of the writings of Cicero, Quintilian, Plato and Aristotle in order to support the assumptions made. Mulcaster could cite Quintilian as a supporter of custom and defender of the primacy of writing but Hart too found in this author a support for placing writing first: "Quintilian would have the writing to be framed to the speaking" (Scolar Press, 1969: 10). Apart from the classical element, spelling reform also gained force and inspiration from contemporary debates and became one in the throng of contentious issues being floated. This recondite subject therefore came to be a sounding board for a host of issues but its place of prominence in the public eye was short-lived. In terms of results it was also somewhat of a proverbial flash in the pan and its significance must be measured against its achievements. These were conditioned by the way in which it was perceived and the changes that the term "orthography" underwent provide a measure of its quick demise. The role of the printers in their dissemination and popularisation must also be taken into account.

The immediate origins of the impulse to reform spelling can be located in problems of a pressing nature which came to a head in the classroom. The dilemma which faced teachers consisted in endeavouring to fulfil the double goal of teaching literacy and reinforcing the state apparatus simultaneously. Spelling was identified as an obstacle to the achievement of both objectives. It is for this reason that this discussion begins by considering the importance of literacy and standardisation in Tudor society, whether for religious or secular motives and then

moves on to consider the practical and theoretical difficulties encountered by teachers as they strove to realise objectives which, although clearly defined in theory, were obliged to take labyrinthine paths to overcome innumerable hurdles in their realisation.

Structural, practical, attitudinal and terminological obstacles arose in the teaching of reading and writing. The very terms themselves require a historically specific definition as they did not go in tandem as they do today and the relation between the two is not as transparent as might be summarily assumed. What was meant by the term "spelling" and what role was it assigned in the teaching of literacy? How did the writers use the terms "letter", "sound", "power" and "force"? Were they consistent and rigorous in their application? What was the approach to the teaching of writing and reading, how were they sequenced and what does this reveal about the relative status of each? The educational context provides the immediate *raison d'être* for the flurry of tracts dedicated to spelling reform.

Having situated the movement within its social and educational contexts, a summary of the arguments Mulcaster used in order to demonstrate the fallacy of modelling spelling on speech is presented. These are a compilation of like-minded reformers' defences of traditional spelling, much better represented in the French debate than in England. Although it was Hart and not Mulcaster who acted as the liaison between the Continental reform movements, the debate there gives evidence of a source for his theories and throws a contrasting and revelatory light on them. Mulcaster's approach is thrown into relief by placing him against the

background of Smith, Hart and Bullokar but the resulting impressions are balanced by examining the English debate in light of the French experience revealing that the opposition of the terms "phonemic" and "conservative", used as labels to stake out boundaries, need to be used with greater circumspection. This in turn poses the question as to whether "reform" or "amendment" is the most exact term to describe the diverse initiatives of the period.

The basic question hinges on the writer's understanding of language and whether it was written or oral in its primary inception. These two alternatives force writers to define the word and then lead on to consider the relation of letters to sounds, of writing to speaking. The decision to remake the language forced the participants to decide whether to take the phonemic or the etymological path in order to establish a "true" writing system.

6.2 The Rise and Fall of the Reform Movement: The Term "orthography"

Orthographie is a Greeke woorde signifying true writing.

(Hart, An Orthographie, 1569)

Spelling reform has always raised heated debate even well into the twentieth century. Its history is littered with the rusty debris of abandoned projects. At best they found partial acceptance as did Noah Webster's amendments to American spelling practice. At worst they were ignored: Sir Isaac Pitman's Phonetic society, established in 1843 failed to gain broad support and never ventured beyond the halls of academia. Even modest proposals such as the fifteen-page pamphlet issued by the Simplified Spelling Board, funded by the Carnegie Institute in 1906 were met with widespread, immediate and vociferous public outcry, in spite of the fact that the proposed reforms were already being used by many public bodies.

The naturalisation of a handful of loan words introduced by the Real Academia Española provoked discussion in newspapers and the media, the tone of which ranged from indignation to scepticism. More recently, Gabriel García Marquez's pronouncement that: "Spelling should be pensioned off. It terrorises human beings from the cradle" (Time, 21 April. 1997), recommending the elimination of merely two letters from Spanish orthography, merited comment in the international magazine and had a Web page devoted to the theme. The strength of the response to the issue indicates that it touches some sensitive nerve in man's conception of himself.

The rhetoric used in the debates on spelling reform has not changed significantly - the defensive tone, moral imagery and complaints have persisted. Smith's characterisation of English spelling conventions as "inept, maimed, detestable, uncertain, inconsistent, unstable and stupid" are echoed by Jesperson's reference to "that pseudo-historical and anti-educational abomination" (1925: 231). Zachrisson continues the tradition of strong and unequivocal language, describing English spelling of his day as "a national misfortune, an obstacle to progress and social welfare" (1931 -32: 6), upbraiding "that insular feeling which prefers ease, comfort and individual lines of thought to broad outlooks and international undertakings"(25). Not content with this moral bashing, he uses the same arguments as those of the sixteenth century to defend the beleaguered position of the reformers, facing "concentrated ignorance, stupidity, envy and malice" (20). Not only his complaints but his aims have a sense of *dejà vu*, his own reform aims to be phonetic in principle but at the same time deviating as little as possible from existing spelling. Overtones of Bullokar!

The birth and rapid death of the spelling reform movement can be measured and to some extent accounted for by the rise and fall in public appreciation of the term "orthography". The term passed through three stages. The first corresponds to an overflow of reformation zeal in the 1530's and 40's, which represented an attempt to transfer the force of the Crown as manifested in the Reformation, to secular and linguistic affairs. This was the age of the articulate citizen and counselling-type tracts replaced those of complaint. The forum was the Court and the universities

where private initiatives were launched before a restricted audience. In the second period, the movement acquired a more social character and witnessed a series of public manifestos acutely conscious of public accusations that it was merely ornamental and concomitantly social. The 1580's saw the outright refutation of the movement's projects, its demotion to the merely superficial, and its substitution by custom as the main arbiter of spelling rules. This periodisation places the launch of Mulcaster's treatise at a time when his audience would be most receptive to his views, a fact to which he was no doubt sensitive and exploited to the full.

Initially, the quest for a true and correct orthography arose from academic and nationalistic roots which harked back to a utopian past and attempted to transplant that perfection into the present. The theory of the progressive degradation of mankind since the Fall lay behind this position. The degree to which the Edenic state had degenerated is patent in Baret's lament that orthography had arrived at a state of Cacography, a term which carries strong overtones of the Babelian debacle.

Public appreciation of these earnest efforts, while never enthusiastic, became more antagonistic over time and what began as an academic exercise slowly came to be identified with reprobate modes of behaviour which flouted established norms. The early earnest schemes and the frivolous use to which they were to be put were branded with the same brush.

As the spelling reform movement lost momentum and enthusiasm slowly petered out, the term "orthography" began to quickly slide down the slope of respectability.

Like other linguistic terms, it was applied without distinction to both speech and writing and is accused of misdirecting speech and begetting affected pronunciation. It becomes a metaphor for those of an uncertain social position who seek to maintain and swell their own self-importance. Holofernes, the typical schoolmaster is socially indeterminate, rubbing shoulders with the gentry but their inferior (a sharply realistic reflection of the position of this professional class in Tudor times) and attempts to magnify his own importance by literally speaking by the book. Armado's insecurity lies in his foreignness which he tries to camouflage by following what he perceives to be the practice of the Court but he is condemned as a "racker of orthography". Shakespeare aims his barbs at the provincial, narrow-minded classical scholars and the pretentious affected courtesans who use orthography as an added ornament and little more.

In Much Ado About Nothing, the term is used for the love-sick Claudio, as a catchword for pedantic fastidiousness and, as in Love's Labour's Lost, allows a glimpse of the jaundiced eye with which it is viewed,

> He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turn'd orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes (2.3.17 - 25).

Holofernes and Nathaniel represent the reign of sound, the earliest layer of linguistic reform. Armado represents the second stage, displaying fashionable courtly extravagance: he is pedantic in his writing; bombastic and inventive in his speech. In Claudio's case it is an illness. Their counterpart in real life is William

Bullokar, who, as one who rode his hobby horse to death has generally, although many times unfairly, been presented as a linguistic buffoon. What had initially been undertaken with earnest zeal and was considered a manifestation of patriotic citizenship had, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, agglutinated around it connotations of frivolity, ornament, pretension and poor learning, or as Bradbrook puts it, was considered, "a flourish of gentlemanly pretensions" (1964: 134).

Why did spelling come under the microscope when it did and why did it peter out so quickly? Interest in the theme seems almost to form part of a rite of passage in the evolution of the vernaculars. Both the Spanish and the French were gripped by a similar fever of reform. The clue to this may lie in the force the classical studies exerted on the forming vernaculars. As an ideal to be emulated, Latin spelling conventions were wrongly assumed to be phonetic and so too should the new language's if they were to achieve strength and permanence. Few reformers escaped from this inherited fallacy. Mulcaster was one, as was Rambaud in France. They both contest this in defending, in Mulcaster's case the retention of traditional forms and in Rambaud's, as an argument for the adoption of his radical Bullokar-like system. Both affirm that no language's spelling was ever completely phonetic. This misconception must have had a role to play in the race for standardisation of spelling practices.

Spelling reform also formed part of the general trend for standardisation. It was seized upon as the most obvious manifestation of order and adherence to a norm and in this sense was set up as a symbol or yardstick by which the national mettle

could be judged. The physical presence of words on a page brought irregularities and inconsistencies into the focus of attention. The growth of bureaucracy too pressed this home.

One of the motivations for urging standardisation in spelling must be located in extralinguistic concerns, and viewed as yet another manifestation of nationalist sentiment. Zachrisson in his overview of spelling reform makes the point that "the demand for the reform of English spelling has been most urgent at times of great national strength" (1931: 10). Historical precedent supports this argument. Noah Webster's spelling initiative was unashamedly nationalistic and the attempt to forge a distinctive system coincided with a surge in separatist sentiment. Nineteenth century Britain, at the peak of its colonial prowess also gave birth to serious if not widely successful endeavours, most notably those by Pitman and Sweet. The Simplified Spelling Board's opinion that "intricate and disordered spelling" was the only barrier to English becoming the, "dominant and international language of the world"(qtd. in Frith, 1980: 26) clearly gives voice to a sentiment which was present even in the narrower domains of specific national interests. In the Tudor period there was a double motive for regularisation. The state was riddled from within by serious religious and political problems and a standardised written language would go some way to fostering a unity of sorts. On the international stage it was beginning to flex its muscles and the growth of its naval strength, both official and pirate, kindled the sparks which signalled the dawn of expansion abroad.

Another possibility which cannot be dismissed, however much one suspects conspiracy theories is that, given the social milieu where the privileges of the established classes and an academic elite were slowly seeping away, stressing spelling was a means by which new barriers were being erected against the encroachment of the hitherto unpossessed into the jealously guarded inner temple. This is the view proffered by Knowles (1997) who sustains that it provided new grounds for discrimination where mere literacy no longer served in a gate-keeping role. This reading interprets the movement as a conservative backlash, divesting it of the radical, democratic costume in which it parades itself. In this light it was an attempt to keep people in their place, to maintain the distinctions that guaranteed stability. Conventions for written language have always acted as an arbiter of correctness and are used, then no less than now, as a criteria for assessing people's intelligence and moral worth.

The new status conferred on the printed word acted as a further influence in the timing of spelling reform. Letters came to receive attention as physical objects in themselves - the number of treatises and manuals on calligraphy and alphabet design increased in the last years of the sixteenth century and exploded in the seventeenth. References to the correct placing of words such as those which occur in Ascham's The Scholemaster attest to the fact that words occupy a certain space, have a physical entity. Paradoxically, even the stalwart father of phonemic spelling, Smith uses a spatial metaphor to describe written words - they are *pictura vocum.* This shift from the ear to the eye gave primacy to the visual memory and with it a fundamental principle was established about how words were perceived in print.

The move towards print thus highlighted the visual and added an impetus to the standardisation of spelling.

The sound and fury generated by the issue had, like the mayfly, a short but intensive life span. It lasted little over a decade in France and about twice that in England although, after the initial bombastic period the issue continued to be dealt with. Why did it lose its vigour and peter out so quickly? Part of the cause was that the spelling reformers had no social agenda. Phonemic reformers on both sides of the Channel fell seriously short in the department of pragmatic awareness. Inspired by academic principles and at times dazzled by their own ingenuity they were, on the whole, blind to the material difficulties facing them, although a lot of ink was spent in pleading their cases amid a hostile environment. In France, few viewed the question from the practical point of view and, by and large, chose to ignore the two most powerful arguments used by the conservatives - the inertia of custom and the practical difficulties of implementation. Neither of these two questions were addressed or even seriously contemplated from a pragmatic angle. How was this new literacy to be divulged, popularised and implemented? There were three fronts on which the issue should have been dealt with: that of education, popular acceptation and technical possibilities. The last was a question which fell beyond the scope of the philologist but nevertheless should not have been ignored.

None of the French spelling reformers, with the exception of Rambaud, ever contemplated the sociological dimension which would bring the declared aims of universal literacy to fruition. Literacy was always learned literacy and never

ventured far from the narrow confines of aesthetics. No system of education in the vernacular was suggested to test out the claims of their systems. In part this may be attributed to the fact that poets figured prominently in the French reform movement and it was seen primarily through the prism of poetics. Ronsard was a figure of some weight in the later stages of the movement and his spelling system was particularly popular with the printers.

Although much of the reform took place within the educational context and much lip service was paid to advocating literacy, O'Day's affirmation regarding educational reformers holds equally true for their counterparts in spelling: "Not a single one of the educational reformers of the period (1500 to 1800) was primarily concerned with providing opportunities for social mobility" (1982: 19).

This may seem too harsh a criticism if applied to those reforms suggested by Mulcaster and indeed do some injustice to some of his more advanced ideas. However, as liberal as his educational project was, it suffers from inconsistencies and some outright incompatibilities. Liberal positions such as meritocracy surpassing aristocracy are countered in the same chapter with violent diatribes against the up and coming middle classes, the only ones who could benefit from an expansion of educational opportunity. He is reluctant to let them into the ranks of the titled gentleman, criticising them as "gaping for preferment" and under the illusion that "monie made equalitie" (1888: 193). Literacy for all must be seen not as a programme to advance social mobility but the education of each to allow him to fulfil his social role. Even those of a lowly nature who could clear the barriers of

rank and class are advised: "he doth not well to oppose his owne particular, against the public good" (1888: 139).

The public manifestos launched by the reformers never followed through with a plan for implementation or dissemination, cowed by the enormity of the hurdles they faced. Both Hart and Bullokar offer but very vague and generalised suggestions as to how their reforms were to be implemented on the ground. They are aware of the effort the leap between traditional and innovative spelling would require. Hart guards against the anticipated public reaction by assuring his readers that while it would initially appear, "that the toppes of trees shalbe planted in the grounde, and the rootes spred in the aire" (Scolar Press, 1969: 3), such an impression would be easily ironed out through use and practise. He commends his new script on the grounds that it would be easy to print and suggests that an efficient way in which to win habit around would be to print the most used books, the Psalter and the Bible in the new notation.

Bullokar used his new system in Aesop's Fables (1585), Sentences from Cato, a book on Tully and a Psalter but, chastened by his own financial outlay, mentions cost and commodity, the obsolescence of books already printed, and the rupture with tradition as obstacles, and concedes that both may be used for a time. This argument, the ease with which his notation can be incorporated into traditional writing is one of his selling points. His conservation of the traditional letters, "which is one of the chiefest points to be regarded in any amendment of Ortographie" (Bullokar to his Countrie) is his way of routing public reticience to

the novel. In spite of this awareness, however, detailed measures to assure the success of their programmes are rarely "spelled out", leaving it up to the reasonable judgement of civilised man. There was a lot of fuzzy thinking and high-minded appeals to monarchs, but little practical provision made for the imposition of this new shortcut to literacy.

Bullokar can only resort to his personal experience with his own offspring who served as a sounding board to prove the virtues of his system: "I have great experience by trial in mine own children" (Danielsson and Alston, 1966: 14). Mulcaster envisaged the incorporation of his spelling suggestions into a curriculum which would include study of the vernacular in a systematic and uniform manner throughout all elementary schools. In spite of his dogmatism, and perhaps as a result of the fact that he had hoped to produce a detailed programme for elementary education, little or nothing is specified. By aiming at the lowest level of education, however, he was correct in recognising that uniformity and standardisation must come from the bottom, not from the top. His suggestions for the establishment of a bursary for those of humble origins and the appeal for sponsorship from the wealthy reveal a consciousness of the necessity for support from society in education, standardisation and uniformity.

What is lacking in Mulcaster's social project is made good to a certain extent by Hart. While Mulcaster stresses the institution, Hart outlines a detailed step-by-step system whereby the student could be instructed in the new spelling cum reading notation, assuring his readers that once the hurdle of unfamiliarity was overcome, it

would pose few difficulties. Beginning with the picture cards he designed in order to eliminate the naming of letters, he proceeded to introduce the five vowels and easiest consonants, <l,>, <m>, <n>,<r> and <h>. Gradually the other consonants were incorporated. Each stage was followed by extensive practice drills. Before the introduction of syllables, vowel digraphs were introduced and practised. The English spelling reformers, therefore, were at least aware of, publicly commented on the impediments and took some measures to facilitate changing a time-honoured tradition and showed a greater pragmatic awareness than their French counterparts.

6.3 The Role of the Printers

Whether printing was a unifying and standardising force which aided and abetted the theoretical projects of the spelling reformers or whether, on the contrary, it parried and thwarted their efforts has been a subject for debate. The work methods and practices of the major printers have been either blamed for contributing to the lamentable state of English spelling in the first place, or praised for alleviating the chaotic and evil "cacography". Some have claimed that flexible spelling, in fact, favoured their profit margins, while others maintain that they were in favour of standardisation for the same reasons.

Purely economic motives and work practices had no small role to play in the attribution of blame and in determining the fate of reform. Printers must accept some but not all the responsibility for irregular orthography due to the fact that often, more than one compositor worked on a single text, each with his own preferences and not all printing houses had a fixed convention laid down by the master printer. Mulcaster makes reference to this practice, displaying a certain doubt as to whether they will be faithful to his orthography: "But I must crave pardon generallie, for both mine own and the printers errors, which will not be avoided where manie ar to work" (291).

The method of payment, where printers charged by the inch has been cited as a reason for the overuse and abuse of the final <e> and the doubling of consonants. This defect of the language, Mulcaster attributes in part to the printers: "If words

be overcharged with number of letters, this comes either by covetousness in such as sell them by lines, or by ignorance" (86). Hart is more vociferous in his condemnation, accusing them of "garnishing or furnishing thereof with superfluous letters" (Scolar Press, 1969: 15). In a world devoid of computers, it was a solution to the adjustment of margins and the avoidance of word splitting.

Mulcaster does not, like his contemporary Bullokar, contemplate the printed word. The latter, on the other hand, was keenly aware of the power of the press in propagating his reforms and saw in the replacement of the manuscript by the printed text, a historical precedent which would spread his own perfect reform and make it permanent, as "[Though] printing be the best help to stůdy the same"(Turner, 1970: 2). Ironically, his system of diacritics was most vulnerable to printing errors and he was obliged to abandon and amend several of his ligatures on the advice of his publisher.

If printers were responsible to a certain degree for the lack of stability and consistency in French and English spelling conventions, what was their role in its reformation? There are two contrasting evaluations of the situation in France. In addition to the reformer's single-minded and inflexible programmes or their gratuitous name calling, Citton places the burden of the blame on the reticence of printers who were by nature acutely conscious and painfully aware of the compromise into which they would put themselves by advocating a new typographic system. They were caught in the vice of custom, if not for linguistic or aesthetic reasons, then because of their keen eye for saleability. In that context,

compromising oneself to adopt strange orthography was a decided risk: new typecasts would slow the setters down and force so many errors as to make a farce of a system sold on its rationality. These problems, if not obvious to the reformers, at least were not mentioned by them.

The floundering of the initiatives of the orthographic movement is laid at the door of technological inadequacy by Catach. She maintains that far from being reticent, humanist printers in France, and especially in Paris, were sympathetic to the aims of the reformers,[1] being "d'une attitude comprehènsive et ouverte, souvent critique, toujours modératrice, mais positive" (1968: 251). It was the technological limitations of the printing process itself which posed the most insurmountable barrier to adoption of the new notation. The progress allowed by technical innovation was uneven and not sufficiently sophisticated so to implement the ambitious systems devised, thus relegating them to the status of mere historical curiosities.

The role the printers played in the development of English orthographic reform is also ambivalent. They seem to have been less innovative and even more cautious than their Continental counterparts. Brengleman considers their role in the normalisation of English spelling to be negligible. They appear as a pale shadow of Catach's enterprising and innovative French printers: "there is no evidence whatever of any printing house taking a serious interest in the regularization of English spelling" (1980: 333). He concludes: "I know of no positive evidence that

[1] Almost half, (48 of 110 Parisian printers) accepted the new orthography after 1550 and of these 43% were royal printers. See Catach, 1968: 250.

printers of this period had the learning, interest or ability to bring about the important changes that took place in English spelling during the seventeenth century" (335). Zachrisson issues his verdict in more damning terms, deploring the "lamentable denseness and lack of adaptability" (1931 - 32: 8 - 9) of early printers.

Not all critics are willing to dismiss their influence so readily. Scragg, (1974), although giving them more credit, places the profit motive over and above their intellectual motivation, pointing out that they were business men at heart, following in the tradition of their predecessor Caxton whose spelling was notoriously irregular and often determined by the origin of the text he was currently working on. This author vacillates on the matter, at times portraying the printers as neutral middlemen, at others ascribing some influence to them.

Salmon (1989) rectifies this entirely negative assessment although she does concede that it was extremely rare to find among practising printers a public declaration of interest in normalising spelling such as that produced by John Rastall. The grounds for deducing that the printers were active participants in the process are, however, slim as she relies on <u>The Boke of the New Cardys</u>, an incomplete and fragmented text published by Rastall in 1530. Nonetheless, its existence does show the degree of active interest which at least some printers showed.

The immediate dissemination of Mulcaster's spelling reforms can be attributed to his publisher, the Huguenot Thomas Vautrollier. When his successor Richard Field

took over the reins of the prestigious printing house in 1587, some but not all of Mulcaster's recommendations were adopted. The most notable exception was the use of the silent < e > and the use of <ie> at word terminations, for which he preferred <y>. The printers were selective in the reforms they adopted, and as in France, avoided extremes. Bullokar's complex notation system, as a case in point, proved too complex and had to be amended and tailored to the possibilities of the press.

Decline in interest in spelling reform on the part of the academics - the public were never actively engaged and were accused wrongly of dogged and entrenched stubborn resistance to a theme which passed over their heads, coincided with a gradual loosening of the iron grasp the classics held on the vernaculars. As they were weaned from a tyrannical mother, they looked, not to an external reference point but to their own past, and historical relativism began to figure large in their assessment of their own linguistic development, in spelling, as in grammar and lexis. The move away from the classical understanding of speech as the primary manifestation of language, fuelled by the revived interest in the search for the original language that gathered momentum in the seventeenth century relegated spelling to a secondary position in the ranking of linguistic issues of momentum.

A ſhort Introduction or guiding to print,

write, and reade Ingliſh ſpeech:

conferred with the olde printing

and writing: deuiſed by

VVilliam Bullokar:

And he that doubteth in any part thereof, ſhall be more fully ſatiſfied by a booke deuiſed by the ſame Author at large, for the amendment of ortographie for Ingliſh ſpeech, which ſhall be imprinted ſhortly, which booke at large anſwereth all obiections, and openeth all doubts in this amendment of ortographie. So that this pamphlet is printed for a ſhort proofe of the ſame worke at large, both for the ſhort ſhew of the vſe of that amendment, and a briefe collection (out of the ſame booke at large) of the commodities like to growe by the vſe of the ſame amendment: By the helpe whereof a ruled Grammer for Ingliſh is made (not yet in print): to the great helpe of a perfite Dictionarie in time to come, and alreadie purpoſed: To the perfite ſtaie and eaſie vſe of Ingliſh ſpeech, as long as letters endure, to no ſmall commoditie of this our nation, with great credit for Ingliſh ſpeech among all other ſtrange nations: herevnto alſo is added (at the end) the vſe of the ſame ortographie in writing eaſie to be followed of all writers.

Euen as printing to the world brought light:
So vnto Ingliſh this ſtarre ſhineth bright.
And as ſpeech was cauſe letters were deuizd,
So let them not from right ſpeech be diſgizd.

Printed at London, by

Henrie Denham.

1580.

Fig. 11. Title page of Bullokar's A Short Introduction. 1580. Scolar Press Facsimiles 1966.

6.4 Arguments Used to Refute Reform along Phonemic Principles

The arguments which Mulcaster presents to justify his defence of traditional spelling were by no means new. They had figured prominently in the French spelling reform debate where the conservative branch were more evenly represented than in England. The panorama of arguments is wider and allows a more even-handed representation of Mulcaster than has hitherto been offered. The majority of arguments in favour of retaining the traditional spelling system are non-linguistic in nature. They are based on the perceived social and historical function of writing and therefore can be criticised for lacking scientific rigor.

1. Reform would usher in anarchy by ignoring the etymological and diachronic nature of language. Moreover, the retention of etymological letters would confer a high degree of culture on language. A more practical argument, and an off-spring of this is that for the learned the acquisition of foreign languages would in no way be facilitated by a new notation. As they all partook in a single cultural source, spelling as it was could only facilitate learning a new language.

2. The appeal to custom proved a crucial point for reformers and their antagonists. For the former it was the backdoor through which corruption had inadvertently slipped: for the latter it was the foundation of language. The practical application of this principle is expressed in their claim that reading - the ultimate aim of spelling reform - would be even more difficult if the mat of custom were to be whisked from under its feet. This is essentially the argument used by Du Bellay,

who, in a final address to the reader justifies his use of traditional spelling conventions: "j'ay plus suyuy le commun & Antique usaige de la raison" alleging that "cette nouvelle recue en beaucoup de lieux, que la nouveauté d'icelle eust peu rendre l'oeuvre non gueres de soy recommendable mal plaisant, voyre contemptible aux lecteurs"(Terreaux, 1972: 115). Custom here is validated as it assures a favourable reception for his work.

3. No letter was superfluous or "idle". Although they were not pronounced they performed a valuable role in conditioning the environment and quality of the preceding letters and were defended on the basis of their diacritical function.

4. Respect for the ancients and following their example is cited as an impediment to change. It invoked the traditional and inherent deference for the past which was difficult to cast off at one fell swoop, especially by men steeped in classical culture.

5. The maintenance of social distinction could be achieved by retaining etymologically derived letters the use of which conferred a certain distinction on the writer, affirming his status as a learned member of society but also signalled lexically derivational relationships. This argument therefore appealed to both linguistic and social criteria.

6. Conservatives appeal to the security of the old order, of the tried and tested. Few of the reformers ever abandoned the foundations of traditional spelling limiting themselves to modifying it to a greater or lesser extent.

7. The primary function of writing was to convey meaning, not to reflect sound. Writing is not conceived as a secondary representation of spoken language.

All of the so-called conservatives took as their basic premise the fact that writing was not a substantive code of secondary importance, filtered through speech. They maintained that it was based on customary reason although De Bèze claimed that the unreason (déraison) instituted by custom was preferable to that instituted by the phonemic reformers. Within this standpoint there are different justifications for the retention of traditional spelling. One was the affront to the idea that all change led inevitably to improvement. De Bèze states: " L'Ecriture doet tousjours avouer je en sa quoe de plus elabore, e plus acoutre, que non pas la prolacion, qui se perd, incontinent" (Citton, 1969: 75). Superfluous letters are given the role of etymological derivation in the first place or aesthetic in the second: " pour i donner grace". The assertion made by the conservatives was one which argued that the apparent anarchy reigning in spelling would not be abolished but on the contrary enhanced and made more acute by the new signs and forms introduced. Other arguments put forward in the defence of traditional spelling centred on the distinction between homophones; an argument which appeared frequently but held no great weight. De Bèze's reasoning that "on mèt aucunefoes des letteres por signifier la diferance des motz" could be refuted as it was by Hart and his French

counterparts on the basis that context offers little possibility of confusing homophones.

6.5 The Social Context: The Importance of Reading

Reading and writing: "two excellent faire winges

(Mulcaster, 1925: 33)

Reading and writing as flight, the ability to ascend both socially and spiritually, as freedom and movement. This concept of the skills lies at the root of the importance given to them on Tudor curricula.

Literacy is a complex and relative concept, one of the reasons that calculations of literacy levels remain inconclusive. Contemporary evidence is contradictory and often contaminated by the bias and interests of its authors. Thomas More's claim that sixty per cent of the population were literate or John Rastall's affirmation of universal literacy cannot be taken at face value. Links can be established between book ownership, book production, education and literacy but one of the most widely used indices has been the ability to sign one's name. This too can be misleading: "Modern literacy surveys tally signatures as if they alone count as literacy in the earlier period, reinforcing the sense that past literacies can be reduced to their modern counterparts"(Goldberg, 1990: 243). One of the objections that can be raised against this practice is that it equated literacy too closely to writing, which was considered to be quite a distinct ability in the teacher manuals that proliferated in Tudor England. Moreover, as writing was the last step in the progression, it is an unreliable measure of literacy, although the assumption behind the entrance requirements of several grammar schools seems to have been that the

ability to sign one's name went together with a fair ability to read.[2] One must, therefore, be on one's guard not to transpose modern expectations on the past and literacy must be interpreted in a much narrower sense than today, maintaining a distinction between useful or functional literacy and mere literacy.

Modern studies on the theme, Stone (1964), Charlton (1965), Cressy (1980) and O'Day (1982) have used different criteria, distinct sources and geographical locations in order to estimate the numbers of literate citizens but their conclusions concur insofar as there existed and persisted substantial differences along gender, social, geographic and occupational lines. The literate were a very small section of the population, perhaps no more than between ten and fifteen per cent in England, depending on the parameters measured. This is important as it reduces the audience which the writers on spelling and reading addressed. The literate were a tiny minority in a sea of illiteracy and this fact converts the whole issue into an elitist one, throwing a healthy scepticism on the apparently liberal attitudes of Hart or Bullokar in their calls for the right of all to have access to reading or writing. They spoke to the upper echelons: the gentry and the professionals as literacy never penetrated the labouring classes. This is a question that shall be examined in more detail below.

The ability to read took on a new importance in post Reformation society when it became the master key to discovering the contents of sacred authority as revealed in the Bible. Literacy was religious literacy and the religious motive dominated the

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[2] A.M. Stowe English Grammar Schools in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. New York, 1908, 104 -5.

teaching of the skill. Coote's The English Schoole-maister, for example consists of two books, the second of which, to provide practice starts with the Catechism, moves on to norms for leading a good Christian life and the psalms. The structure of the book makes it implicit that the progression from the listing and reading of syllables to orthodox religious instruction is a natural process. Mulcaster too follows the learning of the ABC with reading of the Catechism and "som other well pikt discourse, which shall concern morall behaviour" (247).

