

**Katherine of Aragon's Divorce Hearing:
Dramatic Historiography in Calderón's *La Cisma de Inglaterra* and Shakespeare's *All is True***

David Horacio Colmenares
(Boston University)

While Calderón de la Barca and Shakespeare, in collaboration with Fletcher, devoted important plays to the birth of the English Reformation and Henry VIII's divorce, the radical difference of their political and cultural contexts, as well as the dramatic treatment of the subject, has rendered systematic comparisons between them an exercise in platitude. Even the most casual of readers will discover what an aesthetic and ideological gap exists between Calderón's *La Cisma de Inglaterra* (1627) and Shakespeare's *All is True* (1623). While Calderón produced an edifying *aviso de príncipes* through a courtly *de casibus* story full of melodramatic undertones, centered on the stock figures of the evil advisor and the lustful woman, Shakespeare sought to restore the historical complexity of King Henry's decision in a daring irenic gesture that recuperated the figure of Katherine of Aragón for English history by portraying her demise in terms of martyrdom.¹ Exemplary melodrama, on the one hand; tragic revisionism, on the other.

However, it must be noted that the contending characterizations of melodrama and tragedy have traditionally been ascribed to both plays by critical traditions and staging histories alike. In the case of Shakespeare, the tragic component was most candidly expounded in the mid 18th century by Samuel Johnson, who wrote: "The meek sorrows and virtuous distress of *Catherine* have furnished some scenes which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy."² And in 1948, a critic as influential as Frank Kermode voiced the other extreme of opinion by declaring that Katherine's unremitting appeals to pity were but a collection of "tear-jerkers."³

In the case of Calderón's play an older generation of critics such as Parker, MacKurdy, Entwistle or Wilson, following the lead of Menéndez Pelayo (1881), disputed that *La cisma* should be regarded as a true tragedy, while more recent critics such as Ruiz Ramón (1984) and M. Vitse (1997) have readily counted it among the tragedies in the Spanish playwright's oeuvre.⁴ The criteria of inclusion, in these views, is the presence of a fall brought about by the ominous presence of Fate, understood both as an unstoppable chain of events and an outcome prefigured by the very nature of a temperament. The tragic interpretation emphasizes the centrality of Henry VIII, portrayed as a Faustian figure painfully aware of what lies in store for him. However, this tragic component lies in tension with its exemplary—indeed, almost didactic—intent.⁵ The lustful and cismatic nature of the king's fall cancels out the tragic in favor of the morally reprehensible—just

¹ For this reading, see Appleford 2000, 151. For Calderón, see the Introduction by A.L. Mackenzie in Calderón de la Barca 1990.

² Johnson, Samuel, *The Plays of William Shakespeare* (London, 1765), Vol. 5, 491; quoted in Bowers 1988, 29.

³ Kermode, Frank, "What is Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* about?" *Durham University Journal* XL (March, 1948), 51; quoted in Bowers, 30.

⁴ For a succinct review of critical ideas on Calderón and tragedy see Maestro, 304. As Maestro attests, the general tendency throughout the century has been to identify a peculiar form of tragedy invented by Calderón, which in turn encompasses a greater number of the his plays. While Menéndez Pelayo counted only six "true" tragedies in Calderón, Vitse has come to the extreme of identifying a whole Calderonian tragic cycle composed of over 50 plays.

⁵ It's almost certain that *La cisma de Inglaterra* was performed at the court, in the context of the aftermath of the "Spanish match". See "Introduction", Calderón de la Barca, 3-10.

as his left hand erases what his right has just written—and displaces all pathos to the character of queen Katherine, portrayed by Calderón not as a cunning stately figure, but as the helpless and faithful wife. Katherine becomes the dislocated site of the tragic: the king's hubris is manifested in the pitiful defenestration of an innocent.

It should be clear by now that the tension between the tragic and the melodramatic in both plays is inextricably linked to the figure of Katherine of Aragon. The queen embodies in both plays the dramatic element of pity, an affect that seems socially and historically bound to be regarded as falling within varying points of the tragic-melodramatic spectrum. And while the texts might be subject to subtle and contradictory interpretation, the fact is that the history of theatrical performance of both plays in subsequent centuries shows that companies settled pretty early for the interpretation of Katherine as the central figure of the play. In England, Katherine's role was interpreted by the most famous actresses, and according to Foakes, by the end of the 17th century, "Wolsey and Katherine seem to have become established as the leading roles" (Shakespeare, LXV). In Spain, the continuous success of the play in the Iberian peninsula throughout the 18th century was in part due to the great appeal of the character. Calderón, writing to "please the devoutly Roman Catholic and anti-English theater-goers," focused all pathetic appeal on the figure of Katherine (Calderón de la Barca, 14). As a contemporary critic wrote: "El pueblo castellano se enternece cuando ve a una Reina española perseguida."⁶ Both plays's uninterrupted popularity throughout centuries that saw otherwise great shifts in aesthetic taste can perhaps be explained by the great plasticity that lies in Katherine's character, easily adapted through staging to suit any given point in the tragic-melodramatic spectrum.

I will argue that this precise formal similitude of Calderón and Shakespeare, this productive matrix of pathos which is the queen's character, has a sound historical basis. This basis is certainly not to be found in a purported "true" Katherine of Aragon, but rather, in both playwrights's indebtedness with a historiographical tradition that had already shaped and construed the Spanish queen in ways that offered great dramatic potentials. Both Shakespeare/Fletcher and Calderón resorted to a common and coherent historiographical tradition, even if this tradition was structured by insurmountable polemic. The usage of Holinshed's *Chronicle* by Shakespeare and Fletcher is well known, as well as the fact that Calderón de la Barca based his work on the history of English schism by the Spanish jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira. What is less often mentioned, however, is the fact that Ribadeneira's work was for the most part a translation of *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*, an influential work by the Catholic controversialist Nicholas Sanders (c.1530–1581), that drew on the same sources as Holinshed with very different political aims.