This impression is further reinforced by the fact that mention of reading in English occurs in all the curricula of the Tudor period in connection with the liturgy. The Book of Common Prayer, the Bible, (the Authorised Version appeared in 1611) and the psalms served the function of primers. The ABC in English was the launching pad for study of the fundamental tenets of the faith. Mulcaster gives priority to reading apart from all else, for religious purposes: "Reading if for nothing else it were ... is verie needefull for religion" (1888: 176). Although there was an increasing secularisation of available reading material, it too remained strongly dogmatic until the appearance of the first fully secular reading primer for use in schools in 1694.

Ascham marks the transition from orality to literacy in the emphasis he places on the written text, exalted above speech and even experience. His vehement opposition to foreign travel as a finishing school for young men is supported by the conviction that close reading of the Courtier would more than suffice as a replacement for potentially dangerous and corrupting foreign exploits: "Which

booke, advisedlie read, and diligentlie folowed, but one year at home in England, would do a yong jentleman more good, I wisse, than three yeares travell abrode spent in Italie" (Mayor, 1967: 61). In addition it was through selective reading that Ascham proposed to elevate the moral, civil and cultural standards of the up and coming nobility. Dominion of the written word he claimed would lead to "ready speaking" and it is in this statement that his transitional position is made clear. Much as he relied on the written text, he finally reverts to speech; the letter is the road into the spoken word wherein all virtue lay.

The spiritual and moral motivations for acquisition of the skill were supplemented from two additional sources, antagonistic in themselves according to humanist standards. These were the imperative of fulfilling one's responsibility as a member of society and secondly, the fulfilment of personal ambition. Literacy increasingly allowed the citizen to actively participate in society and hence worked towards the advancement of the common good. Hart cites this as one of the desirable effects of knowing one's letters: "where most people doe best know them, there is most prosperitie and best assurance" (Scolar Press, 1969: 2).

Materialistic and self-seeking considerations also played an important role in fuelling the stampede for the three Rs. Proficiency in these skills was widely perceived as a powerful means of attaining upward social mobility. With an expanding bureaucracy and the reorganisation of the state apparatus which began in 1546, the secular utility of mastering reading and writing became evident to those social classes in a position to enhance their standing in society. The sons of

gentlemen, together with those of the emerging bourgeoisie and the professional classes all keenly sought out opportunities to climb the social ladder. Literacy constituted the first rung. The host of teach-yourself manuals and spelling books which appeared towards the end of the century bear testimony to increasing demand and insufficient supply. Coote's book was intended for both classroom and private use, suitable, according to the claims of its author, for both children and "unskilfull person[s]".[3]

Education increased its market value. In As You Like It, Orlando, deprived of an education by his elder brother Charles feels dispossessed, believing that his "gentle" status depends more on this than his innate capacities as a member of the upper-class. The perceived role of education as a way of enabling people to control their own destiny can be linked with the shift in the sense of the word "fortune" which took place in the sixteenth century. It moves from the original "chance" to "amount of wealth". Hughes interprets this change as a movement from viewing it as "something which controlled one" to "something which can be 'made', allowing one control over one's life" (1989: 69). This semantic shift may have had its corollary in society where money could be used to buy education and thus power.

A school system and a teaching profession conceived as instruments of government and vital for the propagation of the new faith, combined with the humanist belief that truth and reason were intricately linked with letters resulted in the primacy of

[3] Latent vestiges of medieval customs remained. Ability to read a sentence from the Bible would allow the suspected felon to claim benefit of clergy and thus escape the gallows, although the extent to which this fostered literacy is doubtful.

reading and writing as the means by which to achieve a just society and a unified church, both based on personal formation.

%
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

1500 1550 1600 1650 1700 1750 1800 1850 1900

women — men

Fig. 12 Estimated illiteracy of men and women in England 1500 - 1900. Cressy, 1980.

6. 6 The Teaching of Writing and its Social Importance.

> For can reading be right before writing be righted, seing we read nothing else, but what we se writen? (Mulcaster, 1970: 53 -4)

> the prope to remembraunce, the executor of moste affaires, the deliverer of secretes, the messager of meaninges, the enheritance of postreitie, whereby they receive whatsoever is left them, in lawe to live by, in letters to learne, in evidence to enjoye (Mulcaster, 1888: 32 - 33).

In the Renaissance, writing both by hand and in print became a more general phenomenon and was no longer restricted to monks and scribes. The scrivener appeared as a commercially viable businessman, indicating the growing need for the skill among the unlettered. He was no longer confined to the households of the great and his rise coincided with the printed writing manuals which ironically, also signalled his demise. Being able to write a stylish hand and spell correctly could, by then, provide a way of earning one's living; one baser motivation lurking behind learning that Mulcaster was not blind to as he acknowledges that the vast majority of his students placed a higher premium on earning a living than the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake.. The increasing importance attributed to writing is reflected in the fact that it is more frequently mentioned as a requisite for grammar school entry, appearing in St. Alban's in 1570 and Burford the following year.

Some schools employed a professional writing master to teach penmanship and rural schools often had an intensive period of writing instruction held for a month to six weeks each year. In others, writing was offered as an elective subject assigned to the usher and considered as an additional source of income. The subject however was not made appealing to students who were often forced to deal with it outside of the stipulated school day, sometimes forsaking Saturdays and half holidays. Its unpopularity may be deduced by the fact that prizes and rewards were offered to increase motivation, a foreshadowing of the role it played in the redistribution of social roles. It was not until the seventeenth century that it became an integrated part of the curriculum, although a writing school had been established as early as 1577 by Dame Ramsey in Christ's Hospital as a department of the Grammar School. Wandering scriveners were gradually substituted by teachers proper. Symptomatic of the importance it had attained by the seventeenth century was the importance given to the subject by Charles Brinsley. Later in the century, writing schools existed as adjuncts to the Grammar schools. but the pedagogues had not yet reached a consensus as to how much time it merited. Brinsley thought an hour a day sufficient while Kempe would dedicate a maximum of two or three hours.

The secondary importance of writing in the acquisition of basic literacy is reflected in the chronological succession in which it was taught. Reading was taught first and reading without writing was much more common than now. Learning to write either marked the end of formal education or was the threshold for those going on to grammar school. Moreover, there were serious practical problems for the

teaching of writing - the absence of desks! The mess and inconvenience involved in making one's own ink and quill, as outlined in Peter Bales' (1590) or Charles Brinsley's accounts of the process further dampened enthusiasm. The cost of paper was also prohibitive for the majority. It fell victim to the structural, economic and spatial conditions prevailing in the petty schools.

Writing was considered more as a training of the motor skills of dexterity and precision, than an activity requiring intellect and memory. It usually means copying. The chapter on letters in Albrecht Dürer's Unterweysung der Messung (1525, 1538) places writing within the field of drawing and his work was admired by Erasmus who also recommended that the student learn to draw before he embarked on writing. Kempe (1588) is representative of the continuation of this opinion: "expressing and skill of the hand, belongeth properly to the Arte of Painting, and not unto Grammar" (qtd in Goldberg, 1990: 201). Mulcaster reiterated the connection between drawing and writing, those "cosen germains" and cradlefellows, arguing that instruction in the former would have favourable repercussions for dominion of the hand in writing, to "frame the childes hand right, to form and ioyn letters well" (63). He placed drawing high on the elementary curriculum not only for its ability to foster "fairest writing" but for its practical applications for those involved in the world of commerce and trade, allowing a man to judge "what that is which he byeth of artificers and craftes men, for substaunce, forme, and fashion" (1888: 35).

Writing as understood in modern times, as embracing creativity, personal expression and interaction with what one has read, does not figure in the Tudor period's understanding of the term. Symptomatic of this is the fact that learning to write one's own name, much less to develop a personalised signature was not encouraged and composition work did not entail the recounting of personal impression or the assertion of self, instead being a mere imitation of tropes and re-organisation of material from the commonplace book.. The writer was inserted into the set pattern of social rhetoric which begins with an awareness of the person, not as an individual but rather as a social category which had its base in copy or imitation of a predetermined model. As Goldberg states: "To produce a perfect copy is to reinscribe the social, to be socially inscribed; it shows one's education into one's place within an idealised and ideologically naturalised social order" (1990: 157).

Although Mulcaster placed writing before reading, the practice of teaching the two in tandem was not unknown. He himself states that they may "be iontly gotten"(34) warning that "the learning to write be not left of, until it be verie perfit" (33). William Bullokar apparently taught both skills in conjunction. His pupil would be, "learning to read and to spell all words truly, while he learneth to write his letters for change of exercise" (qtd. in Cressy, 1980: 23). It is significant however, that here writing was considered as a mere change of activity. Kempe also proposes to start writing while the student was learning to read. Brinsely's instruction in writing also shows an awareness of the close relation of the skills. The copybook that he would reserve for teaching writing would have a few pages at the end which

would include the "hard syllables" which he had dealt with in reading, so that, "by oft writing them over, pupils might be helped to spell and to write true orthography" (qtd. in Watson, 1968: 196).

The closer alliance between instruction in the two skills was an offshoot of the encroachment of the written word into spheres hitherto dominated by speech. The teaching of rhetoric and the creation of Latins with its stress on language as speech relied paradoxically on written texts and was directed at a reading public who increasingly encountered language as print, no matter how strongly the humanists protested that its basis was in speech. The two most influential texts on the instruction of Latin in the seventeenth century, John Brinsley's Ludus Literarius and Joseph Webbe's An Appeale to Truth, (1622) bring together this realisation of the intimate relation between the reading and writing of rhetoric. Their translation equivalents are set forth in a series of columns and boxes, acknowledging the stronghold that the visual and spatial had taken of the word.

The majority of pedagogues in the period relegated writing to the status of a mechanical skill, more socially oriented and specific to certain occupations. Mulcaster, while acknowledging the importance of the well-formed hand and reasserting the connection between it and drawing, takes it out of its mechanical dead-end by allying it to reading and lifting it into a realm which requires understanding. Although it is a motor skill which requires practice like playing an instrument or archery, it transcends these purely physical capacities. Moreover, quite apart from the virtues of constancy, persistence, and accuracy that may be

inculcated in its acquisition, there is an alliance established between letters and the mind's capacity to know and retain knowledge. Copying *ad nauseum*, or postponing instruction until it is perfect are criticised as he prefers to highlight its human side. The factor which makes writing relevant above and beyond correct inscription on paper is its power to inscribe the individual into the social network and give him relevance there. This is achieved by establishing a direct connection between writing and reading; between doing and interpreting. Interpretation is implicit in all actions and writing is one way of experiencing the world and developing the essence of humanity. Reading becomes the secondary skill as it is based on writing.

The theoretical justification for placing writing before reading in his treatment of literacy lies in two sources. In the opening pages of The Elementarie, he claims that his programme, "resembleth nature both in number of abilities and in the maner of proceding" (30). The order he adopts is, in his opinion, predetermined by the natural progression of the student. His second justification relies on appeal to the classical authors, Plato and Quintilian. He concludes that reading is a result of writing and spelling: "the *reading* must nedes be such as the writing leads unto ..." (59). Placing writing and reading before speech, he coincided with Ascham who would not have scholars utter a word of Latin until they had first acquired the skill of reading and writing in that language, a practice which he implies is at variance with the common teaching of the common schools in England.

Hart took a stance diametrically opposed to such a view when he states that "by learning to reade, he shall be nothing holpen to attaine to speake well and truely" (Scolar Press, 1969: 23). Rather than give precedence to the voice as the guide for correct writing Mulcaster maintains that "the eie will help manie to write right in a sense of president" (60). This is the genesis of the concept which has become known as perceptual memory which Venezky (1980) claims can tolerate considerably more complexity and exception than English spelling presents to it [4]. Mulcaster reverses the established philosophy by maintaining that reading skills are dependent on those of writing: "The treatis of right writing doth pretend som help to the right in reading" (61). The latter should be upgraded "as matter of the one is the maker of the other". (Scolar Press, 1970: 53 - 55).

> Writing is a complex set of physical, socio-political, cognitive and affective elements. It is influenced and influences a constellation of factors. It is an attempt to create docile citizens and had a homogenising effect. School teaches people that political life is to do with respecting authority rather than active participation.
>
> (Clark and Ivanic, 1997: 310).

Moving into the domain of writing, "changes the whole course of history by modifying the moorings that anchor his [man's] being" (Lacan, 1977: 174). In this new order writing becomes a tool or power and coercion. Brinsley perceived as much and gives primacy to letters, describing them as "the hands that uphold

[4] Recent studies on reading skills have demonstrated that when we read we do not analyse the word into its least component but rather catch the global picture. In this process, memory has a larger role to play than had first been suspected. See U. Frith. Cognitive Processes in Spelling. London, Academic Press. 1980.

society". School is a form of government, a founding institution and increasingly in Tudor society, enmeshed in the "world of words", the letter was what upheld government. "Humanism and diplomatic service are domains of the hand "(Goldberg, 1990: 119). Ability to write right was one way of confirming social relations as writing is a form of "behaviour" judged like all others on the basis of its "comelinesse or beseeming" as Angel Day states (qtd. in Goldberg, 1990: .253). David Browne, in 1622 upholds this view: "Writing must needes be, or else there could be litle Civile order" (qtd. in Goldberg, 1990: 169). Literacy provided the opportunity for social inscription in a widening bureaucratic network which created opportunities for those skilled in penmanship. Mulcaster, expresses as much in patently economic terms; "To write and read wel ... is a prety stocke for a poore boy to begin the world with all" (34). He would also have it serve as the chief criterion by which the student's ability to transfer to further education in grammar schools be judged: "during the time of writing and reading, his witte will bewraie it selfe, whether it may venture further upon greater learning, or were best to stay at some smaller skil, upon defect in nature" (1888: 33). It was therefore to serve as a filter, separating the grain from the chaff.

6.7 A Standard

he must first speak wel, before he shall ever reade truely"

(John Hart, 1569: 23)

as practised by the moste, and not disproved by the best

(Mulcaster, 1582)

they shall never erre in writing the true orthography of any word truly pronounced

(Edmund Coote, 1596)

To "speak wel, to "truly pronounce" and to participate in what is "practised by the moste" are three terms which over the centuries became synonymous with Standard English. The last quotation, above all, brings into focus the dilemma facing the phonemic reformers as it makes explicit that "true" orthography hinges on "true pronunciation" of which there was no definition and little consensus in the sixteenth century. The spoken language was still groping about for a norm. It was relatively simple to deride and condemn the non-standard, resorting to the commonplace misconception that dialects arise as a result of corruption or fragmentation of an earlier standard language. The simplest explanation for social variance in language is that variants are corruptions that threaten its purity but, to reach a consensus on what constituted the norm posed quite a different problem.

Imperative lest chaos encroach, and central to the whole question of spelling reform, although rarely articulated directly, was the need to locate and identify a standard. Without a norm for speech which was accepted by the majority, the phonemic reformers were literally at sea. Hart, following through on the phonemic principle is forced to make concessions to dialects and regional variations, allowing them to be used in private correspondence and on a local scale. However, if not backed up by the recognition and acceptance of one common way of speaking, this concession to the spoken word would severely hamstring his project and undermine the very objectives he set out to achieve. Without a standard pronunciation it would degenerate into what Mulcaster foresaw, a free for all, with each speaker set up as king.

Literary language had, admittedly a certain sense of what was acceptable and what was not and could trace a line of continuity back to the of time of Chaucer, whether he was taken as a role model or rejected. Works of literary pretensions inevitably chose London English. It was sound marketing strategy to appeal to the widest possible audience and Dobson's claim that the London dialect had been adopted as the norm, "on practical grounds", not because of any consciously held theory that it was "better" or more "correct", seems true. The use of dialect for humorous purposes shows the incipient bias against regional variation suggesting that these versions of English were considered as inferior in a social, if not in a strictly linguistic sense. Witness the use of the Kentish dialect for the mad Edgar in King Lear, or the Scottish, Welsh and Irish dialects in Shakespeare's Henry V.

The necessity for a standard form of spoken English was not only felt by the phonemic spelling reformers but was part of the drive towards centralisation and the delegitimisation of communities who could become nests of sedition. This was part of a larger political and social debate as the decentralisation of power appears to identify regionalism as factionalism at best, cultural disintegration, even apocalypse, at worst. The threat of division which figured so prominently in the literature of the period, was no hobgoblin of the nationalist imagination, but a living political reality. The process of linguistic unification went hand in hand with the process of constructing the monarchical state. To formulate what this standard was, where it was spoken and by whom, led to the first prescriptive and proscriptive definitions of correct English.

Dante in his definition of the standard had stated that it "is of every Latin city and seems to be of none ... gives off an odor in every city but has its lair in none" .(Welliver, 1981: 81). Mulcaster would have subscribed to this view as his references to the standard are implicit rather than explicit and founded on the conservative principle of the common weal, "the common favourer is the common furtherer" and, "to have the most well, you must yield to som particularities not of best reason" (119). He cites the Greek Theodor Gaza for his definition of right writing. It is that which is "commonlie used in that kinde ... and allwaie the surest, and of the best warrant, notwithstanding particular exceptions, and private notes" (112). He thus accepts the variability and diversity of language on the grounds that that is how language is. The General Rule attempts to ascertain right writing "by main grounds, reaching throughout the hole tung" (119). Notably absent from

Mulcaster's definitions are the moral and reprobate terms found in Hart or Puttenham and he makes no attempt to either pinpoint its location or specify its characteristics.

Moreover, Mulcaster's definition of the standard in the quotation above seems to appoint the populace as its determiner rather than those inhabiting an academic niche, whose function is not to impose, but to ratify and encode, similar to the role assigned to Art in the allegory. The structure of the sentence further enforces this impression with the use of a negative together with the verb and negative prefix. The view that he conceded flexibility to the language is further borne out by the following statement: "A fre citizen, a privat frind, and an hole monarchie, have diversities in respect, tho theie agre in some generalls" (267).

This contrasts with other contemporary definitions of proper English which are characterised by prescription, proscription and marked social and geographical prejudice. Hart uses both rational and social criteria; the "best and moste perfite English" is "that speech which every reasonable man" (Scolar Press, 1969: 21) tries to produce: the variety used by the "learned and the literate". These criteria led him to find in the Court and London, "the flower of the English tongue". Puttenham's definition along class and geographical lines retranslates the language into a system of social differences, creating a system of sociologically and geographically pertinent linguistic oppositions which had nothing in common with linguistic oppositions. The best English - at least for aspiring poets - lay at the centre of social and political life, dismissing the universities as backwaters of

peevish scholarship and devaluing regionalisms. They are cast into the outer darkness and by transgressing the norms, their speakers are reduced to silence.

Both Hart and Puttenham, however dogmatic their views, betray the difficulty facing linguists in trying to select from a host of candidates, a form which could legitimately be enthroned as a model for a language still fluid and in the initiation rites of literacy. Just where to draw the boundaries posed a problem. There is an effort not to offend the provincial gentry, the landed ruling classes and the rural learned who were granted special concessions: "in every shire of England there be gentlemen and others that speake but specially write as good Southerne as we of Middlesex or Surrey do" (Willcock and Walker, 1936: 145).

During the seventeenth century the heartland of the standard was located with increased precision. Butler (1633) defines it as the "speech of the Universities and Citties", Owen Price in 1665 restricts it to "London and our Universities", while Elisha Coles in 1674 says it is "most in use among the generality of scholars". The trend is to shift from the Court to the universities although this in itself reinforces rather than alleviates the social bias.

The absence of reference to dialects in The Elementarie reinforces the theory that Mulcaster dealt with writing as a closed system. Speech was not a way into writing but the inverse. Mulcaster's table of how words should be spelt gives an indication of the degree to which he was working from writing to speech and not the inverse. As Dobson remarks: "The spellings are of practically no value as indications of

pronunciation" (1968: 122). "Right writing", by virtue of its historical development and filtered through the sieve of custom is perforce "of commonest note, and best understood" (112). It is also a social product and therefore, a force of cohesion: "by writing as the generalitie doth, he gaineth the generalitie to be of his side" (112). Here, Mulcaster underlines the task of the teacher as the one with the monopoly to legitimate certain forms and through right writing to provide the student with a means of inscribing himself into society. Mulcaster's understanding of standard then, differs from that of his contemporaries insofar as he deals exclusively with the written standard, unmooring it from the fluctuations of speech and basing it on historical development. Arguing along these lines, by maintaining that what can be accepted as the standard is, like English common law, something worked out by the community, based on common sense, tested and approved by time the great distiller, Mulcaster is able to free himself from possible charges of working from what he himself accuses the other spelling reformers of - "private conceit". A speech standard would be impossible to attain as speech is neither produced nor perceived in a similar manner by all. Writing is like itself but speech is never so. Even within the construction of a standard writing system, the final touchstone was whether what had been expressed was capable of being interpreted correctly by the reader:

> If writing ... do so fullie expresse the truth of the voice, as the reader maie, & doth understand the writers meaning at full thereby, I maie not perswade him, that the letters which he readeth be not sufficient to expresse the writers meaning ... (107).

The definition of a standard was a jumble of class doctrine, English chauvinism and new prescriptivism. The problem encountered is that most of the tracts on Standard English refer specifically to poetic diction. Gill makes this problem specific when he states that traditional theories of poetic diction simply made no provision for dialectic speech: "since among persons of genteel character and cultured upbringing, there is but one universal speech" (qtd. in Blank, 1996: 107). Puttenham's proscription of regional forms is modified by his allowing dialectical forms in ordinary conversation but not in literary language.

6.8 Spelling and Reading

Spell: To name, write or otherwise give the letters, in order, of (a word syllable, etc.)

Read To peruse and apprehend the meaning of (something written printed)

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language 1989

The term "spelling" is used in a variety of ways, none of which closely corresponds to the acceptation of the term today. Spelling in the modern sense was scarcely being taught. To spell a word was to say or pronounce its letters in order, and to read was achieved by putting together the sounds made by the letters grouped into syllables. Spelling therefore consisted of the ability to pronounce individual letters and form syllables - Bullokar defines it as follows: "To divide syllables in a word [is] called spelling" (Turner, 1970: 4). The most popular spelling book of the period, The English Schoole-maister (1596) promises to teach how to "divide truely" and "know how many syllabls are in every word" (Scolar Press, 1968: 16 - 17). The first book devotes four of its six chapters to the task of drilling nonce words. To spell was to pronounce or say and had no immediate connection with writing.

Although Coote uses syllable consistently as, "so many letters as we spell together", the term was, nonetheless sometimes used to designate a word. Richard Holdsworth, in the seventeenth century, in Directions for a Student in the University advised them to study composition as it "would furnish you with a quantity of syllables, perfect your Latin ..." (qtd. in Charlton, 1965: 143) [5]. Milton uses the word for "pronounce": "airy tongues that syllable men's names" (Comus, 208 - 9). The term was therefore polysemic covering the word, its pronunciation and division into syllables.

The approach to reading was an intensely analytical one which began with the letters and their sounds, then the ordering and grouping them into syllables and finally to the formation of words. This was based on the belief that the understanding of complex things would be more easily attained if they were broken down into their simplest component parts.[6] Mulcaster subscribes to this philosophy: "The first thing, that is considered in anie compound matter is the simples whereon the compound is made" (118). Progress in literacy was measured in terms of "sounding" or "saying". Reading remained a performative, communal and oral activity. With the typical ambivalence of systems in transition, pronunciation, spelling and reading were almost synonymous. The central concern for teachers was the relation between teaching spelling and teaching reading and they were conceived of as being identical if sequential skills, one naturally progressing to the other. Hence, they were taught in such close relationship as to be indistinguishable. You could not read if you could not spell.

[5] Holdsworth's observation, although referring to Latin, illustrates the same principle.

[6] It was not until the eighteenth century that it was realised that both things and words could be apprehended as a whole and could be learned without analysing them further.

In spite of the newly gained importance of the skills in religious and secular spheres, there was little formal provision for their acquisition in the elementary schools. Levels of proficiency depended precariously on the academic and pedagogic formation of the teacher. Both Hart and Coote would assign the subject to paraprofessionals[7], learned curates, or boys from the upper forms. So low on the hierarchy of values was it ranked that it was at times left to women! It was assumed that the ABC would be taught casually at home and the early ABCs and handbooks did not name the letters. It was to remedy just such a situation that Mulcaster wrote a draft for lower school instruction, aiming at attaining a universal standardised level of literacy to be imposed by a standard curriculum and pedagogy and not left to the capabilities and random whims of so-called, occasional teachers who had drifted into the profession with little or no preparation.

On the institutional level, the relatively disadvantaged position of the teaching of literacy is evident in the few endowments for "petty" schools which often operated on a makeshift basis. The teaching of reading is described in the literature of the time (albeit by Grammar schoolmasters) as being a lowly task - arduous, irksome and unthankful. Brinsley complains that teaching the ABC took up too much time. Mulcaster, who always tailored objectives to the practical means of achieving them, recognised that as the foundation on which all else would be built it merited the most attention.

[7] This proposal was not innovative as a monitorial system was functioning in the Manchester School from as early as 1524. See Cressy, 1976: 72.

In the sixteenth century there were three methodolo:s for the teaching of reading; traditional, humanist and phonemic. The first system was recognised as producing disappointing results as Hoole (1692) states, remarking that after a year of struggling with the horn book, students under the age of seven were found to have been able to recognise only seven or eight letters. The second more child-centred system used the incentive of play: dice or ivory tabs engraved with the letters of the alphabet were thrown and shown to students. Both the last two systems taught the names of the letters but the phonemic system devised by Hart, used pictorial cards for the teaching of the sounds of the letters. It did not become popular in the teaching of English until the latter decades of the twentieth century but the use of pictorial vocabularies is recorded in England in the late fifteenth century. It was also very popular in Germany in the late sixteenth century, the most widely used picture alphabet being one published by Marcum Schulte in 1532.

A somewhat similar system was outlined by Rastall in 1530 in what Salmon suggests was the first primer in English. Rastall's use of playing cards is the first recorded, if not the first practised, account in England. Although he does not mention the use of pictorial signs, he suggests that these cards feature the letter to be learned in the middle. Hart's system may have been inspired in this and Hoole (1660) mentions a similar system as an efficient way of teaching the alphabet. [8]

It is in the context of teaching reading that spelling reforms are worked out. As Citton and Wyss comment, nowhere in French spelling reform tracts is spelling

[8] See David Cressy, 1976: 74 - 75

related to writing: "Du scripteur, il n'est jamais fait mention" (1989: 52). It is always in the context of reading that it is discussed. This, they point out is a further indicator of the danger of viewing the period, its aims and objectives from a twentieth century viewpoint and thus distorting our understanding of its importance and how it came into being. Sixteenth century motivations for spelling reform were simply not ours, largely because of the stratification of literacy. There was no class such as exists today, the literate but unlearned. The dichotomy between literate and illiterate was absolute.

Mulcaster links spelling directly to writing and to reading only indirectly. He was using the term in something approaching the modern sense although is not completely consistent. This was a result of the fact that he had cut the umbilical cord between speech-sound and letter. Spelling was to be learned in the context of writing and had no validity beyond the system within which it worked. To spell for him was to write the letters, the order and choice of which were stamped on it by custom and usage, irrespective of whether they were sounded or not.

6.9 Impediments to the Teaching of Literacy.

> the blinde maze of learning
>
> (Bullokar, 1966: 14).

> a long and tedious labour
>
> (Hart, 1969: 2).

Teaching reading was a complex activity, in spite of the exorbitant claims made by authors such as Hart and Bullokar who, in the style of the "learn English in six months" advertisements of our day claim it could be achieved effortlessly. The former describes his as "briefe & easie" and promises a reduction of the time spent learning to read by a quarter. Bullokar promises an, "easie, speedie, and readie entrance" to reading, reducing the time by a third. Coote states that it is possible "in few dayes with great ease".

Mulcaster makes no such claims. On the contrary, he labours the point that many factors must be left to custom, usage and practice in order to perfect writing. He saw no automated, mechanical way with which to dominate spelling: "so must acquaintance be the mean to discern ...". What the phonemic reformers aim to remedy, he converts into a virtue.

The seventh precept, the all embracing Prerogative, "which declareth a reservation, wherein common use will continew hir precedednce in our english writing" (60)

brings The Elementarie to a closure which is in fact an opening. It denies any possibility of fixity or dictatorship by rules and is the backdoor through which any certain stability escapes. No norm whatever is unassailable: all can be violated and remodelled. The great irony of the work is made patent here as the seventh concept virtually annuls the foregoing text at one stroke. Mulcaster has the intellectual honesty to put into question all that he has said about the position and force of letters and even his own, albeit timid, suggestions of reform by making usage the bottom line. Moreover, variations cannot be labelled as abuse but, on the contrary, are part and parcel of a system in constant flux. The text strains with the tension generated between Mulcaster's declared aims to "rip up" English spelling and teach "right writing" and his inability to do so.

Teaching spelling was hindered by a number of factors, chief of which was the uncertainty even about the classification of letters. Dobson's opinion of Bullokar holds good for most spelling reformers of the period with the exception of Hart: "[he] has only the rudest notion of the study of sounds apart from symbols"(1968,: 101). Bullokar's ambitious attempt to render both morphological and phonetic principles through spelling led him to preserve unchanged the spelling of the stem in derivatives. He does not preserve the distinction between long and short vowels and, like Mulcaster, did not properly distinguish between diphthongs and digraphs. Bullokar's belief that in certain circumstances the consonants <l>, <m>, <n>,<r> and <s> may be half vowels is a conception which is a muddle of several distinct ideas.

Mulcaster can be branded with the same iron. He makes no distinction between <u> and <v>, other than to state that the difference lies in the form the letter takes, "mostwhat for the dispatch in writing" (122). The status of these letters was not clarified until 1630 when modern practice was widely accepted and in the sixteenth century, only Hart makes the distinction between their vocalic and consonantal qualities. Bullokar omits <v> from his alphabet while Mulcaster does not include <u>. Coote includes both but places <v> before <u>.

<j> did not figure in either of their alphabets and its function was described as the consonantal use of <i>. Hart, however, proposes a new figure to represent <j> consonant. <h> was also questioned. Mulcaster defines it as "aspiration in power; a letter in form and a consonant in some combinations" (122). Hart will have none of this ambiguity and will not admit it in digraphs, as "it is not the proper office of <h> to serve in that sort" (Scolar Press, 1969: 37).

The distinctly writing-bound range of reference is evident in Mulcaster's definition of <u> and <v> above. By placing priority on the form of the letter he eschews the phonetic distinction. This is also evident in the fact that under the title of characters he included both letters and punctuation marks.

Different criteria are used for the classification of letters. Bullokar classifies them, although following the sequence of the traditional alphabet into perfect and non-perfect depending on whether their names corresponded with the sound produced. Hart uses the point of articulation and the presence of voice or not as the basis for

his classification. Mulcaster is the least innovative, giving a list and conventional description of each letter in turn.

A second hurdle to be overcome and which impeded the teaching process was the lack of a coherent and consistent terminology. The two interacting symbolic systems, one visual and the other oral, were not clearly distinguished and there was much crossing over of terms from one to the other. It was difficult for the teacher to keep the two apart. This in itself is not surprising as the Renaissance inherited the predominantly oral tradition of the medieval ages when the letter more often than not was in fact only perceived as a sound. The term "letter" is used ambiguously, usually referring to the written character but also referring to the speech sound. Ascham asserts that "utterance" can be produced "either by pen or by taulke" and the written classics "can be hear[d] or read"(Mayor, 1967: 133). Webbe also places as a norm that "wee must ... speak ... as the most exellent Authours have written" (qtd. in Elsky, 1989: 52). Humanist writers were indifferent to the problematic relationship between spoken and written language. Moreover, the tradition of writing in English was relatively new - the language was still a tongue rather than a written language.