I propose to study what I regard as the most important scene of Katherine in the play: the scene of her trial. I will analyze Calderón and Shakespeare's portrayal of this famous trial in light of their respective sources. I will argue that the scene of Katherine's trial offers a telling instance of how concrete aesthetic decisions effect a full-fledged ideological intervention. Furthermore, I will show how Calderón and Shakespeare harnessed in their own peculiar ways the dramatic potential already present in English Reformation historiography. In the final analysis, a complex entanglement of historiography and dramatic inflection appears in the plays, an entanglement that develops the possibilities already present in the sources.

⁶ *El Diario Pinciano*, November 1787, quoted in Calderón de la Barca, 13.

Katherine's public trial is arguably the central scene in both *La cisma de Inglaterra* and *All Is True*. In both plays, the scene serves a precise dramatic function: the public repudiation of the queen is meant to elicit the greatest pity, while Cardinal Wolsey's evil machinations are exposed. Furthermore, both plays resort to various kind of symbolic and dramatic devices to present the trial as a political purge and the sacrifice of an innocent.

The divorce hearings of Henry VIII and queen Katherine of Aragon, formed at the insistent request of the king by Cardinals Wolsey and Campeius (the papal legate to the court), clearly captured popular and literary imagination, as can be seen in contemporary chronicles. The hearings took place in 1529 at the refectory of the Dominican monastery, commonly known as Blackfriars, a place used in pre-Reformation Tudor England for important political councils such as the Parliament and Privy councils. The fact that half a century later the place would become one of the foremost London theaters, and indeed, that it would be used by Shakespeare's company to stage the kingly divorce, is a historical contingency far too symmetrical to be devoid of significance or agency. As I will try to show, Shakespeare and Fletcher were keenly aware of this fact, and they sought to derive all the dramatic potential of this coincidence.

While historical accounts of the events at Blackfriars vary greatly in details and in the actual content they ascribe to the character's intervention during the hearings (for instance, the king and queen's speeches), some important narrative and dramatic elements are surprisingly constant. Commentators representing such contradictory religious leanings such as Foxe (a militant Protestant revisionist) or Sanders (an active Catholic polemist) recount basically the same story. The same happens with Holinshed, somewhere between both extreme opinions, for his great chronicle is a kind of monumental compromise between contending factions. His account is a somewhat abridged version of Sanders's, although they share all significant details. This is partially explained by the fact Holinshed's *Chronicles* of (1577) and Sander's *De origine* (1585) draw on the contemporary account of George Cavendish. However, I will argue that what we could define as the basic core of story is not formed by the character's words, motives or speeches, but by a series of dramatic and theatrical gestures that are equally present in Holinshed and Sanders-Ribadeneira. In other words, under the different ideological or political usages of the story by these historians, they share a common imagination of the story through a peculiar staging. It must be noted, in passing, that Holinshed and Sanders wrote their chronicles when the Blackfriars had already become a theater, which might account for the remarkable theatricality of their texts.

Furthermore, Shakespeare and Calderón stick to this basic dramatic core and preserve its defining traits and device. In the case of Shakespeare and Fletcher, Holinshed's account is followed closely, with few minimal additions. The same happens with Calderón: although he simplifies considerably Ribadeneira's text, he derives from it its melodramatic aspects. And yet, by pushing this to the limit, he departs from Ribadeneira in a crucial point: the scene he presents is no longer a trial, but a kind of ceremonial defenestration. Calderón simplifies Ribadeneira and erases the argumentative device, that figures so prominently in the other authors. Shakespeare, for his part, will insist in the fact that the scene being represented is a trial: without ever departing from the texts, he uses different theatrical devices to emphasize the actuality of the court's proceedings. The trial offers him an ideal occasion to stage the complexity of the historical moment surrounding the king's great matter.

I. CAVENDISH AND THE DRAMATIC CORE OF THE STORY

We should start by examining what I've called the "dramatic core" of Henry VIII and Katherine's divorce hearing. Perhaps the earliest description, and the most pertinent for our current purpose, for it was Holinshed and Sander's source, was the account provided by George Cavendish (1494–1562?) in his influential biography of Cardinal Wolsey (Cavendish). In 1522, Cavendish became the gentleman usher of Thomas Wolsey, and he would remain a close member of Wolsey's household until the Cardinal's death in 1529 (Edwards). Cavendish's vindication of Wolsey, completed according to the colophon of the work in 1558, was most probably a reaction to Edward Hall's negative portrayal of the Cardinal in his 1548 *Chronicle*. Although Cavendish's account followed, expanded and emended Hall's earlier description of the divorce hearing, adding such important passages as the queen's speech (significantly absent in Hall),⁷ his text would furnish subsequent historians with an account that presented itself as a first person testimony of the trial, establishing the basic elements of the scene that would later be developed. Interestingly, an acknowledgment of Cavendish testimonial authority surfaces—overpassing Holinshed's *Chronicle*—in Shakespear/Fletcher, for a character described as a silent "bare-headed gentleman usher" figures in the trial scene ceremonious entrance (76). We should stop for a moment and summarize Cavendish account, emphasizing what I regard as the incipient stage directions that would form the dramatic core.

After the pope's legate, Cardinal Campeius, and his appointed commission arrives to London, it is decided that the royal couple should be summoned to a court established for "the disputation and determination of the king's case" (Cavendish, 145). The court finally met at Blackfriars, in London, with the Cardinals acting as judges and various bishops and archbishops as counselors for the royal couple. Cavendish presents us with a physical description of the court at Blackfriars: "Now will I set you out the manner and order of the court there" (Cavendish, 147). This "manner and order", which is the physical distribution of the character in the space as much as the symbolic hierarchy of monarchical and ecclesiastical power, will set the standards for all future representations.

First, there was a court placed in tables, benches, and bars, like a consistory, a place judicial (for the judges to sit on). There was also a cloth of estate under the which sat the king; and the queen sat some distance beneath the king: under the judges' feet sat the officers of the court. (Cavendish, 147)

Cavendish readily identifies the spatial distribution of the scene as an ecclesiastical consistory, in the sense of a "meeting of the body of Cardinals" (OED, II. 6) and more specifically, as a "court for ecclesiastical causes and offenses dealt with by ecclesiastical law" (OED, II. 7a). That this is a tribunal is marked by the higher platform on which the Cardinal—the judges—are to sit on. However, the traditional format of the consistory is altered by the presence of the high dignity of the king. The king's presence is all the more disruptive for he is at same time the one petitioning the trial *and* the one being tried. In previous pages, Cavendish candidly expressed the perplexity and shock raise by the spectacle of a king and queen under trial, "as common persons":

⁷ "[Hall] says only that Catherine protested against the jurisdiction of the court and appealed to Rome at the first session on 18 June." Cavendish, Appendix C, n. 1.

Which was the strangest and newest sight and device that ever was read or heard in any history or chronicle in any region; that a king and a queen [should] be convented and constrained by process compellatory to appear in any court [...], within their own real or dominion, to abide the judgment and decrees of their own subjects, having the royal diadem and prerogative thereof. (Cavendish, 145)

The uncanny presence of the king on trial and its disruption of the ecclesiastical judicial order is given a powerful visual cue by the “clothe of estate”, the king’s banner and baldachin, which thus becomes a kind of visual omen of what is to come. Significantly, Holinshed will depart from Cavendish’s description and situate the king in higher ground than the judges: “in the midsts of the said judges aloft above them, three degrees high” (Holinshed, VI, 907). Shakespeare will proceed in the same way. The idea that the king’s dignity, by its sheer presence and aloofness, renders the trial a mere ceremonious spectacle will be one of the underlying tensions of the scene in its long life.

Cavendish then enumerates the officers and the ecclesiastical dignitaries, providing names or some general personal information: “Cook, most commonly called Cooke of Winchester”, or “the Byshop of Rochester a very goodly man and a devout person”. On few occasions, he indicates their relative position in space: “the apparitor” sat “directly before the king and the judges” (Cavendish, 147), etc. After such lengthy presentations, the session starts. The Cardinals order the crier to command silence and read the pope’s Commission (which Cavendish doesn’t quote). He then summons the king and the queen to court. The king answers “Here, my lords!” (Cavendish, 148) but the queen remains silent. At that point, she rises from her seat, which is located far from the king’s baldachin, walks about the refectory past the judges, and kneels down at his feet. The queen then addresses the king “in broken English” (Cavendish, 149), a significant detail for one of the queen’s arguments is the fact that she finds herself in a foreign land.

This is one of the instances in which Cavendish departs most markedly from Hall. While Hall does not quote the queen’s speech, he claims in his *Chronicle* that the queen gave it in French, and that he based his rendition on Cardinal Campeiu’s secretary’s notes (Cavendish, 152, n. 9).⁸ In Holinshed and Shakespeare, however, the queen will be granted the dignity of an eloquent speech, in full command of the English language, and by extension, in full grasp of the political situation surrounding her. It seems likely that Cavendish rephrased the queen’s intervention in order to tone down the extremely harsh words he addressed to Wolsey, which she openly blamed for the whole affair, according to Hall’s report⁹. By way of advancing his defense of Wolsey, Cavendish established once and for all the definitive form of the queen’s intervention in the trials of 1529. He grafted the queen’s arguments in the dignified literary device of a first-personal speech full of apostrophes and pathos. In particular, the queen’s movement in the refectory and her direct appeal to the king, an innovation introduced by Cavendish, will turn to have the greatest of

⁸ Foxe, who based his 1563 account of Henry’s divorce on Hall, confirms the same fact: “These woordes were spoken in French, and written by Cardinall Campeius Secretary, whiche was present, and afterward by Edward Hall translated into Englishe”.

⁹ This is Foxe’s rendition: “For, because I haue wondered at your hygh pride and vaynglory, and abhorred your voluptuous lyfe and abhominable lechery, and litle regarded your presumptuous power and tyranny: therfore of malice you haue kyndled this fire, and set this matter abroche, and in especiall for the great malice that you beare to my nephew the Emperour, whom I perfectly know you hate worse then a Scorpion, because he would not satisfie your ambition, and make you Pope by force, and therefore you haue sayd more thē once, that you would trouble him & his frendes: and you haue kept him true promise, for of all his warres & vexations, he only may thanke you.”

influences. This dramatic delivery—and specially it’s opening line—will remain constant up until Shakespeare:

‘Sir,’ quoth she, ‘I beseech you for all the loves that had been between us, and for for the love of God, let me have justice and right, take of me some pity and compassion, for I am a poor woman and a stranger born out of your dominion. (150)

Katherine frames her case by appealing to the king’s love and pity, reminding him of the unwavering devotion she has procured him throughout the years: “I have been to you a true humble and obedient wife” (Cavendish, 150). Katherine goes on at some length detailing the ways she has fulfilled her marital obligations. She then pleads the king to grants her the right to a fair trial. She argues that being in a foreign land, away from of her trustworthy Spanish advisors, and lacking an “Indifferent Councill” will hamper any equitable resolution of the cause. She firmly bases her argument on the absence of impartial counselors, and thus, of adequate representation. She argues that her counselors have been appointed by the king (thus owing allegiance to him alone) and that she does not know them well enough to trust them.¹⁰ She then reminds the king that such unquestionable wise men such as their fathers (King Ferdinand and King Henry VII) and their advisors sanctioned the marriage as lawful, and so did the pope. Finally, Katherine rejects the validity of the court and asks the king:

spare me the extremity of this new court, until I may be advertised what way and order my friends in Spain will advise me to take. And if ye will not extend to me o much indifferent favour, your pleasure then be fulfilled, and to God I commit my cause! (152)

Then, in one of most dramatic moment in Cavendish’s account (and that, through Holinshed, will surface as a key moment in *All Is True*’s trial scene) the queen raises and leaves the court. As she is about to exit the refectory leaning on the arm of her manservant, the crier summons her again by request of the king. She doesn’t reply, but answers to her manservant:

‘*Madame, ye be called again.*’ ‘On, on,’ quoth she, ‘it maketh no matter, for it is no indifferent court for me, therefore I will not tarry. Go on your ways’. And thus she departed out of that court, without any farther answer at that time, or at any other, nor would never appear at any other court after. (153)

This lines, spoken in private to the manservant but somehow overheard by the whole audience, the Cardinal’s secretary or the chronicler himself, add the important dramatic angle of the private speech—an veritable aside—to the account that thus far has been a scene of public speech. This aside creates a dimension of interiority and conscience for Katherine, but also adds a sense of strategy and understanding of what’s at stake that will greatly contribute to the formation of her theatrical character. Paradoxically, this sense of privacy and interiority will be missing in Calderón’s sketchy portrayal of the pitiful queen.