"The feeling for letter names as labels or tags was long in establishing itself for primary orality lingered in residue" (Ong, 1982: 76). Differentiation between the name of the letter and the sound it produced was the first stumbling block. It was generally assumed that the letter's name was derived from and should represent its sound. There was no realisation that the letter as a character can have a name but

that a sound cannot have a name, the name of the sound is the sound itself. The term "element" was used to designate either the letter or the sound it produced. Hart speaks of sounds as "elements" in an analogy between the four elements of the universe; a combination of voices in speaking and letters in writing make up words. Francis Clement, author of The Petie Schole in 1587 offers this definition: "A letter is an element, or simple voice apt to expresse a word, either one by it selfe uttered or moe joined together". Ramus defines the word as a note; Hart states that the same number of letters should be used in writing as "voyces or breathes in speaking" (Scolar Press, 1969: 6) and letters are: "markes of the severall voices of the speach" (2). The terms "letter", "name", "element" and "sound", were applied to the two systems indifferently. This is evident in Bullokar's definition of the perfect letters; they are those, "of perfect name and sound agreeing" (Danielsson and Alston, 1966: 3). In France, Ramus falls into this trap, defining a letter as "vng son indivisible" (Citton, 1989: 40). Peletier is perhaps the only one to maintain the division clear: writing is "une disposicion de letres, representant les moz sinificatiz de quelque languag que ce soet" (40).It was around the naming of letters which reform on a phonemic basis revolved and it was the basis on which teaching reading was founded.

Uncertainty and inconsistency reigned and proliferated throughout the system. Double letters are sometimes used to refer to typographical ligatures, digraphs and even to diphthongs, the latter two terms frequently being used interchangeably. Mulcaster usually means digraph when he uses the term diphthong as when he accuses the phonemic reformers of increasing the "number of letters and

diphthongs"(106). He also refers to ligatures as "coplements" (119). Hart, although generally consistent in his use of terminology occasionally slips up, as when he states that one should not write a "diphthong in the middest". Length and stress were also confused.

Dobson describes Mulcaster's division of the consonants into 'mutes' and 'half-vowels' as "quite unphonetic" (1968: 123). However, this classification was widely accepted by schoolmasters of the time on the grounds that those consonants whose name began with a vowel are half-vowels while those which began with a consonant (<b>,<c> ,<d>,<t>, <g>,<k>, and <p>,<q>), are mutes. Hart disagreed with this nomenclature and attempts to approximate the two systems in his naming of letters - the name of the letter is its sound: "The consonants may all be framed and uttered sensibly to the eare without the naming of anye vowell or diphthong" (Scolar Press, 1969: 37). Both he and Bullokar, however, refer to <l>, <m>,<n> and <r> as liquids or semi-vowels.

In Hart's point of view, there is only one valid distinction to be made: that existing between vowels, that is, voices or sounds and "dumb" and "dull" sounds (consonants). His treatment of the consonants departs from customary usage as he distinguishes between stops and continuants very clearly. His treatise was innovative in that he makes certain general observations on how words vary in pronunciation in connected speech. "Force" is the term used to refer to the effect that a consonant had when sounded as part of a word while the term "power", applied to both vowel and consonant, referred to the sound produced. Mulcaster on

the other hand speaks of the "value" or "force" of letters without distinguishing between the changed values when used in context.

This confusion of terms can be traced back to the fact that language was conceived as speech. Defaux agrees, stating that the terms "writing" and "speech" were coterminous and used interchangeably in Renaissance times: "The sixteenth century humanist makes no difference whatsoever between the oral and written expression of his thought. He systematically refuses to see that there might be one" (1988: 174). It was *vox* or voiced sound which is a symbol of thought, a definition borrowed and assimilated from the widely used grammarians Donatus and Priscian. But *vox* could mean both voiced sound and the written word. In Titus Andronicus (3.2. 39 - 45) we witness the same intertwining of the two systems. Lavinia's loss of language after her rape and mutilation prompt Tiutus to "wrest an alphabet" from her in order to restore her to human significance. This idea is repeated in many texts; in The Office of Christian Parents, (1616) a sermon is defined as nothing else but "a preaching of the gospel to the eye as the voice preacheth it to the ear" (Cressy, 1980: 4 - 5). Writing was thus often expressed in terms of speech.

The following exchange between the teacher and the student from Coote shows the extent to which the two systems, speech and writing were coterminous. Here spelling is writing.

John: How write you *people* ?

Robert: I cannot write.

> John: I mean not so, but when I say write, I mean spell: for in my meaning they are both one.
>
> Robert: Then I answer you, that p,e,o,p,l,e.
>
> (Scolar Press, 1968: 32)

The lack of consistent spelling hit at the very roots of the educational system and threatened not only to undermine the acquisition of knowledge, but distort it. This fact was becoming dismayingly obvious as the vernacular was invading the hallowed ground once occupied by Latin. While English was merely a functional and practical language, the consequences of its chaotic spelling were not of great import but once it was recognised that it had a higher calling it became a lack to be made good. As Mulcaster observes: "we felt not our want at the first wearing" (104).

6.10 The Relation of Letters to Sounds

ut pictura, orthographia

(Thomas Smith)

quasi une façon d'image d'une voix formée

(Meigret, 1542)

we write as we speak

(Hart 1569)

the letters were first devised, onelie to resemble and expresse the sound by their aspectable figure. (Mulcaster, 1582)

Letters resemble them in sound but ar not the same with the things resembled (Mulcaster, 1925: 111).

letters can expresse soundes withall their ioyntes & properties, no fuller then the pencill can the form and lineaments of the face, whose praise is not life but likenesse (Mulcaster, 1925:110).

the philosopher saith, that natur makes one thing to one use, and that everie use hath his particular instrument naturallie but that our own inventions, naie that even the most naturall means in our application do, and maie serve to sundrie ends and uses (101).

The two predominant and conventional views of the relation of letters or spelling to sound are represented by the quotations above. That spelling should reveal pronunciation, that the origin of language lies in speech was the premise on which the vast majority of sixteenth century reformers worked[9]. Renaissance opinion on the primacy of letters as opposed to sound is a quagmire because, as has been indicated above, the terms used were not neatly limited to one system or the other and there was a considerable overlap, a practice which had been inherited from the classical tradition. For Cicero and Quintilian, oratory and the penning of speeches were essentially one. Mulcaster could quote Plato as he "comprehendeth writing and reading for the benefit of speech" (9). Quintilian, who "first nameth writing and reading" (10) is also rallied to justify the foregrounding of writing above speech: "It is in writing that eloquence has its roots and foundations, it is writing that provides that holy of holies where the wealth of oratory is stored" (Institutio, 10:3;4:93). Taking these statements at face value, however, is to commit the historical fallacy of imposing on a society moving towards literacy, norms which were fashioned for one where orality was dominant. This is not merely our fallacy but constitutes the conundrum in which Renaissance linguists were trapped. The two concepts of language were examined in Renaissance humanist's attempts to fashion a theory of language.

A clearer distinction between the written and speech mode is found in Erasmus' De recta Graeci et Latini sermonis pronunciatione (1528). The bear Ursus who wishes

[9] This is the premise on which most of the major spelling reformers have worked. Noah Webster held that the phonetic principle should be the conerstone for the basis of American spelling reform.

to provide his cubs with the key to humanity, locates this virtue in writing rather than in speech. He in a sense, begins backward, placing the letter before speaking as the mark of humanity, asserting that writing humanises as it is a manifestation of reason; it is regarded as a tool of morality, where the fundamental moral maxims are intellectually grasped. This is based on the Socratic idea that morality was an affair of knowledge and on Aristotle's theory that "right reason" was essential to good conduct. The close relation between writing, morality and conduct is reflected in the use of "character" to describe a style of handwriting: "You know the character to be your brothers?", Gloucester asks Edmund (King Lear, 1.2.61). Ascham also had the double significance in mind no doubt when, as tutor to Edward IV, he claims to have been responsible for his "character".

The function of writing for the majority of the reformers was not primarily to transmit meaning but to translate the phonic system through the graphic symbol, clearly seen in Meigret's definition. The opposite position, that spelling should testify to the word's semantic history traced through its orthography and thus granting it a history of its own, although espoused by a minority, was biding its time and in the seventeenth century gained the upper hand. However, the main figures on the landscape in the sixteenth century, Smith, Hart and Bullokar in England and Sébillet, Meigret and Estienne in France, held that the function of writing was to render sound as closely as possible.

The difference between Mulcaster's approach and that of the phonemic reformers lay in the emphasis to be given to language as speech as opposed to language as

writing and it posed a dilemma which could not neatly be resolved. This problem can best be analysed in terms of whether it was reform or amendment that was aimed at. In the vast majority of cases, reformers, in whatever guise they presented themselves were content with amendment. Most of them left the traditional alphabet intact. Hart pared it down to twenty three letters and Bullokar expanded it to well nigh twice that although he saw no incompatibility between the old and the new systems. Meigret retained the traditional base as did Peletier who, through his classification of abuses into two types, paves the way for a retention of the old with an incorporation of the new. Rambaud was the great exception, making a clean sweep for the presentation of his completely new system. Wading through the rhetoric of the authors, the conclusion is that amendment is a more appropriate term than reform as it incorporates compromise, integration and negotiation between old and new.

In An Orthographie the single most recurrent analogy is that made between the word and the painting. This comparison had been made in Phaedrus and had been brought into currency again by Smith and Meigret. This was the most prevalent view of writing. Rambaud says: "L'escriture est le double & coppie de la parole"; "L'escriture est un miroir" (Citton, 1989: 45) and it is on this principle that Hart and later Bullokar devised their reformed alphabets. Hart's characterisation of the letter goes as follows: " the letter we may well call a maner of painting of that member for which it is written" (9). The word is therefore a likeness but its perfection is determined by the degree of realism which it holds to the original. Words, moreover, in this scheme of things are considered as symbols of the sounds

they represent, that is, a natural bond was thought to exist between the letter and the sound. Each sound should be represented by one symbol and one symbol only and the only reasonable and logical function of writing was to reflect it, mirror-like. Throughout his treatise the writer - painter analogy is called upon to press home the representative function of letters: "Better can not a writer be compared with a painter"(29).

For Hart letters, as mere representations, have an external point of reference, one which determines the evaluation of their efficiency and allows a classification which is described in terms of perfection or not. Their veracity and truth, the functions they serve within spelling can only be gauged by referring to speech. They are thus secondary, derivative and instrumental, a mediation of a mediation, a sign of a sign, the mere artificial and distorted representation of the voice and, therefore, at two removes from what constitutes the truly human.

Bullokar saw fit to exploit the same analogy. In A Short Introduction, from line seven onwards he never tires of stating the relation between letter and picture in these terms: in chapter one it appears three times. In Booke at Large, published in June of the same year, he proposes to "make a picture plaine for every voice" (Turner, 1970: Prologue, unnumbered). There is however a fundamental ambiguity in the painter - writer analogy. Hart's adoption of the pictorial metaphor is self-defeating in that he attributes to words a concrete, spatial, entity in spite of his contention that they are merely reflections of a prior speech act. Goldberg points out the spurious base on which this analogy is formed, claiming that:

> The truth of letters themselves as originally painting locates the origins of the alphabet as a script without phonetic value. The justification of spelling reformers like Hart, who proposed new writing systems as a means to return to an original script, are haunted by the hieroglyph, the nonphonetic original writing (Goldberg, 1990: 203).

The second four quotations above highlight different ways in which Mulcaster's theory differs from that of his contemporaries. The first makes reference to the initiation of writing, when letters were devised to resemble sounds insofar as this was possible. The key word is "aspectable", which signals the impossibility of sound to be rendered present on the page in a form which exactly duplicates the original.

Letters only resemble sounds but are different in quality. The repetition of the word "resemble" stresses the fact that their function is not representation but approximation. It also denotes and repeats the idea that words initially were closely tied to sound but that, over time this relation weakened and became more lax due to the intervention of usage and tradition. Mulcaster may have had in mind the onomatopoeic quality of certain words as it was commonly believed that onomatopoeia was the first, imitative state of language. Carew states as much and the belief that this class of words formed the core of a language was frequently used in arguments which defended Hebrew as the originary language, as the

possessor of the highest proportion of such words. The human origin of letters is alluded to in the word "devised".

The fourth quotation establishes the fact that the written and spoken systems of communication are by nature distinct and different. There is no hierarchy, no scale of values which places one above the other. They coexist as parallel systems and therefore operate on different sets of values.

The pictorial analogy made by the phonemic reformers is rejected because letters are not life, that is, nature, but have their genesis in the world of art (likeness) which is never to be taken for the real thing in the same way that one does not mistake a portrait for a living human being. On the contrary, its merit lies in copy, in attempting as near a resemblance as possible: "the truth of writing lies in likeness, not life, artifice not natue; the function of the pen is "not life but likenesse" (110). By situating letters in the world of art, Mulcaster cuts the umbilical cord between sound and letter so carefully cultivated by Hart.

In the last quotation the prerogative of man to use his own inventions as he pleases is highlighted, conjugating the two forces operative in language and opening the floodgates to human will. Mulcaster justifies his former contention that, just as words were first appointed on the basis of their "cause", that is, resemblance to the things they denoted, that there was a relation between the thing and the name it was given, so too spelling procedures began with a symbolic relationship between the thing and its rendition in spelling. However, this is superseded by, "our own

inventions". Given these precepts, it is possible to affirm that "their usage is certain in their most uncertaintie" (103), a fact which he finds to be a virtue rather than a vice.

Mulcaster challenges the traditional interpretation of the graphic symbol as expressed by Aristotle, the strict interpretation of which was the basis of phonemic spelling. Aristotle's vision of meaning and signification consisted of a chain of stages which proceeded from the external world to the interior and reverted again to sensible expression in voice which is in turn, expressed through the grapheme. Each stage must establish a correspondence with the one before if misrepresentation is not to occur. The main fear of the phonemic reformers - nationalistic sentiments apart - was that incorrect spelling (reading) could misconstruct and misrepresent the thoughts of man. The chain of signification could be broken and therefore, not only thought, but soul taken for what it was not. Correct spelling therefore in Hart's terms is invested with a moral symbolism which identifies it as a mark of a "civil" person, one who behaved in accordance with rules and respect for authority. Vestiges of this attitude still remain and the emphasis on the standardisation of spelling has a normative, disciplinary and gate keeping role in social life. Then as now, it is considered a prerequisite for education and later social success.

Hart gave special importance to the signature, another variation of the portrait, the self-portrait, and a focus where misrepresentation and self-misrepresentation came together. Multiple spellings of one's signature failed to authenticate the person,

becoming, at worst simulation and at best similitude. Scandalously: "Many a man doth scantlye know how the writing of his owne name should be sounded" (qtd. in Goldberg, 1990: 242). This situation betrayed phonetic truth, the only function of orthography in Hart's book.

The danger of misinterpretation, which lay principally at the interface between sound and letter, was not so vividly present for Mulcaster because he states from the start that letters are in a conventional, not a symbolic relation with sounds. He grants letters an autonomous life of their own, suggesting that they can escape from the regime of man's authority. They are:

> but elves and brats of the pens breeding, and they perform their function not by themselves or anie vertew in their form but onlie by consent of those men, which first invented them, and the pretie use thereof perceived by those which first did name them (102).

This image is open to two possible interpretations. There is an implicit analogy between God's creation of man and his granting him free will which in fact allows him to escape from the noose held by his own creator, and man's creation of letters. The image reminds this twentieth century reader of a Frankenstein-like monster or a computer which slips out of its maker's control. The scenario Mulcaster paints is one of man hedged in by disruptive forces on all sides. On the one hand, he is thwarted by the fickle nature of sound and on the other defied by the rebellious nature of letters which, although human in their inception, act according to their own will. Letters, therefore, circumscribe but at the same time

reaffirm man's humanity. They are autonomous and resist being marched in Indian file. Letters are determined by two factors as described in the above quotation; their original inception, based on sound as Mulcaster showed in his allegory and thereafter, the use assigned to them. Correct orthography, therefore, would come about by the conjugation of sound and tradition.

With the inclusion of tradition, Mulcaster makes his greatest departure from his contemporaries by taking into account the diachronic or historical element, giving it a weight which it is denied by Hart and Bullokar. He bestows on spelling a past, legitimising it in its own right, allowing it to be judged in terms which escaped those imposed by "private individuals". The historical past has a dynamic character and serves as carver of the language, past, present and future. It is not merely a passive weight but a principle for language growth and development. It is, "the surest guide", the "mistress" of spelling. Just as Vives before him had appealed to usage as a norm for language, so did Mulcaster apply it to spelling practices. The image of elves and brats reveals something of his appreciation of the joy and playfulness of language. There is nothing malevolent here; it tends instead towards the mischievous, marrying happily with the "dalliance" he praises in the English use of letters. These fairy-like spirits are changing and unpredictable but at heart, figments and affirmations of man's own imagination.

Mulcaster is not so much concerned with the relation of words to sounds as the fixing of a spelling which will reflect the diachronic forces at work on it. Sound is the primary influence but its force is dissipated by the intervention of man's

ratiocinio, how this is wrought through time and subjected to the forces of art. To attempt to rewrite the language on any one of these principles alone would result in a loss of etymologies and permit free variation in spelling which would be tantamount to unmooring language from the social institutions with which it had been formed and from which it derived its meaning.

Writing becomes its own referent and this is reflected in the ordering of The Elementarie. Letters refer to themselves and to each other within a system. Mulcaster's decision to concentrate on writing was his way of building sound foundations on which to operate reform. The phonemic reformers took sound as their base and Mulcaster comments ironically, "no marvel if it abuse speche, which as it passeth thorough everie mans mouth, and is resembled by everie mans pen, so must it nedes gather much corruption by the waie" (93). Sound then is a deceptive and flimsy base on which to build writing.

Mulcaster takes the accepted theory of the arbitrary nature of the sound to its referent one step further. The series of rules he elaborated stems from its extrapolation: the relation between sound and its graphic representation is of the same nature. He rejects a divine origin, by affirming that it was the result of a collective effort, "for it was no one mans invention, nor of anie one age" (72).

6. 11 Writing or Reading First ?

> the letter is the first and simplest in the trade of teaching and nothing before it (Mulcaster, 1888: 233).

> letteres should keep the voyces and yeeld them again unto the Readers as a pawne or gage (Hart, Scolar Press, 1969: 10).

The above quotations show two opposing views of the status of letters. Mulcaster places them at the base, not only of the pedagogic process but of human identity. Hart, however, recognises them merely as a medium of transmission of an originary manifestation of man's humanity. These different conceptions of the relation of speech and writing to the essence of man's humanity and their relationship with one another lie at the base of the strategies adopted in the reform of English spelling. They also go some way to explaining why Mulcaster would not delay writing until after reading had been acquired.

"Befor I medle with anie particular precept, to direct the Reader, I will thoroughlie rip up the hole certaintie of our English writing" (59). This has frequently been interpreted as evidence that Mulcaster proposed to invert the succession in which the skills were acquired but there is no evidence that this was so. While he placed it first in importance and it becomes one of the pillars on which his approach to spelling rests, that is, it is a major theoretical precept in the grounding of his theory, in practice, it is reading that will be first taught. In Positions, he states that

his elementary plan will be built around reading: "Wherefore I make *reading*, my first and fairest principle of all other, as simply being the first in substance, and learning to none, but leading all other" (30). Writing is to follow reading, although, "in some reasonable distance after, bycause it requireth some strength of hand" (1888: 31). In the same section however, he issues the following statement, relegating reading to a secondary position: "So that reading being but the expresser of the written characters must needes acknowledge and confesse her peniship to writing, of whom she tooke both her being and beginning" (32). He contends that "in nature and time it must needes be the elder". These contradictions appear in Positions only and are abandoned in The Elementarie.

Why begin with reading if writing is prior to it? Are not the two positions on a collision course? The answer lies in what he himself commented on: the difficulty of moving from principles to practice. He hints at a possible solution which has to do with motor skills which set physiological limits on his theoretical programme and as he has declared his pragmatic intent, his attempt to fix things in the real world and not a utopian ideal, the physical and other limiting conditions must be accounted for and integrated into his plan. A distinction must be made between the theoretical foundations he lays and the hierarchy of principles he establishes and how these were to be applied in practice. The perfection of motor skills, the absence of desks and the cost of writing materials, the latter two practical factors to which he was no doubt blind would condition and modify his grand plan.

In Mulcaster's hierarchy, the letter is supreme. It has no reference point other than itself and its value can only be measured by the use to which it is put within the system to which it belongs. The letter exists within an order of being that surpasses the natural order and replants nature. It is semi-autonomous and operates "by lawful authoritie of it self, confirming it self" (114). It needs no external scale of reference, nor indeed does one exist and it cannot be judged by its similarity to the sounds it represents. Discussing the use of <t> before <ch>, a practice which has no etymological or phonemic rationale, Mulcaster concludes that it is "so much used as it maketh a rule of it self allmost" (117). The origin of the letter's value then, lies in the system of which it forms part and this system is partly determined by usage. Mulcaster considers writing to be the supreme source of humanity. His comment that "everie mans brain was everie mans book" (115) establishes the relation of human intelligence to writing. As Engels wrote nearly three centuries later, although in quite a different context, all the work of the hand is rooted in thinking. Freud, within his own scheme establishes a similar link when he sees writing as the meeting point between the subconscious and the conscious[10].

One of the chief advantages of writing is that it allows man to extend his life through words and confers upon him a type of immortality, prolonging his lifespan and allowing him a glimpse of eternity. It allows him to transcend the restraints his physical and mortal nature place on his spirit. These are the time-worn arguments Mulcaster uses when he exults in the permanence of written words. "So that books give life where bodies bring but death". This echoes Theuth's opinion, rejected in

[10] Goldberg (1990: 279 - 321) examines theories of writing and its relation to essential humanity in the post Renaissance period, through an analysis of Barthes', Heidigger's, Engles' and Freud's work.

Plato's Phaedrus: "este conocimiento ... es el elixir de la memoria y de la sabiduria lo que con el se ha descubierto." (Arauja, 1969: 881). It also calls up the words of Rabelais who compared the writer to the father who finds eternity in his son, or Luther who declared that "L'oeuvre celebre l'ouvrier" (qtd. in Defaux, 1988: 168). Apart from its immortalising function, writing directs human reason through what Mulcaster calls the "paragon sense": the visual. Practice in writing aids reading as it is the "foundressse" (32).

The fundamental importance given to writing, specifically handwriting in The Elementarie sustains this impression. Mulcaster goes to great lengths to clarify that his treatise is directed to handwriting and not the printed letter. It involves the direct engagement of the human; co-ordination, manual dexterity, aesthetic appreciation and memory. It is the highest expression, exercise and cultivation of man's physical and rational skills and in its materiality is linked to the deepest experiences of humanity. Printing is "a benefit impropriate", while "writing is our generall, and in every mans finger" (107). Print hides the hand and all men appear the same. Mulcaster was against a levelling of both social and individual differences. Much later, both Barthes and Heidegger make the same observation - individual difference cannot be maintained if the hand is not extended by the pen. Mulcaster's classification of characters into "signifying and sounding" (letters) as opposed to "signifying but not sounding" (punctuation marks) presents an integrated approach to the written text. His concern for the aesthetic and practical leads him to demand of letters that they be, "faire to the eie, commodius to the ioynt, and swift to dispatch" (119). Hart in contrast, while not unaware of these

principles relegates the importance of the visual appearance of letters on the page to secondary status, "Writing must not satisfy the eye" (Scolar Press, 1969: 15). Mulcaster was therefore concerned with writing as a system in all its facets and not primarily concerned with relating it to or evaluating it by its similarity to the sound system. Writing is like itself.

Mulcaster's concept of writing can best be illustrated by Derrida, who insists that writing is not a supplement to the spoken word but a quite different performance. It has an economy of its own and cannot simply transmit unchanged what it receives from speech. Derrida takes the consequences of this to the extreme by concluding that writing is not at all representational or expressive of anything outside itself. He denounces phonocentrism and the consequent debasing of writing because the former assumes that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the extramental world and words in spoken speech and a similar one-to-one correspondence between spoken and written words. This sequence places writing at the end of a series of transformations in what Ong, (1982) describes as a pipeline which cannot have continuity as it has already been broken in the earlier stages of passage from the extramental to the psyche.

TRAITE TOV chant le commun vsa-

GE DE L'ESCRITVRE FRANCOISE, FAICT PAR LOYS Meigret Lyonnois, au quel est debattu des faultes & abus en la vraye & ancienne puis-sance des letres.

Auec priuilege de la court.

1 5 4 2.

On les vend au Palais en la gallerie par ou on va à la Chancellerie, es bouticques de Iehan Longis, & Vincent Sertenas libraires: Et en la rue neufue nostre dame, par Denis Ianot, Imprimeur & Libraire.

Fig 13. Title page of Meigret's Traité Touchant... 1542. Rpt. in Slatkine Reprints. Geneva, 1972.

6.12 Personal Animosities: The Stakes.

The texts that have been studied in the assessment of the theoretical imbroglio of spelling reform are a source of more than the confrontation of contesting theories. While one may lament their inconsistent terminology, they are texts from which much more can be gleaned. They are virtual manuals in rhetorical practice of the time - rhetoric in use as opposed to in theory. Furthermore, they afford insights into the personalities who, at such "great cost" penned them. They put into practice the norm that the speech or writing of a person reveal more than the words used; they ooze with the personality of their authors. This may seem like a rather esoterical digression and overt self-indulgence but it forms part of the project underhand. A humanist view of language has been given precedence over the sterile, objectivised and distanced discourses which have tended, with some notable exceptions to clog up the present pages of linguistic journals. Humanists impart to the modern reader, the human and intimate relation of man to his language and thereby restore the balance. It is true that most of the spelling reform texts make tedious reading but where the personal intervenes, where the writer is engaged with the heart and not the head the texts change tone. They were sustained by deep personal convictions and this leaves its indelible imprint on them. This is not to assume that they open their hearts and pour forth their innermost sentiments as I have already suggested. On the contrary, they worked within what by modern standards, was a strict code of expression.

The passions that the theme incited and unleashed cannot be ignored, disregarded or omitted from an appreciation of the texts. It is for this reason that the personal animosities which shape them will now be considered and evaluated. It is when the author, in the face of rivalry and antagonism attempts to communicate that, he is at his sharpest. This aspect cannot and should not be overlooked when examining how human beings have expressed themselves on language through language. It shows how they saw themselves, in relation to their competitors and their pet projects. The venting of personal ire masquerading in the guise of a politically correct and defensible theory is endearing and ultimately human. The themes dealt with in the following discussion have already been raised summarily but bringing them together here is intended to highlight the personal commitment and rivalry between the two camps. It also sheds a light on the precarious and frail nature of human motivations and to indicate that anything pertaining to language is, as Mulcaster said, both tainted by the blemish of human error and exalted as a monument to his grandeur.

Sharp exchanges, personal as well as political animosities and outright confrontation which frequently degenerated into name calling and vicious insults were a staple in the French spelling reform debate which sometimes substituted sound theoretical foundations for soured back-biting. This was due to the fact that it revolved around a few personalities whose voices soared to a screeching crescendo, relegating the theoretical content of the debate to a secondary level.. The title of Meigret's response to Autelz' arguments in favour of traditional spelling can serve as an example of the open slurs liberally and repeatedly cast

about. It runs as follows, Response de Louis Meigret a la desesperée replique de Glaomalis de Vexelet, transformé en Gyllaome des Aotels.[11] This intense personal rivalry was ostensibly absent in the English experience. Insults there undoubtedly were, but on a much more even keel, guarding propriety and proportion at all times. Bullokar perhaps it is who is most forthright in accusing his forerunners for having ill-disposed public opinion to reform. While he names names, between Hart and his major rival Mulcaster, one can only glimpse a vein of tension in the discourse of the latter. Discretion was the order of the day. The two extremes of the spectrum saw themselves as forces set on a collision course although historical hindsight cannot vouch for such a cataclysmic clash of Titans. A great degree of cross-fertilisation took place between the intransigent extremes. Each of them announced himself as the possessor of truth and pushed his reforms to the detriment of others but, at the same time, rode on the back of his predecessors.

The French orthopaedists were particularly outspoken and direct in their attacks on one another and the debate, "finite en un echange d'insultes" (Citton, 1989: 61). Casting aspersions on aims and objectives, reliability, patriotism and moral integrity by subtler means characterised its counterpart in England but the same factors were at work behind the scenes, with each Messiah acutely conscious of his status and the possible fate awaiting him if he did not peddle his wares successfully. The Elementarie provides an example of the subtle but scathing disdain used to discredit the efforts of other reformers, distances the author from them and serves as a vehicle of self-promotion.

[11] The spelling, originally in Meigret's reformed version, has been normalised.

The extent to which The Elementarie was engaged in a ruthless, persistent and effective discrediting of the phonemicists can be appreciated by examining how Mulcaster appropriated the imagery used in Hart's work. He is largely silent on Bullokar, making only one veiled reference to those who would swell the alphabet with strange notations and diacritics. Subtlety defines his strategy, the barbed tongue beneath a smooth and apparently inoffensive narrative. The allegory was his *pièce de résistence* but not the only strategy used to discredit them and distance himself from their theoretical positions.

Firstly, Mulcaster does not mention any of his adversaries by name. Smith, Hart, Bullokar and others of their cohort remain nameless and are referred to collectively as "they". Leaving them in the cold vaults of anonymity is the first slur on their achievements. He denies them a face of their own in the same way that they had denied it to the letter. Sensitive to the thin line between official approbation and displeasure, he was not going to chance his arm and incur the wrath of potentially powerful people. Both Smith and Hart had been high standing diplomats[12] and to come out openly with a criticism of them could have backfired on a humble teacher trying to reach the centres of power from the edge. Mulcaster is constantly negotiating the fringe, apologising, attempting to put his own view forward without creating enemies, "it entendeth no defense, as against an enemie, but a conference, as with a frind" (92); "I will endevor my self to perswade them as frinds, then to confute them as foes", "This title tho it seme by the inscription to pretend som

[12] Smith had served as ambassador to France on two occasions, 1562 - 64 and again in the 1570's. He was first Secretary from 1572 to 1576 and participated in the Irish venture from 1571 to 1576. Hart, for his part had also served as ambassador in France and held the title Chester Heralt.

offence, yet it is nothing moodie at all"(92). These statements indicate that a least on the surface, Mulcaster was presenting himself hat in hand and this fawning attitude was intended both to smooth the path towards the presentation of his own reforms and make the acuity of the criticisms he had, or was about to issue, more palatable. This strategy also avoids the *cul de sac* into which Bullokar so recklessly and clumsily drove. His criticism of Smith and Hart for having negatively affected public opinion on spelling reform does not sit happily with the words of praise he feels obliged to throw in their direction. Mulcaster was warier, more cautious and more subtle.

Secondly, Mulcaster objectivises his opposition by distancing the human element and levels his accusations on a purely theoretical level by congratulating them on their, albeit fruitless and ill-directed, efforts. Goodwill, he implies is not enough: "I allow not the mean, tho I mislike not the men, which deserve great thanks for their good will" (109). This seeming benevolence, however, is undercut by the previous accusations of treachery, treason, sedition and anarchical tendencies. It is a conventional curtsey, made out of feigned respect and rings slightly false. The tone is condescending and he reserves his *coup de grace* for the condemnation of their lack of consistency and rigour because they have not studied the matter for themselves but have relied blindly on inherited precepts. In the Preface to The Elementarie he casually dismisses the other reformers who "have bene tampering about it" (Scolar Press, 1970, Preface, unnumbered). Mulcaster places great emphasis on "orderlie seking" and "sufficient observation" and finds this lacking

in the phonemic reformers. He "laie[s] the hole falt upon the insufficient observer, for not seking the right in it [language], by a right waie" (111).

The threat of war and disruption is exploited. The verbs associated with the phonemic reformers suggest battle and violence: "thwart", "force", "cross" and "hinder". He exploits the social and economic circumstances of an age haunted by the spectre of disruption and disorder, in the form of the hatching of plots by both gentry and communality.

Mulcaster strategically places himself on the side of the country, the majority and the common good - ironic given his elitist standpoint. He accused the reformers of arrogance, and speaking down to their countrymen: "He calleth his own credite into som question, which taketh his cuntrie to be blind" (112). This he suggests reflects more on them than on the object of their reform. He imputes sinister motives to those who challenge custom, alleging that their aims reach much further than merely altering the spelling and suggests that they are involved in a conspiracy to overthrow, not only the newly established religion, but also the laws and policies of the state. To rewrite the language in which the state "hath set down hir religion, hir lawes, hir privat and publik dealings" (108), constituted a treacherous plot to overthrow the established order and an act of disrespect to ones' ancestors. He goes on to suggest that, lurking beneath an apparently innocent, civic and intellectual initiative there lay a more sinister and hostile motive: "But theie will saie that theie mean not anie so main a change" (109).

He unravels the political implications of "replanting", presenting himself as the champion of order, security and, of more immediate consequence, upholder of the monarchy in the person of Elizabeth. Of course, he was just as much involved in the double think of reform-minded men of the time and indeed of the monarchy itself. Hart sold his reformed orthography as a force of cohesion in a divided state but the very proposal undercuts the stability of the state. The same applies to Mulcaster's educational reforms.

Of special importance is the slur thrown at the phonemic reformers that they seek to benefit their particular and personal ends at the expense of the common weal. Overweening pride gives the potential reformer the audacity to challenge the institutions of the state with "a new right of his own conceiving" (112). By accusing them of placing the private and personal above the common good, Mulcaster is invoking an argument which was bandied about throughout the Tudor period, especially applied to the rising mercantile and artisan classes. These were treated in the most disparaging terms by social commentators and the sacrosanct principle of the common good above all is used to link the phonemic spelling reformers with a social class typified by ambition, personal advancement and disregard for the common weal. He evidently saw what Hart terms "publycke profitt" as "private conceit" and to level the accusation of self-interest and covetousness against his intellectual rivals was to identify them with the social pariahs which impeded the proper functioning of the state. Mulcaster's contempt for the ambitious, profiteering mercantile class was bitter and the connection he

attempts to establish between the two groups was designed to cast the phonemic reformers in the most unfavourable light possible.

Apart from these direct or semi-direct references, the second weapon in Mulcaster's arsenal of attack is to play on the imagery that figured prominently in both Hart and Bullokar's work. He takes up the gardening image, affirming that, unlike Hart who will, in his own words, "replant" the whole garden of orthography, his aim is both less ambitious and less disruptive, and is confined to "reasonable proining" (108). This is justified by his statement that what he seeks is relative perfection, "our commonlie so, and not their alwaie so" (113). Here, the use of the two pronominal forms, "our" and "their" serve to identify his enterprise with the public good, distancing the others as a splinter group.

Hart is obviously the target for criticism in the references to the imagery of disease and healing. His diagnosis is called into question and the similarity between the spelling reformer and the surgeon is demonstrated as being presumptuous. Mulcaster doubts that what Hart has identified as symptoms of disease are really so. They are no more than "pretended infirmities in our tung" (110), what Johnson would later call "spots of barbarity" which must be endured as they cannot be eliminated.

Mulcaster begins his treatise on a positive note, determining not to dwell on the defects and he carries this through. The deficiencies he identifies in English spelling are not combined and elaborated into laws as in Hart's case. They are

briefly illustrated with specific examples, incorporated into the Generall Rule and accounted for in the section on Prerogative. So, while Hart uses them as a framework for his whole reform scheme, their negative effects are diminished by Mulcaster's accounting for them under the blanket term Prerogative. He goes even further by assigning them a role in the growth and development of the language. Defects become virtues and the established view is inverted, relying on the premise that a language or its writing is sufficient if it adequately performs its tasks of communication. Hence, "these pretended infirmities in our tung, whose psysiking I like not this waie" (110) are in reality strengths and Mulcaster can conclude that "the remedie itself is more dangerous then the disease" (107). When speaking about the defects of English spelling, Mulcaster almost always qualifies the terms "wrong" or "infirmities" with "pretended" or "supposed": he aims to "sift the certain right from the supposed wrong." (186). Mulcaster uses Hart's treatise as a platform from which to launch his own alternative theory but his debt to his predecessors is never acknowledged

Mulcaster refers to words as if they were characters or personages and instead of giving them mere reflectory value, grants them countenances and dressage, thus lending them a physical presence and a character which is not derived from mere imaging. Thus, he can criticise the fact that phonemecists introduce new characters which he describes as unnatural mutations, "the deformitie thereof appearing in the face, and the infirmitie thereof not able to bear age" (186).

The strategies used in The Elementarie to elevate the status of its author, denigrate those who adopted an alternative approach and launch another initiative involve direct confrontation smoothed with praise, the play on words and use of figurative language. By situating the movement within the religious, political and economic arenas he attempts to show how the rival band was working against all that was sacred to Tudor society and its ruling dynasty.

In the midst of phonemic euphoria, Mulcaster opts for a concept of language and adopts measures to rectify it thereby leans heavily towards the minority view which exalts the letter above the sound. He rejected the doctrine of phonemic identity between letters and the sounds they represented, considering them to be two self-contained systems linked only by a conventional bond. This is why he begins by dealing with writing although in pratice it is not very clear whether this will also apply to the succession in which they are taught in the junior school.

The tendency, however, to exaggerate Mulcaster's originality must be resisted and, in fact, proves too simplistic. The points of agreement that can be detected between his project and those of his peers are numerous. The two branches of spelling reformers have their genesis in the same trunk. Analysis of the work of Hart and Mulcaster reveals not only a considerable store of shared assumptions but, moreover, brings to light the extent to which Mulcaster was familiar with Hart's text.

At first sight it would seem that in questions concerning spelling reform, Mulcaster, that presumed brilliant revolutionary was at heart a conservative. Another turn of the screw ! Conservatism and radicalism are relative terms and a conservative among radicals can almost be considered a new radical. His conservatism was not only "modern" but completely congruent with his general view of language development.

Mulcaster's proposals have been interpreted as an attempt to batten down the hatches against the onslaught of the teeming rabble, attempting to conserve the elitist character of writing by claiming that it was not as easy as his phonemic contemporaries went all out to prove. His defence of a spelling system which is flexible and etymological has little to do with his social orientation but is based on an understanding of the way language works through time on the one hand, and on the other the primacy he gave to writing. His defence of traditional spelling, whatever ulterior motives he entertained, is based firmly on insights of a linguistic nature.

Secondly, the pragmatic nature of his work cannot be lightly dismissed. It was Mulcaster, not Hart, who proposed the practical means of providing greater access to literacy, who kept his eye firmly fixed on what was possible. He tailored his ambitions to his means.

There are undoubtedly grey areas where he fails to make his stance explicit or bring it to his final conclusions. Apart from the indeterminate and inadequate

terminology, Mulcaster's concept of language , writing and spelling foreshadows the views that were to come to prominence in the seventeenth century. His concept of spelling severed the links it had maintained with speaking and in this sense he is more modern than his contemporaries although he sometimes backslides into the classical concept.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 A Personal View

I will do my best, to use my authour well

(Mulcaster, 1888: 12).

Mulcaster was a man of many parts. Ironically, the three roles Holofernes plays in the charade presented in the last act of Love's Labour's Lost seem most fittingly to correspond to Mulcaster's ubiquity, even if the playwright's intention was not to pay tribute to his versatility but rather to condemn his pomposity and voracity for protagonism. History collaborates in this faceless face as we have no known portrait of the man other than the brief pen pictures handed down by former students. A characterisation of Mulcaster is also found in the letters he defends. Like them, he too can take on many forms and representations, unlike Hart's players who cannot tolerate cross-dressing or any kind of transvestite behaviour. If all the world is a stage and men and women merely players, then he was one of the most versatile. The task I set myself was to place Mulcaster through his work on this stage and examine the variegated figure in the different settings and space within which he moves - to look into, beyond and behind.

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gaps and deficiencies, unexplained silences and contradictory ideas woven in an uneven fabric: a complex working together of diverse and often incompatible strands.

His text, for all its dogmatism, is a process, like humanism itself. He partakes of and epitomises the spirit of the times, embraces a perception of conflict and diversity, the result of new intellectual combinations and permutations. Spanning centuries, there is one image which I feel best represents Mulcaster: that of Mrs Ramsey sitting at the centre of her universe, continually knitting, feeding thread onto her needles, creating from those strands of life that reach her, a relatively coherent but ultimately imperfect universe.

Combinatory intellectual activity inspires many creative acts - a fact that we are relearning today with the challenge of the Internet and the mushrooming of the new media. This is true also of the sixteenth century. Diverse systems of ideas and special disciplines were combined. Mulcaster found himself in what Eisenstein (1983) calls the new Common Wealth of Learning which yielded a wide-angled and unfocused scholarship. It also promoted, paradoxically, both standardisation and idiosyncrasy on all levels and this is evident in Mulcaster's work. Uniformity and diversity, the typical and the unique, individualism and masification are not contending forces but two sides of the same coin. Like the age in which he lived he was concerned with defining and consolidating boundaries but at the same time, could not prevent a blurring of those same lines, forcing either their redrawing or erasure. It was as if, by trying to place the template of the Old World,

about. It runs as follows, Response de Louis Meigret a la desesperée replique de Glaomalis de Vexelet, transformé en Gyllaome des Aotels.[11] This intense personal rivalry was ostensibly absent in the English experience. Insults there undoubtedly were, but on a much more even keel, guarding propriety and proportion at all times. Bullokar perhaps it is who is most forthright in accusing his forerunners for having ill-disposed public opinion to reform. While he names names, between Hart and his major rival Mulcaster, one can only glimpse a vein of tension in the discourse of the latter. Discretion was the order of the day. The two extremes of the spectrum saw themselves as forces set on a collision course although historical hindsight cannot vouch for such a cataclysmic clash of Titans. A great degree of cross-fertilisation took place between the intransigent extremes. Each of them announced himself as the possessor of truth and pushed his reforms to the detriment of others but, at the same time, rode on the back of his predecessors.

The French orthopaedists were particularly outspoken and direct in their attacks on one another and the debate, "finite en un echange d'insultes" (Citton, 1989: 61). Casting aspersions on aims and objectives, reliability, patriotism and moral integrity by subtler means characterised its counterpart in England but the same factors were at work behind the scenes, with each Messiah acutely conscious of his status and the possible fate awaiting him if he did not peddle his wares successfully. The Elementarie provides an example of the subtle but scathing disdain used to discredit the efforts of other reformers, distances the author from them and serves as a vehicle of self-promotion.

[11] The spelling, originally in Meigret's reformed version, has been normalised.

The extent to which The Elementarie was engaged in a ruthless, persistent and effective discrediting of the phonemicists can be appreciated by examining how Mulcaster appropriated the imagery used in Hart's work. He is largely silent on Bullokar, making only one veiled reference to those who would swell the alphabet with strange notations and diacritics. Subtlety defines his strategy, the barbed tongue beneath a smooth and apparently inoffensive narrative. The allegory was his *pièce de résistence* but not the only strategy used to discredit them and distance himself from their theoretical positions.

Firstly, Mulcaster does not mention any of his adversaries by name. Smith, Hart, Bullokar and others of their cohort remain nameless and are referred to collectively as "they". Leaving them in the cold vaults of anonymity is the first slur on their achievements. He denies them a face of their own in the same way that they had denied it to the letter. Sensitive to the thin line between official approbation and displeasure, he was not going to chance his arm and incur the wrath of potentially powerful people. Both Smith and Hart had been high standing diplomats[12] and to come out openly with a criticism of them could have backfired on a humble teacher trying to reach the centres of power from the edge. Mulcaster is constantly negotiating the fringe, apologising, attempting to put his own view forward without creating enemies, "it entendeth no defense, as against an enemie, but a conference, as with a frind" (92); "I will endevor my self to perswade them as frinds, then to confute them as foes", "This title tho it seme by the inscription to pretend som

[12] Smith had served as ambassador to France on two occasions, 1562 - 64 and again in the 1570's. He was first Secretary from 1572 to 1576 and participated in the Irish venture from 1571 to 1576. Hart, for his part had also served as ambassador in France and held the title Chester Heralt.

offence, yet it is nothing moodie at all"(92). These statements indicate that a least on the surface, Mulcaster was presenting himself hat in hand and this fawning attitude was intended both to smooth the path towards the presentation of his own reforms and make the acuity of the criticisms he had, or was about to issue, more palatable. This strategy also avoids the *cul de sac* into which Bullokar so recklessly and clumsily drove. His criticism of Smith and Hart for having negatively affected public opinion on spelling reform does not sit happily with the words of praise he feels obliged to throw in their direction. Mulcaster was warier, more cautious and more subtle.

Secondly, Mulcaster objectivises his opposition by distancing the human element and levels his accusations on a purely theoretical level by congratulating them on their, albeit fruitless and ill-directed, efforts. Goodwill, he implies is not enough: "I allow not the mean, tho I mislike not the men, which deserve great thanks for their good will" (109). This seeming benevolence, however, is undercut by the previous accusations of treachery, treason, sedition and anarchical tendencies. It is a conventional curtsey, made out of feigned respect and rings slightly false. The tone is condescending and he reserves his *coup de grace* for the condemnation of their lack of consistency and rigour because they have not studied the matter for themselves but have relied blindly on inherited precepts. In the Preface to The Elementarie he casually dismisses the other reformers who "have bene tampering about it" (Scolar Press, 1970, Preface, unnumbered). Mulcaster places great emphasis on "orderlie seking" and "sufficient observation" and finds this lacking

in the phonemic reformers. He "laie[s] the hole falt upon the insufficient observer, for not seking the right in it [language], by a right waie" (111).

The threat of war and disruption is exploited. The verbs associated with the phonemic reformers suggest battle and violence: "thwart", "force", "cross" and "hinder". He exploits the social and economic circumstances of an age haunted by the spectre of disruption and disorder, in the form of the hatching of plots by both gentry and communality.

Mulcaster strategically places himself on the side of the country, the majority and the common good - ironic given his elitist standpoint. He accused the reformers of arrogance, and speaking down to their countrymen: "He calleth his own credite into som question, which taketh his cuntrie to be blind" (112). This he suggests reflects more on them than on the object of their reform. He imputes sinister motives to those who challenge custom, alleging that their aims reach much further than merely altering the spelling and suggests that they are involved in a conspiracy to overthrow, not only the newly established religion, but also the laws and policies of the state. To rewrite the language in which the state "hath set down hir religion, hir lawes, hir privat and publik dealings" (108), constituted a treacherous plot to overthrow the established order and an act of disrespect to ones' ancestors. He goes on to suggest that, lurking beneath an apparently innocent, civic and intellectual initiative there lay a more sinister and hostile motive: "But theie will saie that theie mean not anie so main a change" (109).

He unravels the political implications of "replanting", presenting himself as the champion of order, security and, of more immediate consequence, upholder of the monarchy in the person of Elizabeth. Of course, he was just as much involved in the double think of reform-minded men of the time and indeed of the monarchy itself. Hart sold his reformed orthography as a force of cohesion in a divided state but the very proposal undercuts the stability of the state. The same applies to Mulcaster's educational reforms.

Of special importance is the slur thrown at the phonemic reformers that they seek to benefit their particular and personal ends at the expense of the common weal. Overweening pride gives the potential reformer the audacity to challenge the institutions of the state with "a new right of his own conceiving" (112). By accusing them of placing the private and personal above the common good, Mulcaster is invoking an argument which was bandied about throughout the Tudor period, especially applied to the rising mercantile and artisan classes. These were treated in the most disparaging terms by social commentators and the sacrosanct principle of the common good above all is used to link the phonemic spelling reformers with a social class typified by ambition, personal advancement and disregard for the common weal. He evidently saw what Hart terms "publycke profitt" as "private conceit" and to level the accusation of self-interest and covetousness against his intellectual rivals was to identify them with the social pariahs which impeded the proper functioning of the state. Mulcaster's contempt for the ambitious, profiteering mercantile class was bitter and the connection he

attempts to establish between the two groups was designed to cast the phonemic reformers in the most unfavourable light possible.

Apart from these direct or semi-direct references, the second weapon in Mulcaster's arsenal of attack is to play on the imagery that figured prominently in both Hart and Bullokar's work. He takes up the gardening image, affirming that, unlike Hart who will, in his own words, "replant" the whole garden of orthography, his aim is both less ambitious and less disruptive, and is confined to "reasonable proining" (108). This is justified by his statement that what he seeks is relative perfection, "our commonlie so, and not their alwaie so" (113). Here, the use of the two pronominal forms, "our" and "their" serve to identify his enterprise with the public good, distancing the others as a splinter group.

Hart is obviously the target for criticism in the references to the imagery of disease and healing. His diagnosis is called into question and the similarity between the spelling reformer and the surgeon is demonstrated as being presumptuous. Mulcaster doubts that what Hart has identified as symptoms of disease are really so. They are no more than "pretended infirmities in our tung" (110), what Johnson would later call "spots of barbarity" which must be endured as they cannot be eliminated.

Mulcaster begins his treatise on a positive note, determining not to dwell on the defects and he carries this through. The deficiencies he identifies in English spelling are not combined and elaborated into laws as in Hart's case. They are

briefly illustrated with specific examples, incorporated into the Generall Rule and accounted for in the section on Prerogative. So, while Hart uses them as a framework for his whole reform scheme, their negative effects are diminished by Mulcaster's accounting for them under the blanket term Prerogative. He goes even further by assigning them a role in the growth and development of the language. Defects become virtues and the established view is inverted, relying on the premise that a language or its writing is sufficient if it adequately performs its tasks of communication. Hence, "these pretended infirmities in our tung, whose psysiking I like not this waie" (110) are in reality strengths and Mulcaster can conclude that "the remedie itself is more dangerous then the disease" (107). When speaking about the defects of English spelling, Mulcaster almost always qualifies the terms "wrong" or "infirmities" with "pretended" or "supposed": he aims to "sift the certain right from the supposed wrong." (186). Mulcaster uses Hart's treatise as a platform from which to launch his own alternative theory but his debt to his predecessors is never acknowledged

Mulcaster refers to words as if they were characters or personages and instead of giving them mere reflectory value, grants them countenances and dressage, thus lending them a physical presence and a character which is not derived from mere imaging. Thus, he can criticise the fact that phonemecists introduce new characters which he describes as unnatural mutations, "the deformitie thereof appearing in the face, and the infirmitie thereof not able to bear age" (186).

The strategies used in The Elementarie to elevate the status of its author, denigrate those who adopted an alternative approach and launch another initiative involve direct confrontation smoothed with praise, the play on words and use of figurative language. By situating the movement within the religious, political and economic arenas he attempts to show how the rival band was working against all that was sacred to Tudor society and its ruling dynasty.

In the midst of phonemic euphoria, Mulcaster opts for a concept of language and adopts measures to rectify it thereby leans heavily towards the minority view which exalts the letter above the sound. He rejected the doctrine of phonemic identity between letters and the sounds they represented, considering them to be two self-contained systems linked only by a conventional bond. This is why he begins by dealing with writing although in pratice it is not very clear whether this will also apply to the succession in which they are taught in the junior school.

The tendency, however, to exaggerate Mulcaster's originality must be resisted and, in fact, proves too simplistic. The points of agreement that can be detected between his project and those of his peers are numerous. The two branches of spelling reformers have their genesis in the same trunk. Analysis of the work of Hart and Mulcaster reveals not only a considerable store of shared assumptions but, moreover, brings to light the extent to which Mulcaster was familiar with Hart's text.

At first sight it would seem that in questions concerning spelling reform, Mulcaster, that presumed brilliant revolutionary was at heart a conservative. Another turn of the screw ! Conservatism and radicalism are relative terms and a conservative among radicals can almost be considered a new radical. His conservatism was not only "modern" but completely congruent with his general view of language development.

Mulcaster's proposals have been interpreted as an attempt to batten down the hatches against the onslaught of the teeming rabble, attempting to conserve the elitist character of writing by claiming that it was not as easy as his phonemic contemporaries went all out to prove. His defence of a spelling system which is flexible and etymological has little to do with his social orientation but is based on an understanding of the way language works through time on the one hand, and on the other the primacy he gave to writing. His defence of traditional spelling, whatever ulterior motives he entertained, is based firmly on insights of a linguistic nature.

Secondly, the pragmatic nature of his work cannot be lightly dismissed. It was Mulcaster, not Hart, who proposed the practical means of providing greater access to literacy, who kept his eye firmly fixed on what was possible. He tailored his ambitions to his means.

There are undoubtedly grey areas where he fails to make his stance explicit or bring it to his final conclusions. Apart from the indeterminate and inadequate

terminology, Mulcaster's concept of language , writing and spelling foreshadows the views that were to come to prominence in the seventeenth century. His concept of spelling severed the links it had maintained with speaking and in this sense he is more modern than his contemporaries although he sometimes backslides into the classical concept.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 A Personal View

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(Mulcaster, 1888: 12).

Mulcaster was a man of many parts. Ironically, the three roles Holofernes plays in the charade presented in the last act of Love's Labour's Lost seem most fittingly to correspond to Mulcaster's ubiquity, even if the playwright's intention was not to pay tribute to his versatility but rather to condemn his pomposity and voracity for protagonism. History collaborates in this faceless face as we have no known portrait of the man other than the brief pen pictures handed down by former students. A characterisation of Mulcaster is also found in the letters he defends. Like them, he too can take on many forms and representations, unlike Hart's players who cannot tolerate cross-dressing or any kind of transvestite behaviour. If all the world is a stage and men and women merely players, then he was one of the most versatile. The task I set myself was to place Mulcaster through his work on this stage and examine the variegated figure in the different settings and space within which he moves - to look into, beyond and behind.

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gaps and deficiencies, unexplained silences and contradictory ideas woven in an uneven fabric: a complex working together of diverse and often incompatible strands.

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geographically, ideologically, politically and linguistically on the new map of Europe, he found that not all boundaries coincided. He represents a new growth within the womb of the old, a mounting awareness of change achieved in the course of an apparently deliberate reaction against it, an annoying paradox which nonetheless lies close to the heart of Elizabethan Renaissance culture.

C.S. Lewis has stated that one becomes infected with the force exerted by Renaissance rhetoric; that one ends up accepting the age for what they fashioned it to be. Perhaps one also adopts their approach to their subjects - eclectic and wide ranging. Our ignorance of the age too, sometimes leads us to mount conjectures which are the unfortunate fruit of historical hindsight. I do not rest guilty, I hope of being one of those who "wringeth the writer, and wreasteth his meaning that their meaning, and his applying be both of one ground" (1888: 12), of not confining myself to reading between the lines but instead inserting new lines, "forcing that upon him, which he never dreamed on" (1888: 11). I concur with De Molen's verdict that: "In the letters and works that have survived, Mulcaster remains something of an enigma: a strange compound of stubbornness and perspicacity, of vanity and zeal, of commendable aspirations and unworthy actions, personally ambitious, desiring power and independence" (1991: 41). Such an evaluation of his character can be extended to his work

Returning to the image I have appropriated from To the Lighthouse, in the novel, the journey there was never undertaken as death and the vagaries of life intervened. The lighthouse remained a mystery, an unfulfilled goal, its beam sporadically

lighting up patches in the mist. Mulcaster's ambitious project likewise remains incomplete, not only in the sense that the work, scorpion-like carries its self-immolating sting in its tail but also that it had no continuity, no further instalments which would help to appreciate the scope of the work and explain anomalies that appear there. Like Mulcaster, I could not deal with utopian ideals and edenic contexts and had to content myself with what existed, not what might have been.

Mulcaster ends his treatise on language and spelling reform with both an interrogative and an invitation, the former taking his spelling reform proposals out of the sphere of dogmatic prescriptivism, the latter, submitting them to time and other subsequent initiatives. His work is open-ended and without closure; it is at once a challenge and an invitation.

What Mulcaster lacks in depth, is redeemed in extension. His vision of the nature of language has effectively become ours - that it is a tool for communication, that it is eminently social in nature and that it is a dynamic force, shaped by and shaping our lives and our vision of the world. It is less fragile than has often been implied, needs no external watchdogs or guardians; will never achieve complete consistency and, Houdini-like, wriggles out of cast-iron rules.

Behind the apparent dogmatism there lies an appealing and disturbing tentativeness which suggests the idea that the work is a process, a working through of ideas. This suggests in turn that Mulcaster was a Janus-faced figure straddling not only two centuries, two habits of thought, but ultimately two philosophies. This finally

developed and congealed into the thesis of this work, that the two treatises penned by him are scored and fissured by transition. This transitional nature is most evident and made patent in the core issue of The Elementarie, in spelling reform, a reform which refused to go forward but in equally strong terms, refused to go back. It represents a negotiation between the past as forged by custom or tradition and current social reality. From this perspective, his reforms were neither wholly revolutionary nor wholly traditional but balanced, tailored to necessity and circumstance, and dictated to by contingency. His final salute to the reader captures its variegated nature. "the argument is new, tho the handling be old ... because the arguments be old, tho the handling be new" (247). The seeds of modernity can germinate and thrive in old fields. Mulcaster was progressive in his conservatism and conservative in his progressivism. All the themes that huddle under the umbrella were forged on the same anvil and as many questions are raised as answers proffered. His silences often speak as loud as his words and caution is the watchword, both for the author and the reader. It is a work of synthesis which culminates a long career in teaching but at the same time, is poised on the brink of a new manner of understanding the world. Like other humanists, he was caught in the dialectic of faith and observation, certainty and uncertainty.

I, like many others, have come to accept the impossibility of fully reconstructing and re-entering the culture of the sixteenth century but by analysing Mulcaster's texts it has been possible to glimpse how he expresses and embodies the dominant satisfactions and anxieties of the period. What I have attempted to do is not to wall off the text from the symbolic structures operative elsewhere but to unpick the

converging lines of force that produced it. What has always been uppermost in my mind , be it for ill or for good, is the sense of the larger networks of meaning in which the author and his works participate. A knee muscle, described and analysed in isolation, dissected, stained and put under the microscope does give a certain knowledge but it is only when it is studied as part of the whole joint, its interaction with tendons, other muscles, cartilage and bones that the reason for its structure becomes apparent and its function evident. Intertextuality has been taken up as a catchword lately but casting our minds back to the sixteenth century, we discover, not only that it has long existed but moreover, that it constituted the very basis on which all literature and writing is conceived, processed and finally delivered.

I have tried to place Mulcaster. The act of placing requires aligning the co-ordinates on the philosophical map of the time. Just as the researcher's task in delving into history is to reconstruct, so too was the writer's task; writing was then, as never before or since, a consciously reconstructive act, bricolage and mosaic-like effect. This text seen through the dense mesh of intertextuality does not disintegrate. It dissembles and reassembles newish forms, old patterns applied to new fabrics, sempieternal configurations realigned with slight adjustments. Mulcaster's interest in cartography is symbolically important as his aim, like the researcher's was to give co-ordinates, to place or position, as the title of his first book indicated.

Christopher Porterfield's verdict: " Our century, which began by changing the old constancies, ends by making change the only constant.(Time, 8 June. 1998) can be

equally well applied to the sixteenth century. Change is a title heading, not a footnote; a chapter not a paragraph, a norm not an aberration. There are many parallels to be found between their cultural situation and that of today, although drawing parallels is a hazardous business which frequently tends to see oases where only sand dunes exist. The incursion of new technologies on the human mind, its perception of the text, and the construction of meaning holds true, requiring a redrawing of mental maps and a realignment of established schemes, a questioning of established authority and thus a growth, with the accompanying growing pains. The move from orality to literacy has become a shift from literacy to techno-literacy. Whereas in Renaissance texts there is evidence of difficulty in adapting to the page format as witnessed in the exaggeratedly long titles and letter size, we are now being forced into a new concept of space as the page is not turned but scrolled on the computer screen.

Our concept of, and the value attached to spelling are also undergoing subtle shifts. With the incorporation of spelling checkers into most word processors, and the plethora of on-line dictionaries, the criterion of correct spelling is losing its normative value as the sign of an educated person. Although it has tumbled down a few rungs on the ladder of judgement, it still exercises its influence in other ways. Calls for spelling reform have been reduced to a timorous whisper and the growth of alternative spelling systems is reflected in the dictionaries of American, Australian or other varieties of English widely available. Whereas the sixteenth century represented a considerable step in the advance along the path of

standardisation, today there has been an onslaught on the concept from all angles, both from the ex-colonial periphery and from within the heartland itself.

If the language was given a definite shape in the sixteenth century, we have embarked in the opposite direction, fragmenting and scissoring what was a unified past. The postmodernist penchant for dissembling and deconstructing is splintering all sense of unity. But that is not necessarily bad and out of cognitive dissonance great things can grow. There is no longer one English pattern but many and diversity is the basis on which the human body and society work. Perhaps Mulcaster's glorying in the many different functions which the letter can assume is verified today. He praised the language's polymorphism and chamaleonic nature and this is what is evident in the mosaic of the varieties of English today existing.

English academics are no longer traumatised by the question of borrowing and here again we find that Mulcaster's predictions were slightly off the mark. Today, the situation has been reversed. It is the continental vernaculars whose hackles are raised by the invasion of English terms and the political measures adopted by the French and Spanish authorities on language are ample proof that the practice still impinges on the national sense of self. In this as in many other cases, there is disappointing evidence that the myth of international unity is precisely that - an instance of verbose wishful thinking.

The main problem now has switched back to literacy and if it has not, it should do so. The sixteenth century rise in literacy is matched by our decline, whatever

official tallies may claim. It is being able to read not being able to spell that must be a priority, for all the reasons that Mulcaster and Tudor teachers maintained because therein lies something of the essence of being human. and there is a gaping void in true literacy in this society

In this post-modern age, however much we seem to have progressed, we are caught once again in the question of relativity, contingency and the adaptation of old models to fit modern circumstances. Finding analogies with the past is not sufficient in itself but can help us to map out future directions.

Depending on the perspective adopted some of Mulcaster's theories are repugnant, at loggerheads with modern social propriety but if there is one thing which allows me to feel empathy with this sombre and imposing figure, so pitiful is some senses it is this: his love of the language and his insistence on a historical perspective, an unfashionable posture to take in a world where words are often thought of as mere hot air and history has ended, if we are to believe the postmodernists.