It’s important to note that while historians like Sanders and Ribadeneira will make the queen’s argument revolve around a matter of jurisdiction—asking that the cause be judged in Rome by the pope—Cavendish gives no basis for this claim. In his account, the key juridical

¹⁰ Sander would go as far as having the queen express the precise reason why even Cardinal Campeius is obliged to the king: he was granted by the king the bishop see at Suffolk.

concept of the dispute is the notion of “indifferent counsel”, mentioned several times in a few pages, which raises the issue of partial and untrustworthy representation. This notion displaces a diffused blame on a series of characters that would not figure prominently in the scene, nor its subsequent iterations. Significantly, the names of the queen’s counselors only appears in Cavendish: all subsequent chroniclers will regard them as unnecessary.¹¹ And we know from Hall’s account that the queen most likely devoted her speech to berate Cardinal Wolsey and denounce his machinations. At any rate, Holinshed and later Shakespeare will reformulate the queen’s rejection of her counselor as a rejection of her judges, which would void the proceeding of the important notion of willful acceptance.

Finally, Cavendish writes that the king, once he noticed that Katherine had departed and “calling to his grace’s memory all her lament words that she had pronounced before him and all the audience” (Cavendish, 153), addresses the whole audience. The line quoted above is striking, for the uninterrupted flow of Cavendish’s narration makes unlikely that the king would have to call to mind Katherine’s words. Several explanations might be given for this. The first is that the events might have actually taken place over a longer period of time that Cavendish’s “unity of time” seems to suggest. As we shall see, subsequent historians have a tendency to abridge and condense the months-long trial into shorter periods, and it’s not impossible that Cavendish does the same thing. There is, however, another explanation: the reduplication of the queen’s speech into a mental image that elicits the king’s reaction might be a dramatic device to show the impact of her speech on the king. Indeed, the king goes on to acknowledge the queen’s “virtuous qualities”, stressing that he has no complaints about her behavior, obliquely indicating to the court that she is not to be attacked on those grounds.

Cardinal Wosely then asks the king to state in front of the audience whether he is the instigator of the whole affair or not, with which the king acquiesces: “I can well excuse you herin” (Cavendish, 154). He then explains that his motives, which have to do with “a certain scrupulosity that pricked my conscience” (Cavendish, 154) on the validity of his marriage, first suggested to his mind by the King of France’s ambassador on the validity of the marriage of his daughter Mary to the Duke of Orleans and further by his sense that his inability to bear a male heir might be a sign of providence. Finally, the court is adjourned till next day’s of session. Then follows a convoluted account of the discussions and arguments that were voiced throughout multiple meetings of the council, until the day of the final verdict arrives in July 1529. In this session, Cardinal Campeius says that he cannot reach a final verdict until he has “made relation unto the pope of all our proceedings, whose counsel and commandment in this hight case I will observe” (Cavendish, 164-5). It was thought at the time that Charles V had finally influenced the pope’s opinion to move the trial to Rome, and that the pope had given secret instructions to Campeius to thwart the process. Cavendish reports the cardinals’s words:

‘Wherefore I will adjourn this court for this time, according to the order of the court in Rome, from whence this court and jurisdiction is derived [...]’. With that the court was dissolved and no more pleas holden.” (Cavendish, 166)

To conclude, it must be noted that Cavendish account is far from being a mere rephrasing of previous sources. While his information is drawn from previous authors, the narrative elements and dramatic devices he incorporates into his text will help establish a powerful and theatrical

¹¹ They were: Doctor Fisher, Bishop o Rochester, and Doctor Standish, “some time Grey Friar, and then Bishop of St. Asaph in Wales”. *Life*, 148.

image, which subsequent authors will find hard to resist. The subsequent consecration of the scene in public imagination should not prevent us to fathom Cavendish's creative, yet subtle, innovations.

II. HOLINSHED, SHAKESPEARE AND PUBLIC SPECTACLE

While Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577) has to be regarded as a monument of English historiography on its own right, its historical relevance for us is nevertheless linked to the fact that it was the source for 13 of Shakespeare's plays, including *All Is True*. His account of the divorce hearing abridged most of the personal information and ecclesiastical intrigues present in Cavendish account, thus attaining a more cohesive and self-enclosed dramatic unity. In many ways, Holinshed's account is more narrative and dramatic than purely historiographical: it emphasizes the gestures, interventions and movements of the character's rather than information or details. It seems as if Holinshed had retained only the dramatic unity of Cavendish, cleanse from concrete political cues, in order to create a more acceptable reading. However this move, in turn, has also an historic-critical aim: to simplifying and clarifying the juridical arguments at stake in the hearing, balancing, as it were, between Cavendish and Hall. In Holinshed's view, the queen's argument took the form of precise juridical procedure: an appeal, by which she rightfully demands to be tried by a supreme tribunal, thus effectively thwarting the trial at Blackfriars. Holinshed writes:

[the queen] forsake such a iudge [Cardenal Wosley], as was not onelie a most malicious enimie to hir, but also a manifest aduersarie to all right and iustice, and therewith did she appeale vnto the pope, She appeleth to the pope. committing hir whole cause to be iudged of him.

The author recuperates Katherine's accusations on Wolsey, recorded by Hall and edited out by Cavendish, while at the same time he establishes the point of contention as one of jurisdiction. Indeed, unlike Cavendish, which make the question of the queen's sexual union with Prince Arthur the heart of the ensuing discussions, Holinshed will parse the remaining sessions of the hearing as a debate over whether to accept the queen's (lawful) appeal or to acquiesce with the king's mounting pressure. This effects an important dramatic shift, for the queen will no longer be the passive object of deliberation (her virginity), but rather, the active agent of her own cause: the discussions at Blackfriars will revolve around her unwillingness to freely accept her judges, which voids the ecclesiastical tribunal of validity. The heart of the matter is no longer the queen's virginity, but her consent to be tried.