I believe that the approach I have adopted respects and does justice to the integrity of the work itself. It was this which conditioned both the shape of this piece of research and the spirit in which it was undertaken, pointing up a restless mind at its most creative. Together with Mulcaster, I would dare to presume that eclecticism is not a synonym of shallowness and that perfection is not a feasible measure of worth.

I have embroidered on my standard the words "only connect" and like Sir Gawain am resigned to the fact that the Pentangle must be substituted by the Girdle. Likewise, I have approached this work in the spirit that it is not the end but the beginning. Many doors and concealed entrances have been seen and unfortunately had to be passed with iron determination. They will, I hope, yield up their secrets on other forays.

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Thirdly, an analysis of the French spelling reform movement brings to light the fact that the positions were not as strictly divided as may seem from confining the analysis to English territory. There was a large stretch of common ground in fact, although individual and personal rivalries downplayed the points in common and exaggerated the differences. The comparison of the French spelling reform movement with the English one also brings to light an important point in the whole debate and it is one which arises from extralinguistic and personal cum professional issues rather than theoretical ones. It has much to do with the consequences of launching one's work into print and the jockeying for power among aspirants. All of these factors must be accounted for in the spelling reform debate which can never be shorn of its ties with public life, power and political correctness. The texts which provide the cues for tracing the orientation of the French movement are Louis Meigret's Traite touchant le commun usage de l'escriture françoise (1542), Jaques Peletier du Mans' Dialogue de l'orthografe e pronunciacion françoese (1550) Rambaud's La Declaration (1572).

These three form the fundamental building blocks on which both The Elementarie and Positions are based and as they approach the work from three complementary and contrasting angles, aim to reveal that it was a work of wide scope, in tune with the times, conscious of its impact and the tightrope it walked.

The two sources of influence, continental and insular are one aspect of the dualities and ambivalences embedded there. Despite the resoundingly confident tone, the work is shot through with an appealing tentativeness. The writer is feeling his way,

groping with the dilemmas of the past and trying to establish a new order. He has inherited the humanist obsession with stability and the need to define clear boundaries between categories, but is content to mark them off within dotted lines with a fine-tip pen, to allow for overlap and a blurring of frontiers.

Working in the growing shadow of the turn of the century and experiencing the labour pains that accompany a shift in world view leave their imprint on all aspects of his work. The panorama that emerges is a teetering balance, a type of double vision of two superimposed templates, and pieces which do not interlock perfectly. His seeing meaning as a social construct seems set on a collision course with construing it as dependent on and reflecting the property of the thing it represents. In the political aspect, there is also this tension: the support for absolute monarchy in his propaganda writing as opposed to his coming down clearly in favour of parliamentary monarchy in The Elementarie. In the sphere of social life, he condemns the class on which he depends for his livelihood. Caught in the tug between orality and literacy, his assessment of the written text attempts to comprehend the new medium but the inbred residue of orality intercedes. On a professional level, he shuttled teaching from haphazard lack of regulation, putting it on a more rigorously scientific basis but constructs this on the humanist bedrock. All of these tensions and how they are resolved will be examined in the texts under discussion. They show the effects of relativisation, how both ideologically and geographically, he was a transitional character. Mulcaster's texts are feeling the way. While uncertainty swept the carpet from under his feet, it also opened up new perspectives.

A summary of the ambivalences striating Mulcaster's work appear below. They permeate all levels: language, society, politics and education and each will be explored in order to see how Mulcaster achieved an alloy or on the contrary was unable to reach synthesis.

1 His attitude to the ancients is characterised by ambivalence. Like Bacon, he advocates a selective and discriminating approach to ancient learning and rejects slavish copying: "It is no proufe bycause Plato praiseth it, bycause Aristotle alloweth it, bycause Cicero commends it ..." (11). The reading programme outlined in The Elementarie, however, shows a heavy reliance on the classical authors but omits any practical work in the curriculum, which, with the exception of the inclusion of English does not differ greatly in content from the programmes used up until then. It is in the broad proposals and the sequencing rather than the finer details that innovation is evident. Mulcaster's work has a Janus type quality, one face resolutely turned to the future and the other bowing in reverence to the past

2. His theory of the linguistic sign, whether it was natural or conventional, seems at first to be clear but is put into question by certain comments which seem to reverse the presumption underpinning his spelling reforms. This about turn initially poses serious doubts about whether he understood meaning as referential or relational, whether meaning exists *a priori* or only as part of the system.

3. Whether Mulcaster was in favour of an absolute as opposed to contingent monarchy can only be decided by reference to his work in the political sphere and by taking into account the pressures of political correctness then in force. His

allegory of the development of writing vouches for the latter while his acts tend to follow the train of the former.

4. His attitude to change swings between utter rejection and vehement resistance of its social manifestations and approval in the sphere of language where, not only is it tolerated but is taken as a sign of growth and development.

5. As regards the functions of literacy,: Mulcaster pays lip service to its extension but on the other hand proclaims that it is the prerogative of the learned and uses spelling as a barrier to social advancement.

6. In respect of reading and writing, there is some confusion as to the order in which they are to be presented. In Positions and even within The Elementarie he is self-contradictory, placing now one, now another first in order of priority.

7. The work shows a gradual advance towards the ideals embraced by scientific materialism while retaining elements which identify him as a true-blooded humanist. Distrust of words vies with self-indulgent play and observation with reverence for received authority.

9. The desire for rule, order and stability is confronted by the recognition that they can never be more than fragmentary, transitory and must constantly be remoulded.

8. The ambivalences in the text have bred their own progeny and the evaluation of historians and linguists, ranging from conservatives to material capitalists have been able to construe him as both elitist and liberal, conservative and revolutionary. The answer lies in the middle distance: between the early formation of the mind and the professional and personal experience of a schoolteacher and bread winner.

There is a tantalising and vexing vacillation evident in almost all issues and it is this double perspective, both in time and in space which gives vitality to his vision. Like so many of his contemporaries he strains against the bit and reaches forth, beyond the continuous lines to the little explored ground, the no man's land. At times he attempts to reconcile opposing perspectives and apparent contradictions; at others he is seemingly unaware of the implicit incompatibilities and the turncoat attitudes he draws from the grab bag of eclecticism. The desire for order in language made an uneasy travelling companion with the obvious exceptions and the unruly elements. He had, however, the intellectual honesty to admit their existence and adapt the rule accordingly. The respect for custom rides in the saddle with the recognition of change which was seen as a subversive element but it too is re-evaluated.

This jostling and elbowing of contending forces, between theory and reality, principle and practice permeates not only his work but also seeps into his private life. His precarious position at Court and his dependence for patronage on Elizabeth I would seem to compromise his ideological stance. Likewise, the high-minded rectitude he demands of the teacher seems incompatible with the accusation made against him for theft (Demolen, 1978) and the constant quibbling about salary with the directors of Merchants Taylor's. These anecdotes apart, the work must be judged in light of the mind set of the time and as Shuger quite rightly points out, judgement must be reserved until the intellectual culture of the age is fully understood.

I contend then that Mulcaster, far from being a revolutionary, either in educational or spelling reform was revolutionary in a different sense and in his work, ideas and even persona, provided the embodiment of the Renaissance thinker towards the end of the sixteenth century. He not only stands at the cross-roads which points to a new way forward but which is nevertheless anchored firmly in the past but personifies the intellectual dilemma faced by all of his time. His work was imbued with the value systems of his age but there was a before and an after which overlap and intermingle with the present. Mulcaster was acutely conscious of the time in which he was living, of the disparate elements that had to be reconciled, of the loose threads that could not be easily integrated and at the same time blissfully ignorant of the clash of two value systems and views of the world. There are many blind spots and while consistency is one characteristic of his two works, the reverse side of the coin is inconsistency, double thinks, vast areas open to negotiation.

The inclusion of texts which move away from the strictly linguistic or language-centred themes is justified on a number of counts. No Renaissance text can be completely evaluated without reference to the context in which it was conceived and no discussion of language appreciated without placing it in the web of which it was a part. This is true, of course, for all texts but especially so, for a stage in history when language was not the property of the academics alone. The host of perspectives which overlap, intertwine and flow one into the other give a distinctive texture to the writings of the period. Mulcaster as well as being a prominent schoolmaster was also sympathetic to the Church of England and held office throughout his life. He came from a politically oriented family, his father

serving as a member of parliament for Carlisle on two occasions. He himself was elected as a member of the 1558 - 59 Parliament but was not returned and there is no account of his activity there (Demolen, 1970). As the son of an aristocrat, it was a hard pill to swallow to be in the employment of his social inferiors. As a spelling reformer cast in a different mould, it was difficult to assimilate the protagonism of the phonemicists and as a linguist, to accept the glorifying of the present without reference to the national past. His life was one of frustrated ambitions in all fields.

1. 2 Methodological problems: Hurdles

> Our legend of the Renaissance is a Renaissance legend. We have not arrived at this conception as a result of our studies but simply inherited it from the very people we are studying (C.S. Lewis, 1964: 5)

> The Renaissance has posed a host of recalcitrant problems.
>
> (Keith Percival, 1986: 56)

In a society like ours, where a high premium is set on creativity and originality, wading through the scattered fragments that litter the path to the sanctuary of Renaissance thought is painstaking and time-consuming. It is difficult to readjust the lens through which the period must be viewed, to avoid being deceived by the mirage of present-day standards where they do not exist, to tease out the material, like a seasoned sleuth, piece together and reconstruct a world picture by rummaging through a jigsaw puzzle of which several pieces are missing. The attempt to imaginatively recreate is the daunting quest of the brave and rash soul who dares to wander down the labyrinthine tunnels of history. Whispered voices, false clues, fleeting glimpses of a passing figure turning a corner are all that can be hoped for. In addition to the hurdles posed by the lapse of time, as Lewis pointed out, we are vulnerable to being hoodwinked into buying the product the age itself so eloquently sells.

Any attempt to analyse the sources on which Renaissance writers drew their ideas is hazardous. All writers of the period worked with the same corpus of classical authors who served as a treasure house of ideas, an Aladdin's cave, the contents of which were appropriated and used at will. The names of Quintilian, Cicero and Tacitus punctuate all writing on whatever subject. As is wont to happen with all canonical figures, their writings were subject to differing and frequently contradictory interpretations, taken out of context and turned into slogans in support of a wide variety of causes. The doctrine of imitation which they had preached often had a boomerang effect. Quintilian can be rallied to either support or condemn borrowing, be regarded as a champion of custom or defender of change. The humanist belief in interpretation was taken to its extremes, a fact exemplified by Smith and Mulcaster's use of the same source. Jane Donawerth remarks: "Richard Mulcaster argues against reform in spelling although he draws many terms and ideas from the same philosophical discussions as do Smith and Hart" (1983: 82). Smith begins his treatise on English spelling by avowing that language was based on customary usage. Mulcaster concurs; custom is the mistress, " the surest guide". Smith however later dismisses "blind custom" as a source of error. This apparent about-turn was not uncharacteristic of Renaissance texts. Shuger (1991, p.15- 16) states that it was not uncommon to find conflicting and even contradictory ideas within one author based on the same initial precept. The case cited above confirms this as does much in Mulcaster's own work: His statement that by the study of grammar, "we our selves also shall seme not to be barbarous"(56) is soon after undermined by his disparaging contention that

grammar rules are but the bleached skeleton around which a language can coalesce and gain prestige.

A second hurdle to overcome is the unacknowledged liberal borrowing or blatant plagiarism among contemporary authors: "Typical humanists, the Englishmen copied and plagiarised freely from their remote and immediate predecessors, partly to show their wide reading, partly to bolster and amplify their own ideas" (Caspari, 1954: 16). The habit of recognising one's sources had not yet imposed itself and all felt free to partake of what, before the professional writer appeared on the scene, was considered to be a universal patrimony. John Hart was perhaps the most scrupulous writer of the time, religiously citing his sources. Mulcaster explicitly refuses to give citations and name names in both his works, maintaining that the erudite reader would have sufficient cultural baggage to recognise the origins.

Many of the ideas on loan can only be verified by careful probing and wide reading of contemporary texts. For example, on the opening pages of Positions, Mulcaster clearly refers to Elyot's preference for private education in a critical tone: "they moil themselves sore, with the manners and conditions of the nurse, with the fines or rudeness of her speeche" (15)[3]. These and other veiled references are the enigmatic clues scattered at the feet of the sleuth decoding the text. There are no lack of fine examples to support this observation: George Puttenham's extended discussion on the origin of the word "barbarous" in The Arte of English Poesie,

[3] The original text runs as follows: " hit shall be expedient that a noble mannes sonne, in his infancie... the nourises and other women aboute hym, if it be possible, to do the same (speake pure and elegant latine)... that they speake none englyshe but that which is cleane polite, perfectly and articulately pronounced, ommitinge no lettere or sillable, as folisse women often times do..." (Craigie, 1946: 121 -22).

chapter XXII calls to mind a similar passage from Du Bellay's Deffence. From the same source is the image of the suckling child which appears in E.K.'s commendation of Spenser's The Shepheards Calendar (1579): "their own countrie and natural speach, which together with their Nources milk they sucked" (Smith, 1904: 130).[4]

The practice of unacknowledged borrowing and literal copying had its own historically justifiable rationale. It was an extension of the theory of imitation as derived from classical sources. Imitation was not considered reductive but unleashed creative energy which allowed a whole new philosophy to be born from something old. This posited that writing was dependent on what had been written before and responsible for the high degree of linguistic eclecticism and allusiveness. The Renaissance scholars could fashion and refashion themselves only because they were imbued with the sense of relativity of the contingency of all human institutions and a belief in their ability to change their future. It would be well to keep in mind Caspari's comment that our approach to these texts can rarely come up with incontrovertible proof and must rely on fairly good circumstantial evidence.

A further difficulty lies in the fact that, for many humanists in the service of the Crown and dependent on patronage, it was often rash to speak too clearly and thus risk putting their livelihood at stake: "it was not prudent to advance broad critique of the existing order" (Hankins, 1996: 118). Mulcaster himself experienced at first

[4] Demolen (1970: 175 - 82) argues cogently that E.K. , the editor of the poem was in fact Mulcaster. This same thesis had been put forward by M. Greig (1952). This lends added weight to the image used, as it is known that Mulcaster was conversant with Du Bellay's work.

hand, the dangers of challenging the established authorities when permission to print Positions was granted only on the grounds that he not challenge openly the precepts on schooling set down by Roger Ascham in Toxophilous and The Scholemaster. In fact he makes a veiled reference to this coercion: "bycause myselfe dealing in that argument must needes sometime dissent to farre from him, with some hasard of myne owne credit, seeing his is hallowed" (Quick, 1888: 240). Fear of offending and the need to vent hidden grudges give rise to a discourse that treads the thin line between insult and parsimony.

A final problem confronts students of this period and that is the lack of any coherent, well-defined corpus and specific set of critical terms to use as points of reference: "The authors of these works were rarely what we may call 'professional linguists', and theories of language were advanced primarily to lend strength to matters of more immediate concern"(Stankiewicz, 1983: 178). Treatises on religion, politics, education, economics, social life and literature were used as vehicles for propounding different discussions of linguistic, semantic and grammatical theory. Simone summarises the situation thus: "ces théories ne se présentent presque jamais d'une façon autonome et clairement identifiable ... sinon entremelées a des considéracions d'autre nature (1975: 302). This point is especially evident in the writings of the English humanists; no fully-fledged treatise on language exists for the period. The debates about language were more casual products of men fully immersed in the life of the nation than a compact body of thought. The questions that beg answers, therefore, demand a broad interdisciplinary perspective which will provide a potentially illuminating power,

language providing a link between cultural domains. Within the confines of any one academic speciality, vision becomes blinkered. English linguistic theory must, therefore be reconstructed piecemeal, carefully extracting filaments from the cloth with a jeweller's precision.

The reason for the scattered nature of English thought on language, and the absence of a treatise or dialogue in the French or Italian style may, as Waswo (1987) claims, lie in the fact that, as the Renaissance arrived late in England, when the theorists set to writing, Continental works were readily available and so they felt no need to restate the ideas but to polish off the finer points and, therefore, restricted themselves to the issues of the most pressing urgency. A further possibility was the fact that the vernacular, as an offshoot of the Reformation was already extensively in use in England since mid-century, eliminating the need to defend it as heatedly as in Italy when it was just emerging from its gestation or in France where it was not bolstered up by religious issues.

The Reformation, and Bible translation inspired reflections on the theory of meaning, the relation between the sign and the signified, reviving past debates on whether the linguistic sign was natural or conventional in origin. Machiavelli's political writings also have a linguistic and moral facet and his Dialogo intorno alla lingua (1514) deals explicitly with the relation between state and language. Castiglione's The Courtier discusses language extensively, highlighting not only its social significance, but proposing a theory of language which embraces the questions of custom, borrowing and delivery. Speroni's treatise on linguistic

diachrony was considered primarily as a tract on poetics and rhetoric and only later as a manifestation of linguistic nationalism (Simone, 1975). Starkey's Dialogue discusses the use of legal terms and propriety in language. and offers reflections on custom and change which provide a broad framework for future discussions on language. Indeed, as Hall (1977) remarks in reference to the inkhorn debate, it is not in the recognised manuals on rhetoric that one finds the greatest sensitivity to the difficulties inherent in the use of language but in the prefaces, essays, and commonplace books which allow for more tentativeness. The result is that linguistic theories are rarely presented as such but emerge " en marge de questions non-linguistique" (Simone, 1975: 303). Blank makes the same point:

> Early modern English produced no full-scale treatise devoted to the defence of the vernacular: the defence of the language was debated implicitly and in similar terms by English poets, poetic theorists and language theorists (1996: 13).

This problem is compounded by the absence of what Bacon was to call for at the beginning of the 17th century - a terminology which was precise, unambiguous and constant. Ashworth (1974) underlines the imprecise analytical and terminological apparatus of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The looseness of descriptive terms and their wavering meaning can be both entertaining and baffling. Smith's labelling <c> a monster of a letter, and <e> an idle vagabond bring a freshness in comparison with the stiff terminology of our time but the dash of colour is gained at the expense of scientific accuracy and hinders comparative study. Mulcaster uses "diphthong" when he means "digraph" and also confuses length and stress. Jonson

shows similar inconsistencies, using the word "letter" to mean "speech - sound ". To spell could mean any of three things - to say one's letters, to divide into syllables or to read. A rigorous metalanguage had not yet evolved.

The difficulty of attempting to trace a line of thought and prove influences between one text and another is aggravated by Renaissance concomitance, the free circulation of ideas and people. Links are putative and cultural change is a sloppy business. As ideas appeared, they were hailed or ignored, imitated or misconstructed, enshrined, attacked or forgotten. As Waswo warns: "the historian of ideas in search of biological continuity can find nothing very edifying in the spectacle of a fairly widespread body of theory ignored for centuries" (1987: 84). There seems to exist a line of thought which, proceeding from Italy, passed through France and reached England late in the 16th century. Renaissance literary theory in both France and England was almost entirely received from the classics and from Italian commentators or expositors of the classics. The general movement was from Italy to France in the first half of the century, and from both continental countries to England throughout the second half. Supposed influences, cannot definitely be established as:

> all three countries were more or less in the throes of literary creativity in a comparatively new medium, the vernacular, and all three had before them the example of the quantitative measures of Greece and Rome. It seems quite probable that the links which do exist are evidence of direct influence or stimulus, though this cannot be proved. (Caspari, 1954: 39).

THE

FIRST PART

OF THE ELEMENTA-
RIE VVHICH ENTREA-
TETH CHEFELIE OF THE
right writing of our English tung,
set furth by RICHARD
MVLCASTER.

Imprinted at London by Thomas Vau-
troullier dwelling in the blak-friers
by Lud-gate
1582.

Fig. 1 Title page of The Elementarie. Rpt. in Campagnac, 1925.

1. 3 Evaluation and critical assessment of research on Richard Mulcaster

> For genius to be realised in action, for people of high talent not to be mute and conventional, it above all matters at what time and into what circumstances they are born.
>
> Epitaph of Pope Hadrian VI

Richard Mulcaster is a minor figure in the dizzying firmament of the late sixteenth century. His serious work lacks the audacity of a Puttenham, the scientific rigour of a Hart or the elegant prose of a Sidney. He was an Elizabethan savant as Demolen (1970) claims, showing sharp, if apparently unostentatious insights into the social, political and linguistic situation with which he was confronted on a daily basis during his long teaching career and intermittent contacts with the Court. His work on spelling is an adjunct to his educational theories and as E. Dobson (1968) observes, the latter conditions his approach to the former. His name crops up also in relation to his having been Edmund Spencer and Lancelot Andrews' schoolmaster at Merchant Taylors. Much has been made of the influence he had on Spenser and the loyalty he inspired in his ex pupils, a fact which apparently confirms his status as a secondary figure but, as Bacon was to observe, those who extract the metal from the mines are equally as important as those who hammer it out and refine it.

His position in the secondary ranks is a result of historical circumstance, his light occluded by the stellar brilliance of his times. It is primarily as an educational

theorist that he was recognised by his contemporaries and hailed in the wave of interest in Renaissance education which began to gather momentum in the last years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century. His reputation as a radical and far-sighted reformer was established by Foster Watson, Herbert Quick and E.T. Campagnac in their pioneering work on humanist educational policies.

His standing among his contemporaries as a schoolmaster in the two most prestigious schools in London was high, although he never seems to have cast off the stigma of low esteem which dogged him all his life. The depth of his indignation surfaces regularly in a barely disguised form in his two works on education. The publication of Positions and The Elementarie does not seem to have caused any immediate impression. The extent of the reforms he proposed; the establishment of a nation-wide system of elementary or petty schools with a standardised curriculum which would include serious study of English, the formation and training of teachers, higher salaries and social recognition for educators, and the education of women were daunting in scale and never implemented within his lifetime. When some of these demands were met it was not in any way connected with his proposals, but due to a response to specific, historically-determined factors. His was a fate shared by other innovators: "how ineffectual were the efforts of Humphrey, Mulcaster and the rest to ensure adequate school training in English" (More, 1910: 9). His influence was circumscribed to academic circles and was never as widespread as that of Edmund Coote (1596) or Ben Jonson (1640).

Both Positions and The Elementarie were printed by Thomas Vautroullier. Only the first part of the latter was completed and it never ran to a second edition. The former went through two reprints, one in 1587 and the second in 1591 although neither are extant. By 1868, however, only two copies of The Elementarie existed in the British Museum according to Quick (1868) and the same author states that no known copy of Positions existed. These facts, together with the silence that accompanied the wake of his publications confirm Leo Weiner's statement that Mulcaster was ignored by his contemporaries. There are, however, indices that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, at least among the academics, the relevance of his work was coming to be recognised. The equally unconventional John Wilkins (1668), revolutionary in his approach to the teaching of Latin, cites Mulcaster as one of his sources. Later, John Locke's treatise, "Thoughts Concerning Education" owes much to the Renaissance schoolmaster in the child-centred approach, the opposition to cramming and the stress on the all-round development of body and mind.

Mulcaster's concept of cyclical progress came to the fore in the seventeenth century. The import and impact of his writings, if not immediately appreciable emerged slowly in the century after his writing. Why this was so may be attributed to the fact that his ideas on language were so closely allied to those on educational reform that the first either passed unperceived or were tainted with the flavour of radical reform and so proved unpalatable.

The early discoverers of Mulcaster focused almost exclusively on his educational theory, accompanied by what they interpreted as his fervent nationalism, two aspects which have continued to attract attention. Of the eight doctoral theses written on Mulcaster, between 1933 and 1982, all but two have concentrated on the pedagogic and educational principles he championed. This effectively continues a tradition which began in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It is significant that R.H. Quick in Essays on Educational Reformers concedes only a page and a half in the appendix to Mulcaster, and the quotations from what he terms his "curious" books, are exclusively dedicated to those passages which demonstrate "how vigorously a learned man and a schoolmaster in the sixteenth century took the side of the vernacular against the Latin language" (1868: 363).

Why his work came to prominence when it did can be explained by the strong emphasis placed on his linguistic nationalism. In this as in other areas, Mulcaster is a victim of historical necessity. The English language at the turn of the century became the standard bearer of the national identity and to the founders of the English nation, Mulcaster's blatant nationalism was appealing, expressing sentiments with which they thoroughly identified. As a pedagogue he offered a prototype for the nineteenth-century educators, who, collaborating with the state in the formation of linguistic policy held education to be the means by which the fractured nation could be welded together. Foster Watson explicitly made this point in an article in the Educational Times in 1893 where he calls for a reprint of The Elementarie and its study by teachers and students of English: "His aims are still under discussion and the points he makes about education are in accord with

confines of education and places him in a wider perspective. Weiner attempts to explain Mulcaster's neglect and issues the verdict that "he was too advanced for his age"(132). The profile of the man was beginning to emerge piecemeal, stroke by stroke.

Two articles which appeared within a year of each other are a landmark for the new direction which studies of Mulcaster would take. W.L. Renwick in a short article in 1922 outlines the similarity between Mulcaster's and Du Bellay's thoughts on the growth, development and status of the vernaculars. The importance of this article lies in placing Mulcaster within the European school of thought, thus tempering the exuberant adjectives which were a feature of former studies and which lacked both critical validity and adequate contextualization. Mulcaster's "boldness" and "originality" become less self-evident and more a product of eclectic but discriminating borrowing. Renwick also highlights the difference between Mulcaster and his contemporaries when he praises his "original methods". This concentration on his methodology unfortunately has not stimulated further research in the area. It must be acknowledged, however, that Renwick (1925) is primarily concerned with establishing a direct link between Spenser and the Pléiade school in France, via Mulcaster and it is in this context that he discusses Mulcaster's theory of language, especially in reference to borrowing.

The terrain had been mapped out and the first in-depth study of Mulcaster's philosophy of language appeared in R.F. Jones' article "Richard Mulcaster's View of the English Language" in 1926. Here, the crucial link between his philosophy of

language and spelling reforms is examined. Jones attempts to compare his attitudes with those of his contemporaries and traces the influence he had on succeeding generations. He is, however, treading shaky ground here, and tends to oversimplify the muddy waters that lap around the transmission of ideas. What exactly his influence consisted in is difficult to gauge but what emerges from this research is that Mulcaster gave voice to theories of language which, owing to his influence or not, occupied the foreground in the seventeenth century and moreover, were well ahead of theories of language which characterised the eighteenth. Jones casts no more than a cursory glance at Mulcaster's spelling reforms and this posture does more justice to the spirit of his work than that which evaluates it on the basis of these alone.

This last point is exemplified by Eric Dobson, in his monumental work, Early English Pronunciation 1500 to 1700 (1968). Here Mulcaster's achievements are viewed in a much dimmer light. This is in part due to the orientation of his work: to describe Early English pronunciation from the evidence available in the work of the phonemic reformers. While acknowledging that The Elementarie must be seen in the light of a more ambitious scheme, preceding and acting as a forward to the book on reading, promised but never brought to fruition, he is particularly scathing about Mulcaster's skills as a phonetician: "Mulcaster had no understanding of phonetics" (1968: 123). Moreover, he believes that he "cannot be said to show any real understanding of the matter ... had no grasp of the questions raised by the assertion that there was an insufficiency of letters" (122). Dobson concludes: "What he has to say does not encourage a belief in him as an originator" (123).

While correct insofar as descriptive accuracy is concerned, the application of a strictly phonetic analysis to Mulcaster's work is to take it out of context and misinterpret its purpose. The Elementarie must be seen as part of the general plan for a vernacular-centred curriculum. Its audience was the teacher and its purpose to provide a guide for classroom practices. This is the aim which shapes the whole work and explains the conservative approach on the one hand and the lack of technical detail on the other.

These accusations were not exclusively applicable to him alone. As Demonet (1992), Ashworth (1974) and Percival (1985) all point out, the lack of a metalanguage and fuzzy, or unstable definitions were commonplace in sixteenth-century writings on language. The absence of scientific terminology must be judged in the light of Mulcaster's intended audience which included the paraprofessionals, often of deplorable standards. His avoidance of technical terms can be judged as a function of *their* rather than *his* own ignorance.

Dobson's opinion has yielded to some less harsh evaluations. Scragg praises Mulcaster for his eminently practical, middle-of-the-road approach to spelling and grants him the following accolade: "his is the first attempt to marshal the case against reform" (1974: 61). This is rather an oversimplistic view: what Mulcaster opposed was not reform *per se* - he too identified English spelling as illogical and diagnosed much the same ills as Hart had done. What he opposed was reform along phonetic lines solely; in his opinion, sound, reason and custom formed the trivium

on which any reform should be based. Other twentieth-century studies tend to concur with Scragg and see Mulcaster as the herald of a new approach to reform, one which recognised the complexity of language development, of cognitive perception and the importance of attitudes.

The fact that fully one third of his spelling amendments were progressively incorporated into the language does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that he was "right", but can be attributed to two factors. As a codifier, he selected among the numerous possibilities existing already in the language in order that they conform to his canons of authority. He "merely" stated and justified current practices - which was his stated aim. The reforms thus suggested were not superimposed and had an organic validity to begin with. Brengleman (1980) claims that by 1650 many of his spellings were in place but the various proposals for the use of silent <e> or the doubling of consonants had been aired by others at different points in history.[5] Scragg attributes the normalisation of English spelling to the printers, and specifically mentions Richard Field, successor to Mulcaster's prestigious printer Vautroullier.

The successful adoption of Mulcaster's reforms probably owes more to the unacknowledged use of his spelling list by his successors. This occupies fifty-five pages of The Elementarie and consists of 7,000 words. Coote's English Schoole-maister looked back to Mulcaster for ideas which were then organised in a systematically programmed learning course. Coote makes few changes to the

[5] In 1530, John Rastell proposed a similar use of double consonants in The boke of the new cardys which pleyeing at cards one may lerne to know hys letters, spel... See Salmon, (1989), "John Rastall and the Normalisation of Early Sixteenth-Century Orthography" .

spellings there, only selecting some forms which had become more popular in print in the intervening fourteen years. It was the great popularity of this book, (it went through 54 editions before 1737) aimed, unlike Mulcaster's, not at professionals but at a wider audience which included " the unskilfull, ... men and women of trades, ... those ignorant of the Latine tung" (1968: 1) that popularised Mulcaster's spelling reforms. Jonson's English Grammar dipped into The Elementarie without compunction, using similar examples and lifting entire descriptions of the sounds and their force,[6] thus providing a platform from which to popularise them. Whatever the reason for the progressive adaptation of Mulcaster's plan, be it the liberal copying of his table, the collaboration of the printers, or Mulcaster's understanding of the collective psyche, his reforms met with greater success than those of Hart or Bullokar.

Some debate has arisen over the question of Mulcaster's "modernity". Bradbrook (1964) asserts that he corrects Hart's and Smith's views by offering a modern and valid understanding of the nature of language and spelling. Donawerth challenges this view, stating that, although his views "may seem attractive and progressive to modern readers, his position is not the modern one Bradbrook and Jones attribute to him" (1983: 82). Both evaluations contain a grain of truth although Bradbrook's claim for a modern view of language falls into the temptation of seeing the first bloom of modern linguistic thought in Renaissance texts. Mulcaster's definition of the linguistic sign as arbitrary did not depart from the traditional line of thought stretching back to Aristotle and was extremely popular in the Renaissance. As

[6] See Herford and Simpson (1986) Vol. IX, 165 - 210 for an exhaustive analysis of Jonson's plagiarism from Smith, Mulcaster and Gil .

Coseriu (1977) demonstrates, De Saussure grounded his theory of the linguistic sign on a long tradition which can be traced back to before the Port Royal school. His only contribution was to systematise it, place it in a scientific medium and present it when the time was ripe. Likewise, viewing language as a social phenomenon was not innovative either. The idea had been presented by Antonio de Nebrija (1492) and more fully developed by Vives (1524). Donawerth's more modest evaluation of Mulcaster is due to one factor of prime importance: her analyses of the English language have always been conducted within the European context, a perspective which sheds a softer light on the characters on the English stage.

Blank calls him, "the most reasonable of contemporary spelling reformers" (1996: 25) and identifies this reasonable attitude with his objections to reforming language according to personal likes and dislikes. She accuses the more radical reformers of setting themselves up as authorities and thus shares Mulcaster's belief that a question such as language cannot be left to the whims of self-appointed judges. What has not been discussed until recently is the *raison d'être* of this approach, and how Mulcaster worked so consistently along the lines of historical development and social necessity to arrive at a view of language which corresponds so well with the modern one. This approach cannot be adequately explained by his role as schoolmaster as both Bullokar and Hart were also active practitioners.

One aspect of practically all the studies mentioned above is their "insular" nature. With the notable exception of Renwick's pioneering work and the more generalised analyses by Donawerth and Hall, Mulcaster has consistently been studied in the English context alone. Comparing and contrasting with his English contemporaries distorts the balance. Neither Mulcaster nor any of his contemporaries were working in a vacuum but represented the culmination of centuries of humanist thought. It is in this context that they need to be examined. The halo of novelty that surrounds his ideas waxes or wanes depending on the perspective adopted. To consider his achievements in this wider context, adjusts the balance and places the emphasis where it must rightly lie; on his discriminating selection of concepts, on their configuration within his own approach and for his specific ends.

Goldberg (1995) approaches the work from the opposite angle, selecting it for its brilliant failure. He analyses the spelling reform proposals from a Derridean point of view and explains why Mulcaster never actually achieves what he sets out to do. The answer lies in the fact that the objectives he set himself could never reach fruition because he was working from within the power system and, as an upholder of that system would never be able to bring the whole structure down around his ears. His stated objectives are at odds with his social status - to rip up the whole of English orthography would be to undermine the very structure he himself depended on and formed part of. While one can legitimately oppose this thesis, it does offer an insight into the internal conflicts which score the text and which preclude definitive statements in absolute terms. The grounds for Mulcaster's failure to

reach closure cannot be sought solely in his socio-political affiliations, however coercive they may have been. Opportunistic political savvy must be counterbalanced by an understanding of language which is the chief parameter by which to measure the adequacy of spelling. It is as if the text itself is telling us how to interpret it.

Other facets of Mulcaster's work have been dealt with with varying measures of success. His presentation of plays at Court with his boys from Merchant Taylors fulfilled a double objective, that of teaching his students "good behaviour and audacity" (Shapiro, 1977: 3) as well as securing an income to alleviate the economic penury that dogged him relentlessly. There is a dearth of evidence with which to work in this respect. He is mentioned in passing in Children of the Revels (1938) and an article by J.P. Brawner (1943), although promising in the title, supplies a paucity of hard facts. There is very little but hearsay concerning his activities as playwright but the text does confirm his eclecticism in citing his "probable" sources as Plutarch and Ovid, appropriating good fable from any source: history, biography, tradition, legend, or romance, of Greek or Latin origin.

Mulcaster's work as a Tudor propagandist allowed him to make his first forays into English prose but he never became one of its virtuosos. This facet has been studied by DeMolen (1970) who provides a detailed chronology of his known and probable contributions to pageants. Wall (1982) provides a more searching and acute analysis of his first prose work in English: Her Queene's Majesties Passage (1559), written as a summary of the progress of Elizabeth I through the city of London on

the eve of her coronation. She examines how he manipulates discourse strategies in order to guide the audience's impressions, directing their attention from the contingency of the Queen's position to the absolute authority conferred on her by history and divine authority, emphasising her benevolence at the expense of the magnitude of the crowd and playing into the hands of the audience while simultaneously leaving them bereft of power. These same strategies of deflection and manipulation are used constantly throughout The Elementarie where the author's presentation of himself and his aims are designed to lead the reader to conclude, erroneously that he is indeed innovative but falls short of revolutionary status - a benign rebel who does not transgress the boundaries of security.

In the same way, Mulcaster cloaks his critical judgement of the state in a discourse which is self-protecting and highly dissimulated. An apparently even-toned, conventional discourse conceals and disguises what Satterthwaite calls: " a quiet, decorous, meticulous revolutionary", a master of understatement, innuendo and barbed arrows sheathed in silken cloaks which are directed, not only at his immediate rivals but at institutions and the superstructure that ironically holds the key to his own future.

Mulcaster is frequently cited in works on English lexicography, but no more than as an emblematic figure. His role here can be compared with his influence on his pupils; more of instigator than actor. His call for a dictionary had a precedent in the figure of Bullokar who in Booke at Large announced that he had contemplated compiling an exhaustive word list. He does not specify the range of words he was

dealing with but his son John produced An English Expositor, a "hard word" dictionary in 1616.[7] Where Mulcaster differed from John Bullokar and from the majority of seventeenth dictionaries was in the range of words he would have included. He envisioned a work where " all the words which we use in our English tung, ... out of all professions, as well learned as not" (187) be included, as well as rules on spelling, usage and pronunciation. These requirements were ignored and the fulfilment of his parameters would have to wait until 1702 to be fully implemented in A New English Dictionary by J.K., John Kersey.

The balance of the latest work on the English Renaissance leaves us with a more complete, if still fragmented portrait of Mulcaster. His role as spelling reformer is no longer narrowly linked to his phonetic accuracy but viewed in the light of his own clearly defined aims: to teach spelling as an adjunct to reading. The political and social dimension of his work has increasingly come into the foreground, although sporadically and unsystematically. Increasingly, research into the linguistic aspect of English humanism has been freed from the suffocating insularity to which it was prone. Within this context of expanding horizons and international perspectives, Mulcaster's contribution to the development of a linguistic theory has come into its own. Donawerth (1983), Hall (1977) and Blank (1996) raise intriguing questions which make it imperative to examine the corpus against a wider backdrop. A balanced appreciation of Mulcaster must consider the linguistic ideas current in Europe as they go some way to explaining his unique blend of liberalism and conservatism and indeed, question the labels themselves.

[7] John Bullokar does not explicitly mention his father but refers to "a worthy gentleman whose love prevailed much with him" (Danielsson and Alston, 1966, xiii).

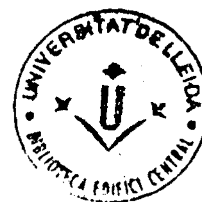
The paradox is that it is his conservatism that breeds a liberal attitude and that his appeal to the past is a signpost to the way ahead.

What has so far escaped the attention of most critics is an in-depth analysis of why Mulcaster differed so "radically" from his contemporaries, and indeed if the term "radical" is appropriate in these circumstances. Donawerth edges toward what would supply a starting point to answering that question with the observation that "each of their [spelling reformers] positions implies a position on language theory in general" (1983: 79). If Mulcaster's theory of language can be analysed in relation to the theories of language on the Continent on one hand and in relation to those of his English contemporaries on the other, the nature of his difference and originality can better be defined than it has been up until now and will allow an escape from the facile bland labels which occlude the real issues.

There has also been a lack of research into the political aspects of The Elementarie and Positions. This embraces issues such as the nature of monarchy, the debate over the status ascribed to common law, the relation between nationality and language and the role both played in the educational system, the conception of language as power and how this power was made manifest. It was thanks to these issues that Mulcaster could appropriate a series of tropes with which to discuss language issues while at the same time shedding a noncommittal light on his political views.

From a slightly different perspective, A. B. Ferguson places Mulcaster on the podium in the presence of Hooker, Samuel Daniel and Ascham to receive the garland of one of the prime thinkers who achieved a true sense of historicity. He is described as having succeeded in reconciling reason, tradition and art: “it is to his credit that he, apparently alone at that early date, recognised its [custom’s] historical significance”(1979: 324). Mulcaster’s “flexibility of mind”, “his capacity to tolerate apparently divergent ideas” (326) and his perception that custom was one of the moving forces in history is praised. Ferguson is not blind to the ambiguities and contradictions in Mulcaster’s text - he comments on the collision between his cyclical and linear view of historical change - but commends his “highly developed sense of history and in particular his feeling for the living character of a language, qualities in which he was surpassed by few, if any, writers of his generation” (326).

Weiner was essentially correct when he says that Mulcaster was virtually neglected and his dictum remained true until the latter half of this century. Attempting to account for why this is so brings the researcher into the tremulous quicksand of speculation and educated guess-work. Weiner proposes that he was in advance of his age but this statement demands closer examination as it posits the theory that it was the unhappy marriage of time and place that mitigated against him. This seems to concede fate too large a role and to make Mulcaster victim of the very principles he stood by so adamantly.



Quick returns repeatedly to Mulcaster's "curious" style as the source of his being relegated to the dusty corners of history and, as editor of Positions, his opinion has a certain authority. Campagnac affirms that he "deserves and demands slow and careful reading" (1925: xix). It is true that the style is, as Mulcaster himself says, "curious", justified by strict adherence to the rhetorical norm of fitting style and vocabulary to the matter under discussion. This, however, is hardly sound grounds on which to account for the fact that he has been "long forgotten" although Jeffreys (1967) concurs with Quick, believing he was hampered not only by complicated style but also "much personal vanity".

The content and not primarily the style of Mulcaster's work worked against him. There are many contentious issues in both books where he throws down the gauntlet not only to the government but also to the canonical figures of humanist thought in England: Elyot and Ascham's pronouncements on educational theory are questioned, albeit timidly.. In addition to deferring from the canonical figures on specific points of methodology, the scale of reform envisaged by Mulcaster both in terms of financing and curricular reorganisation could not have been looked upon kindly either by a penny-pinching administration or a self-satisfied teaching establishment. It was stringent in the demands it placed on the state and on the individual teacher.

Paradoxically, the intellectual climate that developed in the seventeenth century may also have been responsible for the work, considered primarily as a treatise on education sinking into relative oblivion. The aims of education as championed by

the humanists; to produce the good citizen through a thorough grounding in the classics was altered and complicated first by Baconian naturalism and then by Puritanism. In one sense, seventeenth-century theories of education were the logical continuation of Renaissance questioning and challenging of the canonical but simultaneously marked a sharp divergence from humanist liberalism, giving priority to observation and induction. It is ironic that many of the educational theories and views of language that Mulcaster championed were taken up by seventeenth-century writers: the use of the vernacular and the concept of vocational education to mention but two. In general, dependence on their sixteenth-century inheritance went unacknowledged for the same reasons that the Renaissance humanists disavowed their medieval past. The same need to differentiate themselves, to mark out their own territory and stress their specific nature led them to cut many perceived links with their humanist forebears.

The critical reception of Mulcaster's work has tended to steer towards the shores of pedagogue rather than linguist and when heading in the latter direction, opinions have inclined to be overly influenced by Jones' eulogy to Mulcaster. I suggest that it is in the middle distance that the points of reference are to be found; in the alloy between the humanist pedagogue, the educational theorist and teacher of basic literacy, between the applied linguist forged in the classroom and the theorist of classical background that Mulcaster must be evaluated. He is typical of the sixteenth-century thinker, both bland and spicy, predictable and surprising, eclectic and ubiquitous, tantalisingly enigmatic and at times unbearably pedantic. The evaluation of his contribution to linguistic thought has inevitably been influenced

by the perceptions of contemporaries and those who initially unearthed him from moth-eaten closets dressed in educational garb. Mulcaster has much to offer to the student of the Renaissance by virtue of being both deeply typical and atypical of his age. Bland labels such as revolutionary or reactionary do little justice to his achievements and mask the complexity of his thought.

CHAPTER TWO

POSITIONS AND THE FIRST PART OF THE ELEMENTARIE

Wherein it consisteth

2. 1 Introduction

This section will give a descriptive account of both works, outlining form and content to demonstrate how one is the continuation of the other and, how both are united by the same principles, and secondly to underline how it was one global vision of man, language and society that determined Mulcaster's approach to both education and spelling reform. Moreover, it will provide a framework for the more specific analyses in further chapters.

Conceptually and structurally Positions and The Elementarie have a number of points in common. Both follow the same basic scheme and can be represented geometrically as triangular in form, beginning from a generalised base and proceeding to specific points. As the titles indicate, they are intended to lay the groundwork and form a solid and theoretically valid base for reorienting the entire system of education in structure and content. The Elementarie builds upon Positions and together they form the twin pillars for the foundations for the new architectural construct planned.

The two treatises came in quick succession towards the end of Mulcaster's twenty-year career as a teacher, in 1581 and 1582 and bear testimony to the tug between aspiration and the elusive possibility of realisation, between theory and practice. Faced with this conundrum, the guide chosen was to be circumstance, relativity, contingency, opting for the constructs of the imperfect human will as opposed to the unattainable perfection of the gods. On the other hand, the ambitious project he set himself: the reform of the education system on many levels was to be a distillation of his accumulated experience in the field, wedded to theoretical knowledge of the forefathers. Like many of his contemporaries, Mulcaster bided his time, awaiting the maturation of contemporary opinion. His venture into print was, therefore, no rash choice but one dictated by the fact that he was confident that theory had a firm grounding on the bedrock of experience. The two works build upon the past; personal, professional and academic but are directed towards the future. They thus occupy a nexus between both; a cross-roads which feeds upon what has gone before in order to produce a future. Ideologically, they are Baconian in intent and humanist in inspiration but their quintessence was forged in the hot and sweaty smithy of the classroom.

Although Positions deals almost exclusively with the details of the elementary curriculum, it is the starting point for understanding both the form and content of the second work. The Elementarie grew out of Positions, organically and inevitably. The parallelism does not stop there and there is much overlap between the two. In fact, the initial chapters of The Elementarie are like an umbilical cord

as they feed on the mother work, reiterating and restating those fundamental positions on which education for the English child is to be grounded.

TO THE MOST VERTVOVS LADIE, HIS MOST DEARE, AND souerame princesse, Elizabeth by the grace of God Queene of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, defendresse of the faith &c.

Y booke by the very argument, most excellent princesse, pretendeth a common good, bycause it concerneth the generall traine and bringing vp of youth, both to enrich their minds with learning, and to enable their bodies with health: and it craues the fauour of some speciall countenaunce farre aboue the common, or else it can not possiblie procure free passage. For what a simple credit is myne, to perswade so great a matter? or what force is there in common patronage, to commaunde conceites? I am therefore driuen vpon these so violent considerations, to presume so farre, as to present it, being my first trauell, that euer durst

a 2

Fig. 2 Dedication to <u>Positions</u>. Rpt. in Quick, 1888.

2.2 Positions: The Foundations

A preface, as this whole booke is

(1888, 292)

The title is indicative both of the systematic nature of his programme and also the attempt to analyse the educational process not only from a theoretical standpoint but also from that of the principal participants. The use of the plural suggests the possibility of simultaneous but not mutually exclusive angles or perspectives.

The multiplicity of senses which accrue around the word is particularly suitable for Mulcaster's concept of society and language. "Positions" refers to a condition relative to time, place and circumstance which is the leitmotif of the work; it also refers to a situation either unfavourable or favourable - the current state of teaching and what is proposed to improve it. The word can mean "status" or "standing", especially of a high degree which is one of the blows he has to strike for his profession. As it deals with the sequencing and timing of subject matter, "positions" is used referring to the order or manner of being placed or arranged. As a work of an articulate citizen, the acceptation "mental stance or attitude" can also be applied. Finally, as a term taken from music, referring to the root tone in a chord it reflects both the author's fundamental principles and his interest in the art. The student, the parents, the teacher and society are all placed or positioned within a perspective which is simultaneously historical and contemporary. The multiple possibilities that can be read into the title are fully delivered in the work itself.

"Our time is the time of reformation" (325). Taking the tone and note of

contemporary society, Mulcaster conducts a searching review of all levels of education from primary up to third level. The structure and content of Positions owe much to Vives' De tradendis disciplinis, (1531) as he considers not only what is to be taught, to whom, in what order and for how long, but also makes timid inroads into child psychology where motivation and maturity are given importance and follows his recommendations on the lay out and setting of school buildings.[1] They also coincided on specific issues such as the importance of mathematics and, although Vives wrote in Latin, he, like Mulcaster recognised the role of the vernacular in elementary training. In one of the few references by name to a near contemporary who would not be a prospective benefactor, Mulcaster recognises this intellectual debt referring to "Vives the learned Spaniard" (259).

The forty-five chapter treatise can be divided into five parts. Mulcaster begins by justifying his concern for the standardisation and regularisation of the lowest rung on the educational ladder " which in great varitie of teaching doth seeme to call for some uniforme waie" (5).[2] The main objectives are two: to equip the student with the basic skills which would either ease his progress through the upper echelons of academic life, " the circunstances being well applyed unto him, may with very small ado, be transported afterward to the Grammarian or anie other else" (6) or, at the very least, if he were to go no further, provide a "prety stocke for a poore boy to begin the world with all"(34). Implicit in this pedagogic agenda and dependent on it is the political and social project which aimed at shaping students for an active

[1] Mulcaster even attempted to fulfill these stipulations in practice. In 1588 there is evidence that he purchased a country estate and set up a boarding school there. The enterprise did not flourish and mired him in even greater debt than usual.
[2] All quotations from Positions are from R.H. Quick's 1888 edition.

public life and the formation of the "civill" individual, an aim which always figured high on the humanist agenda.

The two key terms which define the axis along which the school is to run are authority and obedience. The schoolroom is both an adjunct of the state and its microcosm. The teacher as a representative of monarchical power and the student, groomed in docility, present a replica in miniature of the power structures which depended on the inculcation of desired attitudes in its members. The teacher, however, is much more than a mere cat's paw of the state and Mulcaster confers upon him the status of artist; his is an act of creation, using the raw materials supplied by nature. His is the task to mould, shape, fine hone and polish the rough edges left by the hand of nature and bring out the inherent qualities in the student. The gardening imagery used throughout conveys this concept of the teacher as coach, trainer and creator. The use of the verb "form" or "make" in education tracts of the time also conveys the way the teacher saw himself. The task, Mulcaster recognised, was best done through early intervention and in an analogy with the pliable shoots of the young plant, he justifies relocating the emphasis from grammar to the junior school.

While the teacher stands at the centre, the co-operative and social nature of the process are considered taking their economic resources, ambitions and supportive role into account. This section of Positions is a compendium of most of the major issues that had been raised by his forerunners, most clearly Elyot and Ascham. He specifies the educational requirements of each social class in descending order,

measures the advantages and disadvantages of private tutoring from a social perspective, warns like Ascham about the warping effects of foreign travel on the character and delivers a singeing criticism of the merchant classes.

Turning to the content of the junior school curriculum, there follows a detailed enumeration together with a justification of the subjects to be studied. This latter combines appeals to classical precedent, personal experience and current theories of the acquisition of knowledge. Several of the subjects are further subdivided; reading is treated under the headings reading aloud and silently. The most exhaustive treatment is reserved for physical education, each of the sports and activities being dealt with separately. This occupies ten chapters which, although it may seem disproportionate, in light of Mulcaster's larger plan, may have been designed to deal with the theme before dedicating subsequent books to the other skills: reading, writing, drawing and music.

The next issue to be discussed is the teacher and his training. Mulcaster saw in uniformity and standardisation the key to the ailing educational system. He correctly located one of the foci of infection in the formation and preparation of teachers and proposes the establishment of colleges within universities to advance specialisation and to bring the profession onto a par with law, theology and medicine. Inspired no doubt by his own ever pending insolvency, increasing the remuneration and providing an economic incentive to the junior school teacher is recommended as one of the best ways to convert the area of elementary education from a rag bag of thwarted ambitions, a halfway station until higher clerical posts

became available, a grazing ground for those past their prime or the last recourse before mendacity, into a profession with rigorous standards and systematic methodology. He suggests a rigorous policing system to ensure high standards and specialisation to take the profession out of the doldrums.

Among the welter of educational treatises that appeared in the sixteenth century, Mulcaster's was innovative because there he places education within a wider social structure than others. This point will be dealt with more exhaustively in chapter three. Other points of novelty concern the contents of the curriculum. The inclusion of music, both singing and playing an instrument, in general education was something innovative for, as Foster Watson (1968) has commented, its study had fallen off since the dissolution of the chantry schools after which the old unity between Grammar and Music had become splintered, both practically and theoretically. The playing of instruments was a reserve for the rich but Mulcaster, a teacher of music himself in Merchants Taylors was, "the boldest educational advocate for Music" (1968: 210). Apart from its intrinsic value, Mulcaster implies that the skills acquired in music can be transferred to mathematics and language.

In Positions elementary education is viewed from every angle. The Elementarie narrows the focus and in its first eleven chapters restates the premises of its predecessor: "what things ar to be followed in the course of learning, and what I my self do promis to do for the advancement thereof" (4). What he aims to do departs from traditional methods in two senses: to place the vernacular at the core of the curriculum and to give precedence to writing over reading. It is under this

heading that he sets down his amendments for recasting English spelling. By now the number of antagonisms he has incited have increased two fold and his anticipation of opposition is acute but the tone of The Elementarie maintains a much more even keel: "I do not herein take upon me dictatorlike to pronounce peremptorily, but in waye of counsell" (293), and is more conciliatory than his first work where he gives vent to pent-up ire and frustrations. He assumes the role of teacher and linguist and refrains from direct social commentary, toning down his spleen-filled outbursts. There is visible a process of moderation, although his personal engagement with the theme is not diminished but rather redirected towards the vernacular, from the standpoint of the linguist and the cultural nationalist.

2.3 The Elementarie: The Scaffolding

In language, as in education, Nature is the guide and Mulcaster proposes "to resemble nature in multitude of abilities, and to proceed so in teaching, as she doth in towarding" (30). There is an analogy established between the work of the teacher and that of the spelling reformer. Just as the teacher must assess the nature of the child with whom he is working, so too must the reformer first study the characteristics of the language and proceed from there. "For as she is unfriendlie, whensoever she is forced, so is she the best guide, that anie man can follow"(30). This becomes his leitmotif for seeking out the truth in writing: "by following, not forcing"(247). By following the course of the language, however, he implies that he will be seen to swim countercurrent.

The Elementarie caters for both the physical and mental improvement of the child, both the natural abilities and what he calls the "artificall principles". The awareness of children's psychological development and its relation to pedagogy is much more pronounced in The Elementarie. As in Positions, current teaching practices are blamed for alienating the learner and in their place, a system of learning based on reason, not mechanical memorisation, and persuasion, not coercion is advocated. However, as he himself remarks, the passage from theory to practice, from the neat lines of the drawing board to configuration in reality is fraught with unforeseen barriers. Much as he and his humanist colleagues inveighed against rote memorisation and corporal punishment, both practices continued to characterise the schoolroom and Mulcaster himself is recognised as

having been a stern and demanding teacher who was not averse to using the rod. The benevolent, understanding and empathic teacher was still a long way in the offing.

The core of The Elementarie revolves around the seven precepts that will ascertain the right writing of English. The development of the writing system is presented from a universal, diachronic perspective, "for all tungs kepe one, and the same rule for their main tho everie one have his propertie in part" (69). He briefly outlines his theory of the arbitrary and conventional nature of the sign, the territory on which he challenges his contemporaries: "for what likeness or what affinitie hath the form of anie letter in his own natur, to answer the force of sound in mans voice?" (72). Mulcaster maintains that the more complex the language, the greater the need to include the variables of custom and reason into the equation. Like other spelling reformers, he goes on to defend the theory that English is at its optimal stage, one where order may be established but diverges from their belief that this will lead to a crystallisation of the language impervious to further changes. The time is now ripe for action but without any guarantees of continued perfection. The see-saw of fate, determined by external factors such as political hegemony, naval supremacy and fluctuations in social conditions cannot be excluded from the equation. External factors, the history of the nation and the quality of its people are the basis for its copiousness. Secondly, he enumerates the sources from which this native wealth has been fed, namely, war, commerce and travel, as determining in the future as they were in the past. Here it is that he demonstrates his historical consciousness.

In chapter thirteen he enters into direct confrontation with the phonemic reformers and refutes their premises on the basis that no language has attained the state of phonemic accuracy that they aspire to: "I see it so in all tungs"(103). If writing, which is an instrument of expression, satisfies its communicative goals, then there can be no justification for altering a system whereby meaning is clearly expressed. The term "right writing" is defined and the role played by usage and consent in its establishment is outlined.

The eight principles on which the ordering of English spelling are to be based are "the known conclusions or such consequents as follow them of necessitie" (120). These rules are formulated in the following axiomatic statements.

1. Writing is a convention, arbitrary and established by consent.

2. The parameters on which any reform must be based are phonemic (sound), logical (reason) and traditional (custom). Of these three, Custom is the ultimate authority with both Sound and Reason under its jurisdiction.

3. The system resists arbitrary modification from external sources. The imposition of standards operating in other languages or those devised by individuals cannot be admitted.

4. The reformer must content himself with amending the old rather than opting for innovation. "Naturall amendment" which dove tails those already existing forms is a surer method than inserting untried and untested elements of an unknown quantity.

5. Analogy is a guiding principle for the establishment of consistency.

6. The consent of the learned community, as the upholders of the standard must be sought and enrolled.

7. The formulation of rules has to leave sufficient lee-way for the "private trick" - individual freedom of expression through the shared medium.

8. Irregularities are the reverse side of the coin of regulation and must be, not only tolerated but positively evaluated. As language is the creation of men, there can be no all inclusive rules. Usage and practice are the only paths by which language eventually incorporates perceived "anomalies".

Mulcaster here makes his lyrical call for the exercise of the language, applying it to new terrain and exploring its possibilities. The precepts, to which he adheres religiously, are constructed along the diachronic and social axes, a view of language which recalls Coseriu's statement: "El saber lingüístico es interindividual o social y en cuanto saber tradicional es un saber historico" (1973: 60).

In these general principles Mulcaster allows for both the individual and the general. They represent a flexible blend between the immutable and the variable, private freedom and consensus, present exigencies and past imperatives, regularity and deviation from a norm. Rules must be flexible enough to allow creativity but rigid enough to prevent potential chaos.

Having issued the challenge, and made much of its originality, Mulcaster reverts to the prosaic mode under this title, resorts to the conventional naming and description of the letters. Although the distinction between orthographic and

phonemic representation is appreciated, Mulcaster follows the path beaten by the other reformers in describing each grapheme in terms of its sound. A three-fold division is made, vowel, consonant and vowellish /consonantish, with the letter < h > set apart as an aspiration. Vowels are characterised as long, short, sharp and weak. The consonants are either mute and close in sound or half vowellish. Each of the vowels is examined individually, the letter < e > dealt with extensively. His treatment of < o > exemplifies his general approach to reform and his concessions to the force of custom. < o > is a letter of great uncertainty because of its similarity with < u >. However, "our custom is so acquainted with the use thereof, as it wilbe more dificultie to alter a known confusion, than profitable to bring in an unknown reformation"(128).[3] The current and unsatisfactory use of < o > to represent / u / is validated on the one hand by recurring to historical precedent and on the other by comparison with the other vernaculars which experience the same problem. The problems it poses must be left in the hands of acquaintance and care in writing, reining in the "swiftnesse of the pen sure". Responsibility for correct spelling therefore is laid not solely at the door of tradition and reason but placed squarely within the field of the individual writer who assumes a moral as well as a social responsibility.

Mulcaster is on surer ground when dealing with the consonants. He recommends the use of < f > to represent the phoneme /f/ rather than < ph > just as Hart had already proposed on the basis that it constituted an "abuse" of the letter. Mulcaster's conclusion is, however, reached by quite a different path, one which

[3] The convention he refers to dates back to the Late Latin form which was passed on to English through French. It was adopted to ensure graphical clearness and to avoid the sequence of minims or downward strokes on the part of the Anglo Norman scribes.

finally and contradictorily appeals to the parallelism between sound and letter, waiving the principle of etymological faithfulness. The naturalisation of borrowed words would dictate that "we wil measure our writing by an English eare"(133). In this case, < f > is more logical and eliminates unnecessary complications for those ignorant of Greek. Etymology, then, is waived in favour of logical and systematic considerations.

The principle of consistency and analogy is applied to the digraph < gu > where the < g > is strong. His chief complaint is that it is inconsistently applied without justification through analogy. It is restricted to loan words and was a convention adopted by the French and imported in borrowed words. Custom is repeatedly called in to legislate on practices which cannot be justified by other means. Thus, unlike Baret, who would eliminate the Anglo Norman digraph < qu > on the basis of sound and reason, Mulcaster retains it because custom has established it with the consent of the linguistic community.

The next point raised is that of proportion which is defined thus: "when a number of words of like sound are written with like letters"(138). This section, following the format of the rhyming dictionary as used by Levins,[4] discusses the consonant clusters which are permitted and explains deviations either because of borrowing, derivation or prerogative. When these factors are accounted for, the basis for reform lies in etymology - the dropping of <c > in "rancle" and "sparcle" and replacing it by < k > based on the root form containing < k > in Middle English.

[4] Peter Levins's Manipulus vocabulorum (1570) used a method of item arrangement based on the rhyming principle, an unprecedented attempt in English lexicography and one which Mulcaster follows in his section on distinction.

The silent < b > in "lamb", "thumb" and "crumb" would also be omitted as it is unetymological but retained in "dumb" where it is. The same arguments are used for dropping the < a > in the verb "learn" as it derives from the Old English "leornian" or the Germanic "lernen". Mulcaster was responsible for the correction of several false etymological spellings, among which was one of the most tenacious, "abhominable", which he correctly spelt "abominable". This part of The Elementarie is wholly consistent with the general rules which Mulcaster applies as he sees fit in each case. The result is a flexible but not very "useful" set of norms because only those with a knowledge of the language's development and sources of borrowing can decide which principle is to be activated for each word. The norm is that there is no single norm and the capricious nature of English spelling is verified, not clarified. Mulcaster emulates Art by codifying the already unwritten rules; the very fact of setting them down in writing empowers them and grants them a status which supersedes that of the spoken word.

In dealing with homophones, Mulcaster again yields to custom's decree. Although he tentatively suggests levelling, they are admitted on the basis of analogy with other languages. Custom also wins out over etymology in the case of using < oo > in place of < ou >. While < oo > is more consistent with etymological principles, custom prevents him from making any dogmatic statement. Dobson takes this example as evidence that Mulcaster knew no distinction between ME /u/ and ME /o/. This chapter ends with the same homage to custom with which it began: "custom wil have a great stroke, and must make up the trinitie of speche" (157).

Composition is deemed "verie necessarie for the right writing of our tongue manie waies"(159). It sets guidelines for the division of words at the end of lines and to discern differences and shifts in meaning between words which can be written as one or as two. As composition alters quality and stress patterns, a knowledge of the components is necessary for correct pronunciation.