After the most brief description of the room and dignitaries present (with practically no names mentioned), Holinshed jumps right to the action, when the king and queen are called to court. The queen follows the same movement described by Cavendish and gives her speech. Holinshed's marginal heading describes the section as follows: "Quéene Ka|tharines la|mentable and p[...]|hie spéech in presence of the court." (Holinshed, VI, 907). The otherwise unaltered text from Cavendish thus receives a particular stress: the queen's speech it's to be read through the affect of pity. The marginal note indicates that by Holinshed's time, a certain convention had been established as to the meaning and significance of the queen's speech. The importance of pity in the portrayal of Katherine of Aragon has been often mentioned by critics, and while the aristotelian notion pity certainly remerged in Renaissance drama, it is clear that in this instance Shakespeare

and Fletcher were merely drawing on a pre-literary convention that had codified the queen's speech in those terms.

One of the most remarkable features of *All Is True* is the way in which, without really departing from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, Shakespeare offers his own, refined reading of the king's great matter, by magnifying the dramatic potentials already present in the text. The trial in scene IV is perhaps the most prominent example¹². The scene certainly manifests Shakespeare's unwavering fidelity to historical and political complexity, but also his passion for the public spectacle of power and the pathetic effects of stagecraft. The scene's spectacle places the dramatic emphasis on Katherine as a wronged yet dignified wife, worthy of pity but also of admiration, avoiding the extremes of presenting her either as a hopeless woman nor as the cunning advocate of her own cause.

I should start by analyzing the scene by paying close to its stage directions, which offer abundant information as to Shakespeare's intent. Scene IV situates the events in Blackfriars, and opens up with "Trumpets, sennet and cornets" (76). A sennet was a kind of fanfare that, according to Foakes, was a common direction for ceremonial entrances in Elizabethan drama (76).¹³ The directions describe one of the major dramatic innovations of the play with regards to historiographical texts: the members of the consistory appear on stage in an orderly procession. They enter in a precise order, and wielding the attributes and signs of their station:

Enter two Vergers with short silver wands; next them two scribes in the habit of doctors; after them the Archbishop of Canterbury alone; after him the Bishops of Lincoln, Ely, Rochester and St. Asaph: next them, with some small distance, follows a Gentleman bearing the purse, with the great seal and a Cardinal's hat: then two: then two Priests, bearing each a silver cross: then a Gentleman Usher bear-headed, accompanied with a Sergeant-at-Arms bearing a silver mace: then two Gentleman bearing two great silver pillars; after them, side by side, the two Cardinals, two Nobleman, with the sword and mace. The King takes place under the cloth of state. The two cardinals sit under him as Judges. The Queen takes place some distance from the King. The Bishops place themselves on each side of the court in manner of a consistory: below them the scribes. The Lords sit next the Bishops. The rest of the attendants stand in convenient order about the stage. (76)

It's not hard to imagine the effect of such a long procession on stage. And we know from accounts on the play's representations that this very scene was the object of an ever more ambitious pomp.¹⁴ While most of the characters will remain silent throughout the scene, their pomp and their personal attributes would great contribute to the dramatic effect of the scene. Thus, for example, the two priests dressed up as Doctors of Law emphasize the legal formality of the trial, while at the same time remind the audience of the international stakes of the issue, for historical accounts mention the discussions that the affair stirred in various European universities; and the mention of

¹² It's generally regarded that trial scene in *All is True* was written entirely by Shakespeare, whereas the next and more melodramatic scene in the queen's apartment (II, I) is generally attributed to Fletcher.

¹³ According to the OED, "sennet" is a "set of notes on the trumpet or cornet, ordered in the stage-directions of Elizabethan plays, apparently as a signal for the ceremonial entrance or exit of a body of players."

¹⁴ "Viliers remembers the pageantry and magnificence of, presumably, the trial scene [...] A reason why the 'magnificence' of Betterton's Henry VIII should have been memorable is indicated in the remark of John Downse that the characters were all "new Cloath'd in proper Habits" (Shakespeare, LXIV).

the Cardinal's seal obliquely refers to a heated discussion (mentioned by Cavendish but overpassed by Holinshed) that the king had with some of the bishops about the authenticity of certain documents. Finally, the presence of the lords, never mentioned explicitly by the chroniclers, closes the dramatic circle by placing the unacknowledged recipients of the royal couple's speeches on stage. This ceremonious procession and its detailed symbols effectively frame the marital drama that is to follow within a complex network of political referents; the King's Matter's historical context is visually *staged*, rather than enunciated.

After a brief intervention of Wolsey and the King, the action really starts when the queen kneels before the king and addresses him. Her speech (IV, 11-55), as Foakes writes, is basically "Holinshed versified" (Shakespeare, 77, n. 11), although with a few additions that emphasize the queen's character. Some of them duplicate or extend a trope already present in Holinshed: when the queen says, in the *Chronicles*, that she has tended to the king's friends, regardless of whether they were her own friends or enemies, Shakespeare adds: "What friend of mine, / That had to him deriv'd your anger, did I / Continue in my liking? nay, gave notice / He was from thence dischar'd?" (IV, 29-32). Others, however, add vigor to her words: compare Holinshed's "I am content to depart from my shame and rebuke" to Shakespeare's grandiose "Turn me away, and let the foul'st contempt / Shut door upon me, and so give me up / To the sharp'st kind of justice" (IV, 39-42), which suggests the queen's tragic embrace of her fate.

It is after the queen's speech, however, that Shakespeare takes greater distance from Holinshed. He deems necessary to convey, in a single chain of events, the queen's denunciation of Wolsey that his biographer and Holinshed had left out. There follows a passionate exchange between the queen and the Cardinals, in which Wolsey blames her for trying to delay the proceedings while she blames him of being her enemy and being responsible for the whole affair:

You shall not be my judge. For it is you
 have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me
 (Which God's dew quench), therefore I say again
 Utterly abhor; yea, from my soul
 Refuse you for my judge, whom yet once more
 I hold my most malicious foe, and think not
 At all a friend of truth. (IV, 76-82)

Earlier on her speech, Katherine had expressed her appeal to the king's pity because of her lack of a "judge indifferent" (IV, 15), an important shift for it places the blame of the matter on Wolsey. Shakespeare then grants voice to the Cardinal, who in his speech reminds the court that his powers stem from the pope: "By a commission from the consistory, / Yea, the the whole consistory of Rome" (IV, 90-91). His self-defense elicits the next intervention of the queen, where she presents herself as a simple woman, "much too weak / T'oppose your cunning" (IV, 103-4). Shakespeare merges two different passages of Holinshed, for in the *Chronicles*, these words were pronounced in private, when the Katherine receives the visit of the Cardinals in her private apartments. Shakespeare thus brings to the public trial scene the rather meek words that the queen had addressed to Wolsey in private. The effect of such move is complex: on the one hand, it strengthens a sense of pity for the queen; on the other, it brings the accusations on Wolsey to the open, thus connecting with Edward Hall's original account.