The discussion of derivation is limited to those aspects which directly affect spelling. The native derivations are classified as four. Perfect, retaining the original word in its entirety and imperfect, which involve the loss of a letter. "Substantiarie" derivations are those which can serve as the head for further derivations. The final category, "accidentiarie" is what is now denominated inflection. Seven rules are given for the spelling of derivations

Under the title of distinction, punctuation marks and diacritics are described and their function and use defined. Stress marks and tildes are to be used sparingly as alternative means of indicating time or vowel length, and diacritics such as the qualifying < e > are preferred. An additional argument against the overuse of stress marks is the visual effect they create. The phonemic reformers, in their attempts to faithfully record all the English sounds were forced to rely on diacritics and new signs. Bullokar's notation is an example of this practice taken to extremes and produces an text which was not only difficult to decipher but also to write and print. Mulcaster's indications about the use of capital letters may also contain a barb against Hart who would abolish them on the basis that the capital letter differs in no way from the lower case letter as they represent the same sound.

Enfranchisement deals with the ways in which loan words can be naturalised. This plea for the complete naturalisation of foreign borrowings is not innovative - both Hart and Bullokar had treated the theme in their work. Mulcaster considers the naturalisation of these words as a fundamental requirement. and considers borrowing as a natural, not an aberrant feature of language.

The tone of The Elementarie is objective and terse but the chapters on prerogative and several passages from the peroration are uncharacteristically lyrical. Mulcaster's praise of the English language is a planned "overflow of feeling" which has been prepared for throughout. It breaks with the general tone, as do certain sensitive and lyrical passages in the chapter on prerogative, where he is dealing with the "secret misterie" of language. These two sections are significant and no mere accident. They are the key to understanding the motivation behind Mulcaster's defence of English and probing his interest in language as a subject. They also highlight yet another contradiction in his personality. On the one hand he is rigorous in his approach, adhering to the principles that he laid down at the outset; observation and comparison. On the other hand, he was attracted to and captivated by the less tangible aspects of the language and closely in touch with the sentiments of loyalty and allegiance that it inspires.

The General Table, 55 pages with 7,000 items listed in alphabetical order, is intended to bear out the validity of his rules by force of numbers and to include sufficient examples to allow others to be deduced from them. Those entries which

deviate from the norm are accompanied by a note to this effect, indicating whether it is prerogative, derivation or distinction which is the source. Loan words are given both in their original and naturalised forms. The table has a pragmatic function: to serve as a handy reference manual for quick consultation. In spite of claiming that it is addressed to the unlearned, it was probably conceived with teachers in mind. Mulcaster claims that he has "gathered the most of those words which we commonlie use in our hole speche"(183). His call for a dictionary, like the efforts being brought to fruition in France, Spain and Italy is his closing appeal to redress the contradictory situation where the English "know foren tungs by rule, and our own by rote" (186).

The Peroration restates the aims of The Elementarie and explains the motives that impelled the writer to take a public stand. It moves from a recapitulation of the general aims of education and its role in society, to a consideration of the hierarchical structure of elementary training. This is followed by an examination of the role of English in the life of the nation followed by a refutation of the obstacles that are posed to its use in the academic field, ending with an analysis of the role of the writer in educating the masses.

As language and education are social institutions, they must adjust and adapt to the evolving framework in which they are situated. The precepts of the ancients may be used but are not followed slavishly. Man is a free agent with liberty to act and decide for himself. This idea is developed in his defence of the use of English which will be the last symbolic and real denial of the power of Rome This is a

heavily nationalistic assertion which carries overtones of the arguments used in the Reformation where religion became the symbol the assertion of the English nation's independence from the thraldom of Rome. Following his premise that learning and language are not in a symbiotic relationship, the use of Latin is no guarantee of quality. On the contrary, it often camouflages and lends a veneer of sophistication to the spurious and the trivial. The choice between writing in English or Latin has no bearing on the quality of the thought expressed

The objections current in the century to the use of English are examined and rejected. The first issue is that of the difficulty of understanding a text in English. This arises, Mulcaster defiantly asserts, from either the author's inability to explain himself or the reader's lack of familiarity with the material. For those willing to learn, the language in which the theme is presented is irrelevant. As for manner, Mulcaster stresses the distinction between oral and written discourse. The second is not be evaluated in terms of the first which seeks to cause an immediate impact. The written discourse must be assimilated gradually through contemplation. Plainness is not always a virtue and some themes demand a more complicated style. This is a modification of the Ciceronian dictum of plainness in style which Mulcaster uses as a justification for the style of <u>The Elementarie</u>. Quick finds Mulcaster's style on the whole, "usually clumsy and awkward, sometimes grotesque, often affected, always hopelessly wanting in the finish, breadth, moderation, and order which alone can give permanence to writing"(306). Mulcaster himself was not unaware of the difficulty the "couching of my sentence and the depth of my conceit"(277) involved.

The agenda for education and spelling reform are guided by the same principles: respect for custom, for current conditions and the recognition that man is a free agent. Just as the educator must understand and respect the child, so too must the spelling reformer understand the nature of the language. Education is never the sole responsibility of the teacher. it requires the backup of society. Likewise, to work deep changes in spelling calls for not only social consent but also a knowledge of history. It is this comprehensive view of the intricacy of the system that modifies Mulcaster's reforms.

Both books are characterised by systematic and orderly exposition. Both treat their subject matter within a broad social framework. In both the voice of experience reins in and modifies any lofty theoretical flights of fancy. Criticism is constructive and defects are used as a launching pad for solutions and remedies. There is a confidence and authority which inspires the reader's trust.

Mulcaster was in pursuit of meaningful social reform, the results of which could be measured against the humanist tallystick of moral and social validity as well as notched high on the Baconian barometer: the utility principle and the material benefits to be reaped from the scientific method. The same two strains are evident in the design of his syllabus: he retains the essential nucleus of the humanist agenda but expands the scope to include subjects of a practical nature for use in vocational education.

His approach to his topics recalls both the work of the alchemist and the chemist. He selects, filters, distils, blends with his mortar and pestle the powder of past knowledge and excipient of experience until he achieves the balance between both which ensures its curative powers. He seeks not the Holy Grail but a palliative, not the truth but a truth which can be valid for his society in his time.

CHAPTER THREE

LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND ECONOMICS

3.1 Introduction

Language is not altogether independent, it is mixed with every human activity

(Sayce, 1957: 32).

In a watch, each cog has a specific purpose but it is not until its function is examined in terms of how its teeth interlock with the surrounding pieces that the role it plays within the mechanism can be appreciated. The same principle of interactivity and mutual influence can be applied to literature and indeed any piece of writing when considered as a social construct, held in suspension by the cultural matrix which lends a form to and determines the terms in which pertinent issues are conceptualised and consequently expressed. Writings on a subject which is both as deeply personal and public as language naturally act as a magnet for all contemporary issues of import. Language becomes the forum where the conscious and subconscious intertwine. Allusions and figurative language hold the key to the ways in which man reacts to his piebald and dappled culture. Intellectual writings of the period had an impelling immediacy. the assumption of a well informed, participative audience, a factor which coexists with the equally valid assumption of a readership well versed and conversant with classical antiquity. The fact that the same basic problems were aired in diverse ways, in different fields of concern is a statement about the interrelated and synthetic mind set which the modern reader can not readily appreciate as we fragment more than assemble. The intention of

this analysis of the network of relations spanning the nodes of language, society and economics, is to set the scene onto which The Elementarie was launched.

The state of the language became a metaphor for discussing the ills assailing contemporary society. Social change and the fears it engendered found their counterpart in linguistic change. They were perceived as two manifestations of a similar underlying trend. As Machan and Scott (1992) point out, the use of language was closely intertwined and even identified with the question of class mobility. The terms in which discussion of linguistic issues was conducted reflected the growing unease caused by the increasingly porous nature of class boundaries while the discourse on social changes makes reference to supposed linguistic deviation. Nowhere is this so evident as in the condemnation of the changing usage of the second person pronouns "thee" and "you".[1]

The base issue under debate in both domains concerned the opposition between natural or conventional, given or made. The central question was whether social hierarchy was divinely ordained or, on the contrary, a reflection of individual effort and merit.. The new social landscape that was emerging raised doubts about whether aristocratic standing was bestowed by birth alone or could be achieved through individual effort.[2] One source of this impression are the writings on education, the nature and scope of which shift as the century progresses.

[1] There is extensive literature on the subject. Of special interest is Fanego (1997), "English in Transition 1500 - 1700: On Variation in Second Person Singular Pronoun Usage", Calvo, (1992), "Too Wise to Woo Peaceably: The Meanings of *Thou* in Shakespeare's Wooing Scenes". For a more general discussion, see Machan & Scott 1992.

[2] This question had been posed in the Canterbury Tales and elsewhere. The borderlines of Chaucer's social classes and his attitude to them, defy simple analysis. "The Franklin's Tale" raises questions of "gentilesse"that Chaucer fails to answer conclusively.

Fig. 3 Schoolroom Scene. Urban Wyss Libellus Valde Doctus A4 recto. Rpt. in Goldberg, 1990.

3.2 Education: The Master Key

Education was the linchpin of humanist thought. It was seen as the key to social stability and the foundation of a just society. Reforms in education, in the beginning, however, were directed solely at the aristocratic classes. The pilot work on the theme, The Governour prefaces advice on education with a sketch of the ideal society and is written exclusively for the aristocracy - the only form of education conceived of is that of private tutoring. While admitting that members of a lower class could achieve the virtues of nobility, namely self-control, discernment, judgement, justice and virtue, this argument is used more as a spur to awaken the upper classes from their stupor and incite them to learning than a real possibility. That those of lesser rank could usurp the aristocracy's advantageous social position is meant as a veiled threat, not a recognition of their right to ascendancy. However, the very fact that such a situation could be envisaged as a distant chimera bears testimony to the fact that aristocratic prerogative, if it were not backed up by deeds and action was being called into question and in imminent danger of being eroded.

Elyot, therefore, sets the scene and by his insistence,"doth protest too much", thereby underscoring their unchallenged right to the reins of power. His treatise tacitly admits to the fact that the prerogative of holding political office depends in no small part on merit and ability. His work is at once a herald of the future and a swan song to the old order. The panorama he predicted arrived, propelled by factors unforeseen by early Christian humanism: the Reformation and the

dislocation of social classes caused by the repartition of monastic properties accelerated the process where the aristocracy had to justify its privileged existence.

The second notable treatise on education in sixteenth-century England was the work of Roger Ascham. It is based, as he states, on his experience as the tutor of the princess Elizabeth and other promising members of the aristocracy. An influential book in its time although it never ran further than two editions, like Elyot's work, it concentrates on the teaching of the classics by the tutor system. On the title page it is explicitly stated that the book is designed for the instruction of the Latin tongue, "but specially purposed for the private upbryngING of youth in Jentlemen and Noble mens houses". The Scholemaster is clearly divided into two parts: the first deals with the education of gentlemen in its widest possible sense and is punctuated by sharply contemptuous outbursts against the excesses and abuses committed by aristocratic youth, followed by recommendations for their remedy. The second is an exhaustive discussion about the best ways for teaching Latin at different levels. Ascham, however, never contemplated the idea of a class of students or even those whose economy would not permit the expense of the three copy books required for the double translation method. His text enshrines the values of humanist education; the proper use of words with its moral and social consequences but his scathing criticism is directed only at the aristocracy whose delight in conspicuous consumption was undermining their authority. Nowhere does he refer to the social classes emerging from their cocoons.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Queen Elizabeths Achademy, written in the 1570's, marks a half way station between private and public education, advocating that young gentlemen be educated together to prepare them for civil life. The norms he establishes, however, were to be applied to a select elite and can be interpreted as an institutionalised continuation of the much maligned system of wardship inherited from medieval society. Mulcaster takes up on his ideas in advocating that it would be preferable that the young gentleman "could have his traine so cast as he might have the companie of a good choice number" (1888: 189). In addition to advocating a system whereby suitable candidates could equip themselves with the skills for active political life, Gilbert's proposals also provide for the use of the vernacular: "in what language soever learning is attayned, the appliance to use is principally in the vulgare spech"(Furnivall, 1869: 83). In his academy, natural philosophy, politics, oratory and mathematics would all be used to reinforce and strengthen the mother tongue, "by such examples, learning shall have brought unto yt the Choyse of wordes, the building of sentences, the garnishment of figures, and other beauties of Oratorie"(Furnivall, 1869: 82). Gilbert thus anticipates those arguments on which the Puritans based their defence of the vernacular and which were given the most complete expression by George Snell in 1649 when he put forth proposals for the setting up of rural colleges where a student could acquire all necessary learning through English. Alongside the humanist stress on words appears an appreciation of language in a more pragmatic sense, as an instrument for diplomacy, war, peace and economics. Gilbert's proposals also represent an attempt which was to be developed by Mulcaster, that the education of children be

legislated for by government, "becawse the publique have therein more Intereste then their parentes".(Furnivall, 1869, 89).

Mulcaster's writings mirror permutations in the social order and a shift in attitudes towards education. He vacillates between the maintenance of the old and the recognition of merit as a ticket to advancement, showing a keen sense that the education system should keep in step with social change on the one hand and on the other, defending established categories. Rather like the Franklin in Chaucer's tale, his attempts to define the gentleman are undercut by his lack of surety about what nobility consists in. The result is a text which vacillates between acknowledging the superiority of gentlemen and the equality of all, stating at one point that: "whether nobilitie come by discent or desert it maketh no matter", but mitigating the force of this statement through his treatment of the middle classes. Edmund's disaffected envy: "Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit" (King Lear, 1. 2: 180 - 81), reiterates a sentiment which was growing in the period.

In spite of this, however, Mulcaster follows in the line of both Ascham and Elyot in considering the aristocracy as the pillar of society and all but abandons the distinction between "discent" and "desert". In Mulcaster's opinion, as in that of Orlando in As You Like It, there is a lingering feeling that by virtue of high birth, an innate superiority and an innate right to development through education is inherited. That his inherited mode of thought was at cross purposes with current social realities is evident in his treatment of the middle class. Having affirmed that parents of the middling sort are the best models for the upbringing of children, it is

this same class which he subjects to fierce criticism. Mulcaster apparently had no clear idea of exactly which social class he was talking about and his invective against the merchants may have been inspired by his own personal contentions with the directors of the Merchant's Taylors throughout his directorship there. He is quite adamant that money cannot make equality, railing against the rising middle classes in inordinate language, stating clearly that, "our state must reiect the multitude, and reimpare in the cunning" (1888: 148). However, a system of education based on individual talent which he claims knows no class boundaries, seems to challenge, if not directly contradict his denunciation of the middle classes.

Moreover, he appeals to the moneyed upper middle classes to establish a bursary to enable talented young men without economic means to continue their studies: "towardnesse will commende some poore to publik provision for publik service"(139)[3]. Richard Halpern (1991) suggests that the spirit in which this is suggested is cynical rather than optimistic and that Mulcaster recognises that sponsoring the poor was a way of conspicuous philanthropy which made little recompense for the impoverishment the merchant classes' economic activities had unleashed in the first place. This fear of change is well exemplified in Mulcaster's uncharacteristically venomous diatribe against the *nouveaux riche.* He condemns their "insolence", maintains they are "too filthy to be honoured on earth" (1888: 194) and brands them as parasites, "maggots" on a "dounghill". This wavering and

[3] At the Merchant Taylors, the student body was composed of one hundred fee paying students and one hundred and fifty less well-off, of which Edmund Spenser was one.

double think is symptomatic of the fact that the politics of knowledge dissemination was confused and contested, even within one writer and one text.

Mulcaster's sees education as both a barometer and shaper of changing social relations and it is precisely here that the battle between the ethics of broadcasting knowledge and fears that popularisation would lead to profanation is thrashed out. Private education is dismissed except in circumstances where there is no feasible alternative as in the education of girls. His objections to it are not founded on any principle of egalitarianism but on the fact that it would work against the principle of uniformity which he felt necessary to impose: "every parent can serve his own humour, be it never so distempered" (155). Private tutoring, therefore, failed to promote the co-operative spirit necessary for the proper functioning of the state and contributed little to the education of the child for public life.

The consent and support of the parents is continually sought. This underlines both the consensual nature of education, an implicit negotiation of ideals and theories, and the real circumstances in which it was operating in the latter days of the sixteenth century. Having on several occasions been involved in acrimonious disputes with the directors of his schools over remuneration he acutely felt the indignity of the employee of aristocratic origin, held to ransom by benefactors of merchant origins. The moral indignation and predicament of the teacher, dependent on the fees of parents, forced to fawn and pander to their whims can be sensed when he complains that where wealthy parents are involved, "the maister must ... measure his paines by the parents purse" (1888: 154).

Whereas the law of divinely ordained hierarchy remains stubbornly entrenched, Mulcaster frequently recurs to the law of the market: the principle of supply and demand. This is invested with the power to regulate, stratify and confine education. Together with natural ability, social and economic factors form the basis on which the filtering process is to be carried out. In a neat paradox, Mulcaster, like the merchants he despises, envisages the school as a supplier of individuals equipped with the necessary skills in order to fit into their slots in the commonweal. Merchant capital played a dominant role in education in the latter half of the sixteenth century, channelled either through individuals or the trade guilds. Judging from the funding provided for the building and support of schools in the period, they not only made good the deficit incurred by the dissolution of the monasteries but also redirected the trend in education.. Benefactor's motives were plainly economically dictated. Practical business concerns such as the supply of literate apprentices for the growing range of skilled occupations on which commercial enterprise depended stood in high priority and were given the seal of social approval under the guise of philanthropy. Mulcaster, unwittingly or not subscribes to this philosophy of education and finds himself at one with his despised overlords.

If he advocated basic literacy for a majority, it was not envisaged as a way of promoting social advancement but rather so that each could perform his assigned task with greater efficiency. In this respect, he was following, in spirit if not in formulation the pattern of his predecessor Elyot. Education would be a bastion

erected against immoderate change whose primary function was that of reproducing and reinforcing the dominant social order.

An entire chapter of Positions is dedicated to the education of "maidens"[4] and it provides a sketch of current attitudes which suggests that these were no halcyon days for women's education. This is borne out by the fact that between 1580 and 1700 women were the most illiterate sector of society, regardless of social class. They were equal but not quite as equal as men. While admitting that both sexes share the same ability to learn, and should be selected following the same criteria of talent, Mulcaster would restrict girl's education to the elementary school level and does not contemplate their admission to the professions. His comments on women are a strange mix of traditional clichés: he speaks of their "naturall weaknesse" and their being under the "moonish influence" (175 -76) and respect for them as human beings. They were to be trained, not as leaders of society but according to rank and role: as "pillers in the upholding of householdes"(176). It is in their capacity as mothers and wives that they should learn the basic skills, reading, writing, singing and playing an instrument. An educated woman would increase her chances of finding a suitable match and if it could improve the quality of the child's most formative years and did not interfere with her household duties could be carried out informally beyond the stipulated age of thirteen or fourteen. Drawing is considered appropriate for its influence on writing and needlework but philosophy and science would, Mulcaster coyly suggests, overtax their mental capacities.

[4] Holofernes, referring to the education of merchant's daughters states: "... if their daughters be capable, I will put it to them" (Love's Labour's Lost, 4. 3: 101 -02).

Therefore, while it is appealing to interpret Mulcaster's defence of female education as a shaft of sunlight cast into the gloom of a male dominated society, this would be the product of wishful thinking and the projection of twentieth-century values on a society which never seriously contemplated such a situation. Mulcaster's plans for the education of women was designed not to disrupt gender barriers but to pay homage to and reinforce them and is no more than an extension of his maxim that each be trained for his place in society.

While there was a tacit appreciation of the new freedom from rigid social stratification, the velocity of change and its impending consequences bred fear and apprehension. Just as it was felt that the overreaching aspirations of the new social forces should be harnessed and their assault on the ladder of ascension be retaliated against, the same buoyancy in the language had to be reined in lest it run out of control. It was not change *per se* that provoked such despairing and at times violent reactions but the prospect of change run amuck, demolishing the old order without replacing it with a new code of behaviour, either linguistic or social. These social and linguistic changes thus kindled a spark which affected the very core of what was a Tudor and humanist touchstone.

Mulcaster's writings on education mark him as a transitional figure, attempting to conjugate and compatibilize the traditional order with the new necessities created by a changing society. The result is a text which wavers between two value systems. If he is to be branded with the brush of elitist then he was not alone. None

of the education reformers ever had promoted social mobility as their chief goal. It was just as much a mechanism of class distinction as it is now

There is an analogy established between the school and the commonweal in Positions. The school is the state in miniature: "Is not his maister his monarchie? and the scholelawes his countrey lawes?", Mulcaster asks. Lack of order in the lower school would be perpetuated throughout the whole system. If in "our petie kingdomes" there is disproportion then, "the verie common weale is molested with the same in greater yeares, and larger scope" (155). This is why in the schoolroom the student of the monarchy must be educated in obedience, gentility, courtesy, duty, obsequiousness and humility. The teacher of reading and writing was also the teacher of thinking, inclining the student to see and feel things in the same way, working to build a common consciousness and the formation and reformation of mental structures. Even though the schoolmaster holds the fate of his students in his hands - through the promotion of the official language of the state to national language, teachers held the *de facto* monopoly of politics, of communication with central government and its representatives - his power, like that of the monarch cannot be absolute. He is the one on whom the burden of selection falls but his power is constrained by factors dictated by society at large and the market. The schoolmaster "is no absolute potentate in out common weale, to dispose of wittes ... as he liketh best, but in nature of a counsellour, to ioine with the parent" (155). The implications of this shed a further beam of light on his theory of monarchy. It is a joint function, based on consensus and collaboration. In his discussion of education Mulcaster goes to great lengths to stress that all decisions be based on

the grounds of circumstance, which "bindes" and necessity which is a great "mistres".

To conclude, Mulcaster was strictly within traditional thinking on the function and purpose of education in society. His proposals in themselves merely corresponded to the trend towards standardisation and centralisation operative there. Where he was innovative was in his perception of the need for education to adapt to these conditions; in his sociology of education.

THE

SCHOLEMASTER

Or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children, to underſtand, write, and ſpeake, the Latin tong, but ſpecially purpoſed for the private brynging up of youth in Jentlemen and Noble mens houſes, and commodious alſo for all ſuch, as have forgot the Latin tonge, and would, by themſelves, without a Scholemaſter, in ſhort tyme, and with ſmall paines, recover a ſufficient habilitie, to underſtand, write, and ſpeake Latin.

¶ By Roger Aſcham.

¶ *An.* 1570.

AT LONDON.

Printed by John Daye, dwelling over Alderſgate.

¶ *Cum Gratia & Privilegio Regiæ Majeſtatis, per Decennium.*

Fig. 4 Title page of The Scholemaster, 1570. Rpt. in Mayor, 1967.

3.3 Language and Social Mobility: Followers of Fashion

[verbal] style is to thought as clothes are to the body

Erasmus, 1530.

Social and linguistic change were seen as manifestations of the same phenomenon and harbingers of the same evils. The analogies made between language and social mobility reveal that the values of order and degree were enshrined both as guiding principles and aims. Linguists were also social commentators and not only did they see the world through the lattice of language but sought to shape that vision to the norms of language. The degree to which this is so is evident in the discourses which place language and fashion in tandem. The debate over borrowing in particular draws heavily on the semantic field of clothing and the social dynamics of fashion came to symbolise all that ailed the language: wild and apparently illogical fluctuation, eclecticism and the defiance of established norms.

The term "fashion" underwent a semantic shift during the period. Before the Renaissance it was applied to the action or process of making, as used in pedagogic texts from the period, signifying a conscious and planned series of actions. In the sixteenth century, it was first used to designate the formation of the self in two contradictory ways. It meant in many spheres, hypocrisy or deception, adherence to mere outward ceremony but also the representation of one's nature or intention in speech or actions. According to Greenblatt (1986), in this period the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable and artful process emerged. Therefore, in the term

"fashion" or "fashioning" we find the nexus of two contradictory forces, that of truth and dissimulation, surface and depth, honesty and dishonesty. To "fashion" was to form, carve and mould, or alternately to deform, offer a show of theatricality and pretence, similar to the prancing and posing of the actor on the stage. Applied to the language, imagery to do with fashion, cosmetics and disguise was employed to reaffirm the relation between moral worth and words, cast aspersions on the role of language in strategies of deceit and subterfuge and to level charges of subterfuge and treachery.

Tudor society, if the welter of sumptuary laws which were passed can be taken as a yardstick, paid quite a lot of attention to fashion. It was seen to be a dangerously destructuring phenomenon, subject to a bewildering mutability and blurring traditional class lines. It represented a chaotic yet potent cultural phenomenon, a disquieting force that did not correspond to traditionally understood constructs of social authority, a form of collective representation operating on norms which openly challenged authority and made a claim for the autonomous individual. As such it provided a fitting metaphor for the discussion of language. The objection to those who went in foreign dress lay in the masking of true values, presumption and almost a betrayal of national identity. Fears of the instability that social advancement would bring in its wake also found expression in the clothing metaphor. The increasing acquisitive power of certain groups, the artisans in particular, was becoming evident in their indulgence in imported goods. Ostentation in dress caused a blurring of social boundaries which led to confusion and disorder where George Puttenham lamented: "there is no manner of decencie"

(1968: 237). By the latter half of the sixteenth century, "critics were for the first time explicitly commenting on the need not just for 'good' English, but for a linguistic decorum that reflected social divisions" (Machan, 1992: 78). Those who aspired to social advancement, be it in their form of dress or forms of address, were harshly criticised. Philip Stubbes in The Anatomy of Abuses (1583) lambastes the "preposterous excesse" which makes it "verie hard to knowe, who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a gentleman, who is not"(qtd. in Halpern, 1991: 39). Unjustified borrowing used to impress was yet another symptom of overreaching vanity. At the other end of the social scale, the aristocracy were also criticised for lavish consumption on slightly different grounds. Their excesses were criticised because as a class they had seen their authority seriously diminished by declining incomes and demilitarisation but this was not reflected in their behaviour.

Language and social status were considered as refractory mirrors. To step out of line in one's usage was symptomatic of a deeper, more disturbing tendency which only presaged sedition and chaos[5]. This argument was part of the battery of weapons used by the conservative ranks of the Cambridge humanists in their struggle against the corruptive onslaught of inkhorn terms, which they felt were threatening the purity of the language by ignoring the classical precepts rhetoric. However, behind the purely aesthetic motives lurked fear of disruption of the social order.

Fashionable clothing and linguistic usage were interpreted as unbecoming presumptuousness at best; at worst a charade of moral integrity and betrayal of

[5] A similar suspicion inspired the violent repression of the Quakers in the seventeenth century. Their refusal to conform to the accepted linguistic norms of deference was interpreted as a threat to the very fabric of society and it was this, rather than their religious beliefs, that was feared.

national identity. Both extremes of the social order were painted with the same brush: the aspiring merchant classes for overreaching ambition; the aristocracy for lavish consumption not corresponding to their dwindling powers and diminishing social esteem. Misuse of words in their ranks had serious consequences. Elyot was one of the first English humanists to investigate the relation between language and political legitimacy, haunted by the possibility that the secure relation between word and thought may be made ineffectual without the support of a morally ordered political structure overseen by a morally upright monarch.

Ascham explicitly equates moral health and linguistic usage. In A Report and Discourse ... of the Affaires and State of Germany and the Emperour Charles his Court he implies that a morally upright monarch is imperative for the secure relation between speech, mind and heart. In his tract, the degenerate Catholic emperor consistently breaks pledges and covenants: deceitful characters use deceitful language. The ruler's moral and political stature is judged against his use and attitude to language. Ascham conducted his own personal crusade against foreign dress, mocking the random and undiscriminating way in which costumes were assembled and called for the monarch to control ostentatious dress at Court. A direct connection between mortgaging the country's wealth and unnecessary borrowing for mere show is established.

In Love's Labour's Lost, clothing imagery is exploited to make a similar point, making the King and his retainers into figures of fun when they appear disguised as Muscovites, their exotic dress being a counterpoint to the artificiality of their

inflated rhetoric. The play brings the ethical aspect to the fore when the King and his courtiers deliver their odes in disguise. In dress as in speech, to appear what one is not is both socially and ethically reproachable. In fact it is more than a mere comparison: the one **is** the other. Social commentators, like the linguistic watch-dogs, were groping for a strategy of control which would allow growth but at the same time pace and regulate it. "Language most shewes a man: speak that I may see thee", says Ben Jonson. (Herford & Simpson, 5: 625). This equation of speech with the inner qualities of man was extended during the Renaissance period to "that I may know your social class" - and the links established between linguistic usage and position in society were crumbling under the weight of social mobility. This is the background from which our study of Mulcaster must depart.

Imagery of fashion and dress also occupies the nexus where preoccupation about the increasingly fluid boundaries between the social classes and their linguistic behaviour meet. It posits a direct relation between a taste for the foreign in clothing as an assault on social order and a sin against English prosperity, on the one hand, with excessive borrowing as disdain for the vernacular and a belief in the fallacy that a show of words constitutes "good" linguistic usage, on the other.

The sense that the use of foreign words was of merely cosmetic value surfaces in references to the use of powder, articulating the growing suspicions about the motivations behind rhetoric, a distrust which became more acute towards the end of the century and was fuelled by the religious debates and the shadow cast by Machiavelli. It is yet another manifestation of the demands experience made on

classical theory where eloquence and the art of rhetoric were exalted. Frivolity and insincerity were the two targets singled out by Ascham as characterising Court speech and dress. Ulpian Fulwell refuses to "powder my style with Frenche Englishe or Inkhorne Rhetorike" (Craigie, 1946: 131), and implies that those who do so hide less than wholesome motivations as "good matter is obscured" and the "Reader deceaved"(Craigie 1946: 131) while Wilson states that those who had spent time on Continental travels "wil pouder their talke with ouersea language"(Craigie, 1946: 127). These statements can, without great risk be traced back to the concept of disfigurement in an age when smallpox scored the faces of those who survived it with unsightly scars. Presenting "a face to meet the faces that I meet", involved a heavy hand with the powder puff. The same sense of deceit is conveyed in The Shepheards Calendar in the February dialogue where the briar's guileful rhetoric uses, "painted words/ His coloured crime with craft to cloke" (160 - 62).

Rags and tatters imagery includes two ideas simultaneously: the impossibility of the assimilation of new words and the relative poverty of the language, thus articulating the dilemma in which linguists found themselves. A lack had to be made good but exactly how to do so was not clear. E. K. (1579) accuses some writers that they "patched up the holes with peces and rags of other languages" (Craigie, 1946: 134), while Richard Verstegan condemns borrowed terms which are used to "patch it [the language] up withall". This imagery is closely associated with both the purists and the antiquarians, steadfast in their belief in a pure language which could be resuscitated to deal with contemporary needs. Thomas

Dekker describes the Englishman's apparel as a traitor's body which has been "hanged, drawne and quartered" as the English "yet steale patches from everie one of them [other nations], to peece out our pride". Like Vergestan, he focuses on the inability to synthesise disparate materials, converting it into mere bricolage, a kind of botched and amateur apishness. A similar idea is expressed in Love's Labour's Lost, when digestive imagery is used to describe and condemn the linguistic antics of Holofernes and Nathaniel: they have feasted immoderately on the alms basket of words but have failed to digest them.

The extent to which objections to borrowing were inspired by xenophobic motives is difficult to determine but it cannot be denied that the perception of a nation under siege by an array of hostile forces on the Continent seeps through Tudor treatises, especially those of an economic nature. This is precisely what is posited by William Cholmeley who advances the hypothesis that Europe sheltered those "who are there confederated and bent agaynst the English nation" (Camden Society, 1853: 18). The conspiracy theory against a beleaguered nation so patent in economic and mercantile circles was reinforced by the Counter-reformation which further cultivated the siege mentality. Ascham echoes this belief, maintaining that there was a covert papist plot to corrupt English youth on the Grand Tour, and Mulcaster, referring to the Papists, voices a similar sentiment, anticipating an "embush which lieth still in waite to intercept our possession" (1888: 149). He does not, however, extend this accusation to his treatment of linguistic issues, working on the principle that any word, no matter what its origin, be admitted as

long as it is beneficial to the language: " tho it were an enemies word, yet good is worth the getting" (287).

There was not a little of national pride behind their linguistic enterprise. Thus, when E.K. denounces those who betray their "own country and naturall speach which together with their nourse's milk they sucked " (Craigie 1946: 124), he is equating a certain form of linguistic behaviour with patriotism. George Gascoigne (1575) was to exploit the same vein when he claimed that "the more monosyllables that you use the truer Englishman you shall seeme" (Craigie, 1946: 134).

This xenophobic tendency constantly surfaces in the inkhorn controversy.[6] Arthur Golding, in one of his dedicatory verses to An Alvearie (1580), calls for the use of native resources, comparing foreign terms with "noisesom weede" which have choked "the good and native seede", the most visible manifestation of which was the rash of borrowing. [7] Wilson (1553) is more dramatic, envisaging a silent rebellion of the forefathers at the desecration of their graves. Acceptance of the foreign was seen to automatically imply a rejection or de-evaluation of the native. Although inkhorn terms of Latin and Greek origin were objected to on the grounds of obscurity, the most scalding blast of contempt is shown for the other European vernaculars. Speech peppered with Italian and Frenchified delicacies is targeted for open ridicule. Ascham denounces the custom of using "straunge wordes as latin,

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[6] R.F.Jones warns against attributing opposition to borrowing to nationalism, pointing out that the era of most borrowing coincided with the height of nationalism.

[7] The little known De scriptorum britannicorum paucitate, et studiorum impedimentis oratio (Carr, 1576) attributes the paucity of English letters, among other factors to the importation of foreign books and the English inferiority complex as manifested in the exhaltation of the foreign above the native. This was a cliché which gained currency throughout the sixteenth century.

french and italian"(Craigie, 1946: 126) as a sign of moral and religious corruption. Criticism of those who use French words and Spanish also came in for some condemnation from Wilson. The image of a fortress-like nation battening down the hatches and wounded national pride can be summarised by the following quotation which embraces linguistic, clothing and economic spheres: "this Realme within a shorte space wilbe ... at the last thrall and subiect to other nations wherof we weare lordes before" (Lamond, 1948: 22).

Within this panorama, Mulcaster breaks free of the conventional disdain for changing fashion and makes a direct analogy between the sacred principles of prerogative and fashion: "I cannot compare this customarie *prerogative* in speche to anie thing better, then unto those, which devise new garments, and by law ar left to the libertie of devise" (1925: 177 - 78). This is a plea for individual freedom both in language and dress, defending the very right which unleashed the ire of those who interpreted fashion-following as mindless pretension and domination by the dictates of a tyrannous overlord. He distinguishes between the garments worn and the body which wears them: the former may change but the essence remains, just as language "changeth with the most, and yet continuewth with the best" (177). Fashion works on similar principles, separating the chaff from the grain. As in questions of clothing, in linguistic usage "we be not like our selves anie long time" (178). Like fashion too, language change cannot be avoided or ignored, even though "it seme to disorder som well ordered rule" (179). This analogy looks beyond the apparent surface chaos and submits the two phenomena to time.

Mulcaster would seem to challenge the conventional belief that the clothes make the man when he distinguishes between dress and essence in his criticism of the phonemic reformers. He blames them, not for imposing new garments but for attempting to introduce new, strange faces, suggesting that their ultimate aim is to alter in some subversive way the essence rather than the surface.

If fashion can be taken as a measure of attitudes to change, here too, Mulcaster shoots his arrow against the prevailing wind. He evaluates both linguistic and this manifestation of change positively. There is nothing disturbing in either as the level on which they operate is not fundamental in that it does not affect the essential. This attitude to fashion displays a maturity, unperturbed by passing trends and casting one's vision to the permanent.

3. 4 The Economy, Language and State: Authority

the currency minted with the public stamp

Quintillian

Economic issues became the vehicle for airing a host of other problematic areas, not least that of language. The subject was put on a new footing during the sixteenth century as the impact of reality on traditional thought made itself felt. Accounting for the contemporary situation, commentators increasingly attributed it not to individual failure to act but to impersonal forces, a trend that slowly seeped into discussions on language as exemplified by Mulcaster and later Hooker. Inflation, coinage, both debased and false, and fluctuating foreign exchange rates led to a modification of the views on the nature of monarchy, unleashed and empowered the forces that realigned new social groups and provided a powerful metaphor for the discussion of language which, together with the economy was the bedrock on which autonomy and thus national identity were perceived to rest.

The parallel between language and economic practices was deliberately exploited as a shock therapy to impress on the populace the gravity of the question. It offered possibilities of prediction and recrimination. It was feared that the English word store would be depleted in the same way that the national coffers were, that the language would be debased like the currency had been and that false coinage would circulate as the real thing. The wool trade, which was bearing the brunt of free trade practices found its analogy in the language which was also being swamped by foreign imports. The linguistic and economic health of the nation gave

cause for concern and a heavy degree of protectionism was called for in both areas. Analogies between the two spheres were natural and mutually enlightening.

The overwhelming importance of the cloth trade to the English economy made it a central question in the legislation of all Tudor monarchs and fostered a general atmosphere of hostility to the foreign.; two of the statutes passed by Elizabeth I's 1563 parliament dealt with the control and prohibition of items of apparel. These and other protective measures were adopted to shield the under-developed native cloth-making industry from Continental rivalry. Both at home and abroad there were frequent complaints about the faulty workmanship of English weavers.
The fate of the industry had also proven to lie outside the scope of royal intervention although several fruitless attempts (albeit half - hearted) were made to regulate the cloth trade, especially during the reign of Edward VI. The standing of the monarch in the regulation of the economy is clearly depicted by Cholmeley who practically admonishes him for his inertia and the subsequent decline of the cloth trade.

The parallels between the dire straits in which this industry found itself and the language were obvious: both English cloth, the backbone of the economy, and the language, symbol of the nation, were described as "wholesome", "plain" and "natural" and seen to be threatened by exotic foreign imports. Both needed protection. The degree to which they were identified is made explicit by Berowne when he opts for the "russet yeas and honest kersey noes" (Love's Labour's Lost, 5: 2. 445) of plain English as opposed to the affected rhetoric of the Court. Mulcaster

issues the same verdict on the abuse of borrowed words, "if theie were *Englished*, and the mask puld of, that everie man might se them, wold seme verie miserable, & make a sorie shew of simple substance" (1925, 275 - 76).

There were a number of factors which slowly ate away, necrosis-like at the idea of the absolute monarch. One of these was dependence on foreign banks; others the debasement of the coinage, circulation of false currency and the activities of the private merchants. The first of these accentuated a growing sense of loss of autonomy accompanied by a dismayingly acute loss in belief in monarchical power. It underlined the inability of the monarch to control the marketplace, his power being increasingly curtailed by private companies* who usurped his prerogative to determine the value of coin. Between 1550 and 1650 a "metropolitan economy" which had wider horizons than before developed. The Company of Merchant Adventurers was the first in a series of similar bodies to be set up and sponsored during the reign of Elizabeth I. Their resources allowed them to act as banks to the Crown and so they forced successive Tudor monarchs to take commercial priorities seriously. The degree of power and influence they exerted attracted sharp criticism from common wealth men who viewed them through a jaundiced eye, feeling that they emasculated the power of the throne. Others were less critical, however, portraying them as a force which had "alwaies kept best traffique for the common weale of their country" (Loades, 1997: 233). This view was justified insofar as Elizabeth I invested in commercial expansion and supplied ships and money to adventurers.

The activities of the "exchangers" were subjected to virulent tirades as they flouted established norms and acted as a law unto themselves. Their linguistic counterparts were the permissive borrowers who, ignoring the rules of diction and decorum, operated on an *ad hoc* scale of values. Economic and linguistic propriety were suspended by the same thread. Controversy over new words were conditioned by anxieties over new coins. Mulcaster no doubt had these in mind when he accuses the phonemic reformers of acting on "private conceit", offering a free- for-all in the spelling marketplace.

Smith finds in the debasement of the coinage the "chief cause of all this dearth of things". The issue of ceding power and sovereignty, either to a foreign authority or to private individuals was likewise, the crux of the problem in the inkhorn and spelling debates. The concession of the pedigree of the language to overseas dominion and its potentially corrupting influence found its corollary in, and was conditioned by worries over coin and currency.

The parallel between language and coinage in the first place, restated the Aristotelian theory of the conventional origins of language. Neither of them have a real value beyond that bestowed on them by human convention and tacit agreement. The successive debasement of the coinage, a measure resorted to in order to finance Henry VIII's spendthrift war-mongering and the maintenance of a lavish Court placed this issue under the microscope of economic commentators. It also called into question the extent of the king's power. It was seen he could not dictate the laws of economics and no true monarchy of the marketplace existed.

The illusion therefore of an absolute monarchy becomes tarnished when submitted to analysis. Thomas Milles (1604) describes the situation thus, "(though kings wear crowns and seeme absolutely to reign), ... private societies of merchants ... are able to suspend their counsailes and controle their policies ... making kings to be subjects and vassals to be kings" (qtd in Blank, 1996: 338). Stephen Gosson 1579, also inveighs against these autonomous subjects who "run to the shop of their own devises, defacing old stampes, forging new printes, and coining strange precepts"(qtd. in Halpern, 1991: 18). Iconoclasm run loose and fear of the political and economic ramifications of innovation assailed businessmen and humanist patriots alike.

The medieval idea, still current although increasingly challenged by events, that it was the monarch's prerogative to raise or debase the value of the coinage at will, slowly evaporated. Smith reluctantly repudiated the fact that the value of money can be determined by proclamation. The effect of the numerous debasements was that the effigy of the king no longer guaranteed the intrinsic value of coin. If not with the king, where, then, could value and meaning lie? This discrepancy between image and true value was just yet another manifestation of the growing distrust of representation that impregnates Renaissance literature. Many of those who considered the norms by which to ascertain both value in language and coinage were left rudderless. A disturbing free market economy reigned in all areas. Paradoxically, this was what undermined more than anything else the theory of the absolute monarch.

Cholmley (1553), clearly perceives that the accumulated actions of private wool merchants, an unfavourable exchange rate and the quality of English work undermine the monarch's status. He appeals to the king to: "use your auctoritie" although as the century wore on, less and less credence was lent to the capacity of the monarch to actively influence the affairs of the nation. As Blank points out, the monarchy of the marketplace was being progressively undermined. The practices of the exchangers, those who set rates of exchange on criteria which did not reflect royal policy but rather worked on the principle of private gain, converted the monarch into a mere emblematic figure. The later Tudors sustained a hands-off policy in most affairs as, having established strong bases, trusted in a mole-like ability of the national economy to regulate itself. They were decidedly against state intervention (or more precisely state expenditure). The erosion of royal authority was increased by dependence on foreign banks, which left the British economy at the mercy of ebb and flow in Continental demand and the egotistical practices of capitalist - orientated natives who effectively held the reins of the economy. The figure of the monarch, despite Tudor attempts to mythologise, was diminishing in stature as *laissez-faire* practices made inroads into traditional territory. In linguistic matters the situation was similar. Rampant borrowing, innovation, and experimentation brought into question just what the "King's English" was.

Yet another source of the crisis in faith was the circulation of base coin, which was blamed for opening the door to corruption from foreign sources. Foreign words were implicitly equated with this money minted abroad. Camden (1614) denounces the currency "brought from beyond the seas" (qtd in Blank 1996: 38). He was,

however, aware of the irony of a situation where the foreign was seen both as a source of impurity and, at the same time, the means by which the English treasure house of words would be enriched. Mulcaster too, saw the dichotomy involved and started from the assumption that all languages being hybrid, there is no shame in supplementing them with what they lack from a foreign source.

The economic woes of the Tudor period lent a real and pressing immediacy to the comparison between language and economy. With the exception of Henry VII, the Tudors had borrowed with largesse from foreign banks, resulting in the debasement of the coinage for the first time in 1542 in an attempt to avert state bankruptcy. Henry VIII had bought foreign currency to meet war expenses, thus increasing the country's dependency on foreign markets and causing unbridled inflation at home. Sir John Cheke (1561) combines two main worries of the day; the excessive liking for foreign clothing / inkhorn terms and the worry that indiscriminate borrowing would deplete the national currency / word hoard. Therefore, the housewife who goes to the bank "to attire herself withall" is advised to borrow with bashfulness, lest "euer borowing and neuer payeng, she shall be fain to keep her house as bankrupt" (Craigie, 1946: 130), and economic penury be repeated in linguistic terms. Jonson repeats the trope: "We must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining" (Hereford & Simpson, 1966: 8, 622). There is a rejoinder from Mulcaster who, alluding to Cheke's image of the language going abegging, thirty years later, asks, "What nede a rich man to be a thefe? "(175). With the arrival of Elizabeth to the throne, the stabilising of the coinage, the issuing of face-value currency and the mediations of Wolsley for more favourable

treatment restored confidence in the economy and curbed inflation. Both the language and the financial situation under Elizabeth I were optimal, giving rise to Mulcaster's pronouncement that the language had reached its zenith.

The linking of imagery from diverse fields of study, corresponding to the analogical manner of interpreting the world, is a constant throughout sixteenth and seventeenth-century texts. Parallels drawn between economic, legal, familial and hierarchical structures and events illustrate the degree to which language was seen as one more element in the social structure. Analogy not only dissolved boundaries between categories, but also provided a language of analysis. That established between social change and linguistic propriety highlighted, not only rhetorical concerns about relationships between subject, object, time and place, but the ethical and moral elements embodied in language. Social man mirrored linguistic man and placing them in tandem was mutually illuminating.

Locating the discourse on language within its social and economic context shows that adjustments in the social order led to the development of new methods of analysis in all areas. Impersonal forces began to be introduced into explanations; relations of cause and effect established, although energetically resisted, a dawning respect for the autonomy of the individual. Plurality although unpalatable was being insrcibed on the social, economic and linguistic menu. Fashion, as the flagship of individualism provides a target for almost universal criticism. Economics furnished an example of the trade which was necessary for national survival. Monetary concerns sharpened consciousness of the arbitrary nature of

even the most hallowed human institutions. All of these insights although slow to be digested and their ramifications explored, found a correspondence in the way in which language was viewed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS; THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE.

4.1 Introduction.

Language has always been politicised and never more so than in the Renaissance. The Sedition Act of 1525, for example, qualified rumor-mongering and hush-hush talk as acts of sedition, investing words with power which made them acts by mere utterance. This was a consequence in part of humanist ubiquity and the eclecticism which led them to take an active interest in all aspects of their society. The political and legal system furnished them with a figurative resource as both form the bonds which held the social fabric together.

The niche occupied by language in the hierarchy of pressing issues in the sixteenth century is evident from the terms in which it was discussed and was not without its political repercussions. The question of spelling reform has from the beginning been tied up with political concerns. Even in modern times, it is closely allied to issues of government, national self-assertion and the thorny question concerning who has authority to legislate over language.[1] From the beginning, when Cheke and Smith initiated the new pronunciation of Greek in Cambridge in 1535, the issue quickly became a football in the jostling for power within the University. Under coercion, Smith renounced his post as vice-chancellor thus generating a long-lasting animosity with his fellow reformer. This anecdote combines two features of

[1] President Rooseveldt's support for the modest spelling reforms proposed by the Spelling Board in 1926, effectively tolled their death knell.

the spelling controversy: its political clout and the fierce personal passions it generated. Memories of the career destroying outcome of such an apparently recondite issue were still uncomfortably fresh and virtually all reformers testify to the fact that they had postponed the publication of their work. Nonetheless, they addressed the question in political terms, recognising it for the potentially explosive issue it was.

Prefaces, introductions, dedications and forewords bring to light not only how the reformers fashion and groom themselves but also how they conceived their projects, developing a discourse which is alert to the larger consequences of their efforts. These are sometimes spirited pieces of writing, at others strictly conventional but always hallmarked with the character of each reformer. Through them a number of concealed issues come to the surface. They reveal how these men saw themselves and their agenda, how they did their utmost to avoid official disapproval and ingratiate themselves with the establishment by identifying their effort with the national enterprise. The question of authority is addressed and whether it is to the monarch, the author himself or to some impersonal force gives some insight into their concept of language. Appeals to the projected audience depended on an appreciation of the value of their work and they are adept salesmen. Astuteness goes hand in hand with the dizzying vertigo induced by the potential made available through the medium of print. There is a curious blend of smug self-righteousness and apprehension, provoked by the cutthroat world of political manoeuvring.

Through an analysis of both the form and content of the major English and French writings on the theme, the political implications of the works emerge. The analogies, imagery and metaphors chosen provide the key to understanding their concept of "true" orthography. and also offer evidence to support the theory that language was given just as much importance for the survival of the state as its political and legal structures. The profoundly political texture of the works comes to light in the parallell drawn between order in the body politic and in the alphabet, in the strategies used to win over a stubbornly indifferent audience through appeals to patriotic sentiment and in the reformers' presentation of themselves as promoters of the common good.

Having established the political nature of the texts, the lens will turn to The Elementarie, examining how it is structured around political and legal concepts, and how its centrepiece, the fable which narrates in allegorical form the growth and development of writing, reveals both Mulcaster's theory of language and his political leanings. In order to fully understand the fable it will be necessary to make reference to the debate over absolute as opposed to constitutional monarchy as dealt with by the early humanists, Elyot and Starkey. Mulcaster's The Quenes Majesties Passage through the Citie of London also provides valuable insights both in content and form into current attitudes to monarchy.

Within the fable, and punctuating both his treatises, the protagonism Mulcaster gives to custom is examined in the political, legal and religious landscapes. Not only was it the lynchpin of his spelling reforms but figured prominently in debates

over the constitution and the legal system, coming to the forefront especially after the amalgamation of temporal and spiritual authority in the person of the monarch. Mulcaster's defence of tradition in spelling practices is thus tinged with political, religious and legal overtones.

4.2 The Common Weal and Spelling Reform.

The time exhorteth us

(Starkey, 1948: 39).

> The humanist reformer was not, it is true, much given to looking far ahead. The perspective of the past was not yet so compelling as to prompt speculation into the distant future (Ferguson, 1971: 129).

The absence of a long-term perspective indicated in the foregoing quotation is in general validated by English spelling reformers. The belief that once reform was instituted, it would not be subjected to further organic developments was widespread in all aspects of Tudor and Renaissance life.

"There is much in the so-called commonwealth literature to indicate that reform could still mean merely the restoration of an ideal *status quo ante*" (Ferguson, 1971: 129). The problem of where to find the original model on which the ideal should be based engaged both spelling reformers and political commentators alike. The original impulse was to seek guidance in past political and judicial systems, a tendency especially pronounced in the early humanists but increasingly rejected as the contingency of time and place became a factor in drawing up the template. Starkey, for example, admired the flexibility and logic of Roman law but was equally aware that it was the expression of a peculiar, historically unique society, worthy of imitation but inimitable. Lupset advises Pole, before undertaking a

definition of the true commonweal to "Look ... to the nature of our country, to the manner of our people, not without respect both of time and place" (Burton, 1948: 40). Mulcaster casts his eye back to Plato's educational system but almost immediately rejects it as not being suited to society as he knew it. These observations show a new consciousness and appreciation of the cumulative wisdom of their own society.

Against this quickening awareness of the differences between past and present and the confidence in the latter, must be placed the conviction that reform essentially meant regression. For Smith, the Anglo Saxon alphabet represented a stage before letters had become abused; it was an ideal to be restored if English writing could redeem itself and become "true" and so he resorted to this alphabetic system to pad out the deficiencies of the current alphabet. Both Hart and Bullokar express approval of letters which are sounded according to the old name and Hart repeatedly refers back to the "proper and auncient soundes" (Scolar Press, 1969: 34).

The opposing view, that the "true" commonweal, "true" church or indeed "true" writing was located in the future made significant strides towards the end of the century and the profound belief in regressing to a putative ideal state was debilitated as the sixteenth-century mind set yielded to that of the seventeenth. Hooker is an eloquent spokesman of this point of view: "Ye think that he which will perfectly reform must bring the form of church discipline unto the state which then it was at. A thing neither possible, nor certain, nor absolutely convenient"

(qtd. in Shuger, 1990: 34). Constructive reform rather than regression became the keynote. Hart's combination of Anglo Saxon letters with invented ones bears testimony to the view that true writing straddled past and future and should be an amalgam of both.

The problems posed by spelling reform and how they were articulated reflected the issues at the heart of national life. Hart's reforms were designed to weed the commonweal of abuses and for this reason, his description of the misuse of letters is set in political terms. The analogy goes back further and the alphabet is compared to the body politic and a hierarchy of rank is maintained. Vowels were placed in the upper echelons and were followed by "mere consonants". Holofernes addresses his inferior Mote in anger thus: "*Quis*, *quis*, thou consonant?" (Love's Labour's Lost, 5:1.50). Baret seems to think that the order in which letters are arranged corresponds to some hierarchical grading: He asks why <c>, a letter subject to "miscalling" and "miswriting", occupies the third place of honour and analyses the fact that some vowels cannot be distinguished from consonants in terms of current social reality. They, like the despised but boldly assertive merchant classes " wallow in wealth, ... being in fat office of writing" (1580, Mm5v).

The failure of the letters to keep to their assigned place provoked strong moral language with political overtones which left nothing to be envied by the rhetoric condemning sedition. Puttenham's diatribe against borrowed words is littered with terms of moral reprobation. Bullokar proposes to "wipe away the dirt, filth and

dust" (14) from the alphabet. Hart likens the abuse of letters to sin and vice; incorrect writing is "enemie both to God and mankinde" (Scolar Press, 1969: 14) Misplacing and superfluity, two of the ills he diagnoses in English spelling had previously been inveighed against by Starkey as the bane of the commonweal.

The idea that letters had broken rank can also be traced back to Erasmus' fable on their invention where all was peaceable until they began to multiply and depart from their original order. The war imagery there is replicated by Hart who sets the tone in the opening chapter where he appears as a crusader: "I shall be armed with patience" (Scolar Press, 1969: 4), signalling his entry into combat and confrontation with misrule and disorder.

It was commonly held that the perfect and true commonweal once sought out and established through royal intervention would not necessarily be subject to further change and this idea was extended to spelling practices. This was a perplexing blind spot in a period which was becoming increasingly sensitive to the uniqueness of time and place. The idea that the language could be brought to a zenith of perfection through the intervention of individual reformers and endorsed by the monarchy is nowhere so confidently and wholeheartedly evidenced as by Bullokar. Whether out of true conviction or as a marketing strategy for his own brand of reform, he aspires to bring the language to such a state of perfection never henceforth to be questioned or submitted to change of any sort: "if a perfectnesse be now surely planted, not to be rewted out as long as letters endure" (Danielsson,

1966: 2).[2] Hart was less pedantic and did harbour the suspicion that his reforms would need emendation at some future stage but feels that he has provided the basic framework. Blinkered by their own linguistic rightoeusness, they could not envisage that their versions of a "perfect" alphabet would one day become dated and in their turn need reform. Ironically, as Mulcaster repeatedly points out, for those who aimed at permanence and stability, they based their reforms on the most unstable of bases - sound, "which altereth still, and is never like to it self" (75). However, to admit such mutability would undercut the very basis of their work, as it does Mulcaster's. He is less confident that his efforts will bear fruit of themselves but holds his work up to the litmus test of time: "What my self have won, by desiring to follow the custom of my cuntrie, & no where to enforce it, it must appear in time" (247).

Over and above such apparently altruistic concerns, it was the national self-esteem that was said to be at stake. The foreigner's low opinion of English spelling weighs heavily on both Hart and Bullokar; the latter citing as a motivation for his effort the fact that, "our speach was condemned of those straungers" (Preface, N. Pag). He concludes that his work has been undertaken "to no small profit & credite to this our Nation". Mulcaster, in contrast, only once refers to the foreigner's low opinion of English spelling and the slur that its chaotic nature casts on the glory of the nation. Surprisingly for one whose linguistic nationalism has long overshadowed his other achievements, it does not figure among the arsenal of weapons deployed

[2] This illusion of arresting linguistic change retained its attraction well into the eighteenth century. Swift is reluctant to give up the dream although he shows certain doubts, "if it [the language] were once refined to a certain Standard, perhaps there may be ways found out to fix it forever" and, "I see no absolute Necessity why any language should be perpetually changing" (qtd. in Crowley, 1991: 33).

in urging reform. He takes it for granted that the language has nothing to prove and is more concerned with altering the native opinion than the international. He makes an issue of the idiosyncrasy of English spelling and in this sense alone, is much more insular than his contemporaries

Mulcaster makes only one reference to facilitating the learning of English as a foreign language. This was merely incidental to the principal aim which was to cultivate native speaker's proficiency. By contrast, Hart was consistently international in perspective, a fact reflected in both the numerous examples given from Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian as well as Irish and Scots Gaelic in An Orthographie. Moreover, he claims that his system could, with minor adaptations be used by other languages besides English with equal efficacy "to pronounce any straunge speach" (Scolar Press, 1969: 5). In short, what Hart aspired to was to devise an international phonetic alphabet. Bullokar, less convincing, cherishes the thought that "strangers in despair of learning English will be alleviated"(Turner, 1970: Prologue). He illustrates his points with references to Latin, French and Italian and the work is addressed "not onely [to] our owne nation, but straungers", who "may delight to acquaint themselves therewith" (15).

4.3 Playing the Patriot Game.

> against corruption of time, against alonenesse of attempt, against preiudice of parties, against difficulties of performance, & whatsoever else (Mulcaster, 1925: 7 - 8).

All spelling reformers launched themselves onto the market declaring their wish to promote the common good but acutely conscious of the pitfalls of reform and people's natural reticence to change. Faced with a hostile audience, treatises on reform are forwarded by apologetic prefaces and a detailed enumeration of the justification for their reforms. Bullokar resorts to blaming the radical nature of Hart and Smith's reforms for public and academic hostility, citing their defects as having differed so much from traditional spelling, having been "driven to seeke straungers" ultimately, having changed the alphabet so much that in the future "there might appeare two languages for one" (Turner, 1970: 17 - 18). Hart postponed the publication of his treatise for fifteen years, perhaps waiting for the Greek debate to die down. Mulcaster too, was aware of public resistance and palliates his suggestions, always hesitantly expressed and hedged in by qualifications, by underlining his more consistently diachronic approach.

Public opinion had to be swayed, cosseted and cajoled and subtle manoeuvres employed to placate the king. They became masters of self-promotion and experts in calculated self-protection. Bullokar took on many functions, not only that of author, but salesman as well. With the publication of Booke at Large, he began

appearing on his soap box to deliver eulogies on his work. The reformer's common claim, like the commentators on social and political issues, was that the work "pretendeth the common good" (1888, Preface. No. pag.). This is the high-minded principle which they maintained had inspired them to embark on a dangerous journey into perilous terrain but must be mitigated by the fact that few, with the possible exception of Mulcaster, provided any pragmatic and realistic means to achieve the widespread literacy to which they paid lip service.

Citton (1989) makes the very pertinent point that sixteenth century motivations for spelling reform were not ours, largely because of the stratification of literacy. There did not exist as there does now an intermediate position between the illiterate and the literate / learned. Those who could read and write, by and large were those who had a solid base in classical scholarship. The dichotomy between the two was absolute. The commonplace practice of prefacing treatises on spelling reform with altruistic statements that the authors were writing on behalf of those without a voice - the rude and the ignorant - cannot be taken at face value. Expressions such as, "for the common good", "for the profite of the multitude", "toute le monde" and "chacun", cannot be interpreted as advocating widespread literacy or a democratisation of knowledge. However appealing it may be from our standpoint, these statements do not hold up under serious analysis. Intellectuals were speaking down to and not for the masses. Mulcaster sometimes speaks as if language is the public possession of the national commonwealth and whoever challenges a nation's linguistic conventions thus doubts the national wisdom but he restricts the power to legislate on language to the wise and rejects ignorant custom

as Hart also does. While rejecting the norms prevailing in the Court and the universities, at no point do any of the reformers appeal to the masses.

Opposition based on ignorance, contempt founded on spite and the skewed leer of envy figure prominently among the hurdles enumerated. Having established their conditions as lone rangers, the spelling reformers go on to add to their prime objective that of the advancement of the glory and standing of the nation placing themselves on a par with the diplomats, adventurers and navigators who were, in the second half of the sixteenth century replenishing the nation's coffers and expanding her range of influence. Hart compares his labour with that of he who, for "the common welth of his country, though with danger of life" (Scolar Press, 1969: 4), puts his knowledge and skills at her service. Mulcaster too conjures up a melodramatic image of the spelling reformer: "... I am your bondman ... yea with danger of my life to do you good" (291). In a direct but mocking reference to Hart and perhaps Bullokar, Mulcaster compares them to "good psysicians and tender harted cuntrimen" (104). He himself was not, however, free from blame and was as energetic in the campaign to sell himself as any: "And if the ware which I do bring, prove marchandable why may I not make shew, and offer it for sale?" (1888: 6).

The illusion of a co-operative enterprise is invoked and solidarity appealed to through the appropriation of the imagery of navigation[3] very common in the literature of political reform. The commonweal was frequently compared to a ship

[3] This also reflects the great interest at the time in the technical aspects of navigation and cartography. Mulcaster professed an interest in the theme and was in contact with, and admired Richard Hakluyt to whom he dedicated two commendatory verses in the 1598 edition of <u>Principall Navigations</u>.

by those reformers anxious to retain the importance of consent in the political process. If it was not to flounder it would need both strong and informed leadership as well as the collaboration of all the crew. Starkey's Pole sums up the argument thus:

> a ship then is well governed when both the master and ruler of the stern is wise and expert and ever hath before his eyes, as a mark to look unto, the haven or place of his arrive, and every man also in the ship doth his office and duty appointed to him (Burton, 1948: 63).

Mulcaster likens the phonemic reformers to a ship's captain who sets out without knowing in which direction he is headed. He severely undermines their authority by indirectly invoking one of the principles of the Laws of Oleron: the safety of the vessel and the proper discharge of its functions were above the principle of obedience. His use of the metaphor of sailing is also significant insofar as the laws of the sea were "customary laws *par excellence*" (Loades, 1997: 10).

All reformers were conscious that they navigated treacherous waters. All anticipated opposition, either from peers or from the monarchy itself and employed three strategies in order to off-set potential confrontations. The most efficacious way of advising a prince was under the guise of flattery. Lavish praise which cloaked a strong and at times bold didacticism, therefore, features strongly in dedicatory prefaces and introductions, evidence of the quandary in which reformers of whatever ilk found themselves - the tension between loyalty to the monarch, their duty to uphold the *status quo* on the one hand and the course of action