Finally, the queen proceeds to leave, but according to the stage directions "*She curtsies to the King, and offers to deart*" (83). She still has occasion to say her last words before exiting. In

this moment, the king pronounces his speech. Here Shakespeare introduces a great solution to give account of the kind of remembrance that he keeps in mind when we are told that he brings to mind her words. The king starts his speech with the following words: “Go you ways, Kate”. The sudden use of an intimate and affectionate mode of address sets the tone for the ultimate status of the queen’s portrayal.

As we have seen, Shakespeare’s version of the trial story extracts the dramatic content from Holinshed, transforms it into a public ceremonial event as the display of power, and goes beyond the Cavendish core visually incorporating elements discarded by the biographer. The ensuing scene, as its history of representation show, tends to overgrow the play itself into an almost self contained and autonomous spectacle of power that somewhat captures all the complexity of the historical moment.

III. SANDERS-RIBADENEIRA, CALDERÓN AND THE EMBLEM OF DEFENESTRATION

Nicholas Sanders (c.1530–1581) was an Catholic theologian and religious controversialists. He studied at Winchester College, Oxford, where he would become a lecturer in canon law and Hebrew. Sometime around 1599 or 1600, he rejected the oath of supremacy, abandoned his post at Oxford and moved to Rome. Sanders, a gifted polemicist, would participate in the council of Trent as a theologian advisor to Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius, and would later become a key leader of the English Catholic communities in exile in the Low Countries, writing treatises and polemical works. During a later stay in Rome, Sanders began his most influential work: *De origine ac progressu schismatis anglicani*. The work, left unfinished by Sanders, would finally be published in 1585. Its expanded edition, published a year and incorporating abundant material from other historians and ecclesiastical writers such as Persons, Allen and Pole, and would circulate widely among Catholic circles. Pedro de Ribadeneira’s *Historia ecclesiastica del scisma del reyno de Inglaterra*, the first part of which is a translation of Sanders work, would help expand the popularity of the work well into the 17th century.

Sander’s training as a canonist, the strong influence of Pole’s *Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione*, and the collaborative work behind its expanded edition, might account for the work’s rich legal and theological information. Inspired by Pole, Sanders established the dominant Catholic interpretation of the English Reform as a schism, an act of “iniquitous dissension” (S. Paul, *On Faith and the Creed*, 9), thus putting all the blame on Henry VIII.¹⁵ Sanders portrays the king Henry VIII as a kind of renewed Julian the Apostate¹⁶, and attributes the schism to his stubborn desire for a divorce. Sanders sets to unmask what he regards as a nefarious act of hubris by demonstrating, through savvy juridical commentary, the groundlessness of Henry’s claim to invalidate the marriage.

This explains why in *De origine*, the divorce trial takes an entirely new importance. Sanders sets to reconstruct the canonistic legal background of the trial with unparalleled meticulousness. His text, for example, is the only one among the chroniclers we have commented to transcribe the “pope’s commission” (that is, his *Apostolic Letter* to Henry VIII), and to display in

¹⁵ There have been two dominant views on the relation of schism and heresy. The first, expressed by St. Jerome, is that while schism and heresy are different in principle—the former is a “rebellion” against Church authority, the later a “perversion of dogma”—as a general rule schism is always triggered by an heretic view (*In Ep. ad Tit.*, iii, 10). The second view is that of Saint Augustine, who grants the possibility of a schism without heresy: “schismatics deviate from fraternal charity, although they believe what we believe” *On Faith and the Creed*, 9.

¹⁶ *History of the English Schism*, Ch. XVI.

full the legal dimension of Katherine's defense. Sanders doesn't omit any relevant information and every aspect of the proceedings receives its proper name. In his account, the queen emerges as a deft stateswoman, who successfully manages to thwart Henry's case at the juridical level, thus pushing him to act out his desire and break with the Roman pontiff.

The divorce hearings appears in Chapter IX of *De origine*. For Sanders, the trial was held at the behest of the king and despite the opposition of Cardinal Campeius, who was instructed by Pope Julius to wait for further word from Rome. According to Sanders, Cardinal Campeius finally acquiesce to form the court "by dint of threats, blandishments, presents and importunity" (Sanders, 51).

After the papal commission is read, the king is "summoned by name", and he appears accompanied by "two proctors" who acts his attorneys (Sanders, 52). The queen is then summoned, but instead of remaining silent, as in the other chroniclers, Sanders has the queen denouncing right away the invalidity of her judges and making an appeal to the Pope. Right from the start, the trial revolves around the validity of her appeal to contest the legate's powers. The first hearing reaches a deadlock, and the court is sojourned for the next day.

In the next session, the queen appears in court "her objections in due form of law, as well as [with] her reasons for appealing to the Pope" (Sanders, 52).¹⁷ From this it can be gathered that the queen's appeal was read at the trial, and delivered with considerable pomp: "Finally, she declares solemnly on her oath that nothing but fear, most justly grounded, moved her to decline in that place, and in that cause, the sentence of the judges" (Sanders, 53). The cardinals still refuse to admit her appeal, but they cannot grant the king's wish for a swift pronouncement.

It is at this point that the king makes the "public declaration" of his motives, explaining that his case is not "urged on by any dislike of the queen, but by the scruples of conscience and the judgment of most learned men" (Sanders, 53). After the king intervention, the queen does not immediately addresses him, but rather, addresses the tribunal: "the queen insisted on the allowance of her appeal. The judges refused" (Sanders, 53). Unlike Cavendish and Holinshed, for whom the trial itself never fully takes off and is in fact overwritten by the marital exchange that stresses the queen's exemplarity, Sanders portrays her as a deft litigator. Katherine first tries to frustrate the king's cause through the force of law, and it's only when her appeal reaches an impasse that she resorts to the sentimental expedient that the other chroniclers have presented as her main intervention:

Thereupon the queen, who was sitting on the left side of the court, rose from her place and went up to the king, who was sitting under a canopy on the other side. Falling upon her knees before him, she most humbly prayed him, who was at home in his own kingdom, to allow her, a foreigner, to prosecute her appeal in Rome, before the common father of all Christians, and also the judge who judge whom the king himself acknowledged. The king rose from his seat and looking at the queen with utmost affection, declared that he gave her leave. (Sanders, 54)

In this lines we recognize the familiar scene, so magnified by Cavendish, Holinshed and Shakespeare. While Sanders maintains the theatricality of the scene, he misses no opportunity to emphasize its properly juridical content of the queen's arguments: her sentimental address to the king is here a way to remind him that he had formally acknowledged the authority of the pope on

¹⁷ Katherine's appeals, rejecting the jurisdiction of the Legates, can be found in Pocock, Nicholas, *Records of the Reformation. The Divorce 1527-1533*, Oxford, 1870, I, 219 and II, 609.

the matter by authorizing the trial on the first place.¹⁸ As for the king's reply, Sander's departs from the other chroniclers by saying that he merely granted her leave and not that he acquiesced to her demand. In the other chroniclers, the king's sudden acceptance of Katherine's appeal was rather perplexing: it was to be regarded either as a red herring or as further proof of Henry's volatile character. In Sanders, however, the fact that this purported nod of affection is part of the king's strategy to debunk her appeal becomes evident a paragraph later, when he summons her again to court, on the basis that "her return [to court] would be taken as a withdrawal of the appeal and would damage her cause" (Sanders, 54). The queen deftly answer back, first by saying: "I will obey my husband [...] but no the judges", and then by declining all together to attend. Thus, it can be gathered from Sanders account that the queen's loving words, and her self-fashioning as a impeccable wife were in fact an effective way of maintaining a communication with the court without acknowledging its validity. The speech of marital love is an expedient for a dispute over jurisdiction.

However, various signs suggest that Katherine's instrumental use of sentimentality, skillfully contextualized by Sanders, tends to overgrow historical facts and capture the historian's text itself. The historian vacillates: the strong juridical impulse of his work seems utterly incapable of shedding the dramatic undertones that the scene had acquired in its multiple retellings. Thus, he concludes the scene with an unexpected and uncharacteristic aside: "The people present in court, seeing the faces and the demeanor of both husband and wife, could not refrain from weeping." (54)¹⁹ This remark, which lacks any known textual source, seems to voice the theatricality inherent in the scene's tradition of historiographic representations, as if the theatricality repressed by Sander's canonistic-polemical discourse returned in the melodramatic form. In this aside Sander, effectively sympathizes with the king, his great enemy. Furthermore, the familiar scene is suddenly populated by an audience, whose reactions and behavior are also referred. Various chroniclers mentioned the numerous people present in the hearing, but in Sander's account they finally became spectators, while the hearing itself becomes a public spectacle.

It's not by chance that Ribadeneira uses precisely that term in his Spanish translation: *espectáculo*. In the chapter titled "Cómo se comenzó a tratar jurídicamente la causa del divorcio, y de la apelación que interpuso la Reyna", the jesuit stresses the dramatic aspects of the scene without departing from Sanders. His translation of the relevant passage reads:

Levantóse el Rey, y miróla con ojos blandos, y amorosos, y respondió, que de muy buena voluntad le daba la licencia que pedía: llorando muchas lágrimas todo el pueblo, que estaba presente a este espectáculo, y miraba con gran curiosidad los rostros, y los gestos, y los meneos de la Reyna, y del Rey, y así se partió la Reyna de aquel lugar.²⁰

Ribadeneira further qualifies the spectators' reactions: their gaze is described as "curious", and they are able to fathom not only the *gestum* (Sanders), but also the faces and movements of the royal couple. These variations, however slight, introduce a substantially change in the structure

¹⁸ The English Parliament had suppressed Papal judicial jurisdiction *in foro externo* since the mid-14th century, through the Status of Provisors and Praemunire. In order to constitute the divorce court, Henry VIII had to grant a license to the Cardinals, thus effectively acknowledging Papal jurisdiction, in May 20th 1529. See *De origine*, 51, n.1 and Soergel, 336.

¹⁹ "Coniugis, et genstum spectabat, minime sibi a lachrymis temperante." (35-36).

²⁰ Sander's original Latin reads: "Assurgens Rex et benignissimis oculis eam intuitus, hanc se illis potestatem facere dixit: populo interim qui vultum utriusque Coniugis, et gestum spectabat, minime sibi a lachrymis temperante" (36).

of the scene: the presence of a spectatorship places the scene within the perspective of its gaze. Arguments and proceedings become intertwined with gestures, movements and expressions. The dramatic framework will thus attain a great degree of independence from the content, and will finally become Calderón's source for his own recreation of the scene.

La Cisma de Inglaterra preserves the public spectacle side of the trial, while it radically changes its meaning and function. Indeed, for Calderón the scene is no longer a trial, but the king's address to the parliament. Tomás and the Captain, the two characters that introduce the scene, have the following conversation:

Tomás:	¿Qué querrá el Rey?
Capitán:	Si al Parlamento llama, cosa grave será.
Tomás:	Voló la fama que dice que le mueve su conciencia una gran novedad. (1692-8)

As this exchange makes clear, the "trial" will be construed as the exposition of the king's motives to the parliament, summoned for this sole purpose. The scene is finally introduced with the following directions: "Salen las damas, córrese una cortina, y estarán sentados el Rey y la Reina con coronas y cetros, y la infanta sentada junto a la Reina, y Volseo detrás del Rey, en pie" (130). The directions depict a scene radically uncluttered and static when compared to Shakespeare's. Instead of a procession, Calderón situate the four characters in the inner space of the *corral*, through the device of drawing the drapes. Throughout the play, the space behind the curtains functions as a "discovery space",²¹ the space of interiority, conscience or prophesy. Actions taking place within it tend to be surcharged with symbolic meaning. The official repudiation of Katherine is symbolically more strongly connected to the other scenes of dreams and prophesies than to those of courtly intrigues. As Mackenzie writes, "it center[s] attention theatrically on the King and Queen" (Calderón de la Barca 1990, 9), construing a scene of marital love disrupted by an evil presence. The royal couple appears already seated and bearing their crowns and scepters: the precise political cues and the representation of hierarchy present in Shakespeare are here transformed into generic symbols of power. While the scarcity of elements on stage can be explained by the simplicity of Spanish theaters prior to 1640, in *La cisma* the limited number of characters and elements on stage fulfills an exemplary function and tends to transform events into symbols. Instead of the public spectacle expressed through pomp, Calderón constructs a strong image of a distraught royal family.

This is the meaning of two innovations introduced by Calderón: he presents the *infanta* María on scene, and has Volseo (Wolsey) standing behind the king. The meaning of this visual arrangement is evident: the cardinal appears not as judge with in a problematic relation to the king, but as a powerful advisor; quite literally, as the power behind the throne. The scene becomes as diaphanous and static as an emblem. But an emblem of what?

The king's speech, which becomes the central moment of the scene, is addressed to the court (understood in the sense of the retinue of a sovereign: "Volseo: Ya tu Corte, señor, está delante" [1709]). Henry presents himself as a learned champion of the faith ("por ser obediente al Papa | cristianísimo me nombro" [1715-6]), acknowledges the virtues of Catalina ("nuevo ejemplo

²¹ For the different usages of the "discovery space" in the play, see Calderón de la Barca, 1990, 8-9.

de virtud” [1745]), and explains his actions in terms of conscience and an strict obedience of the law (“Pero donde es ley | es obedecer forzoso” [1769-70]). The king’s speech is no longer the statement of a case, but the explanation of a resolution already adopted. In terms of it’s dramatic effect, the speech *performs* the divorce: after it, the royal couple is officially broken. In this scene of public defenestration, the queen left without a say. Calderón adopts the silencing of the queen as a means to emphasize her helplessness. He stresses this to the point that the trial narrative is actually inverted. In *La ciscma*, it’s the king who raises from his seat, turns his back to the queen, and leaves the room with Volseo. Catalina’s pitiful speech thus starts:

Catalina: ¿Las espaldas me volvéis?
 ¿No merezco vuestro rostro? (1894-5)

After this, in all effect, Catalina’s words are but mere ramblings, pitiful laments and last-ditch efforts. We do not find a trait of the queen’s discourse, as preserved by the chroniclers, including Ribadeneira. Indeed catering to national sensibility, Calderón deems that the only way to elicit pity for her is to present it as helpless. Catalina passively bemoans her fall, while at the same time she unflinchingly extols the king’s person. And yet, she is granted an unparalleled clarity at what is at stake. If throughout the play Enrique has been portrayed as having an unique access to truth, both of his and his advisors’ motives, it is Catalina who understood the historical significance of her repudiation: she presents the whole affair as the seed of schism. At the end, the melodramatic and politically ineffective rant of Catalina contributes to the clarity of the example. The melodrama offers a powerful visual emblem, an “aviso de príncipes” that shows what happens when unruly desire and ill council could bring about to Calderón’s own royal patrons.

Works Cited

- Appleford, Amy. "Shakespeare's Katherine of Aragon: Last Medieval Queen, First Recusant Martyr." *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40.1 (2010): 149–172.
- Bowers, A. Robin. "'The Merciful Construction of Good Women': Katherine of Aragon and Pity in Shakespeare's 'King Henry.'" *Christianity & Literature* 37.3 (1988): 29–51.
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro. *The Schism in England (La cisma de Inglaterra)*. Translated by A.L. Mackenzie & K. Muir. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990.
- Cavendish, George. *The Life Of Cardinal Wolsey: By George Cavendish, His Gentleman Usher. And Metrical Visions, From the Original Autograph Manuscript. With Notes and Other Illustrations, By Samuel Weller Singer*. Chiswick: Harding, Triphook, and Lepard, 1825.
- Edwards, A. S. G. "Cavendish, George (b. 1494, d. in or before 1562?)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4933>, accessed 20 Dec 2020].
- Gaspar, Julia. "The Reformation Plays on the Public Stage." In J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring eds. *Theatre and Government under the Early Stuarts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 190-216.
- Holinshed, Raphael, Richard Stanyhurst, and William Harrison. *The Firste [laste] Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande: Conteyning, the Description and Chronicles of England, from the First Inhabiting Vnto the Conquest, the Description and Chronicles of Scotland, from the First Originall of the Scottes Nation, Till the Yeare of Our Lorde, 1571, the Description and Chronicles of Yrelande, Likewise from the Firste Originall of That Nation, Vntill the Yeare 1547*. At London: Imprinted for Iohn Harrison, 1577.
- Maestro, J. A. "Los límites de una interpretación trágica y contemporánea del teatro de Calderón: El príncipe constante." In Manfred Tietz ed. *Teatro Calderoniano Sobre El Tablado: Calderón y su puesta en escena a través de los siglos: XIII Coloquio Anglogermano Sobre Calderón, Florencia, 10-14 de julio de 2002*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003.
- Pocock, Nicholas. *Records of the Reformation; the Divorce 1527-1533. Mostly Now for the First Time Printed from Mss. in the British Museum, the Public Record Office, the Venetian Archives and Other Libraries*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1870.
- De Ribadeneira, Pedro. *Historia eclesiástica del cisma de Inglaterra*. Madrid: Oficina de D. Plácido Barco López, 1786.
- Sanders, N., Rishton, E. & Lewis, D. *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*. London: Burns & Oates, 1877.
- Soergel, Phillip ed. *Arts and Humanities Through The Eras: The Age of the Baroque and Enlightenment (1600–1800)*. Detroit, MI: Thomson/Gale, 2005.
- Shakespeare, William, and R. A. Foakes ed. *King Henry VIII*. 3d ed., rev. and reset, London: Methuen, 1957.