

## *King Lear* as *El rey Lear*: Two Spanish Dragons and Their Wrath\*

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Dragon es la mayor serpiente que todas las otras, &  
aun que ninguna de todas las bestias [...] Et la fuerza  
con que ella malfaze non la a en la boca...  
*The Medieval Castilian Bestiary*

The Dragon among Shakespeare's plays, *King Lear* continues to defy fixation and definition more fiercely than the rest —and it will never yield. The history of controversy around it testifies to the hardships borne by critics, interpreters, and other well-meaning hunters who chase this, the elusive prime shakespearean quarry of our days. Ironically, the scholars who confront the Dragon's several —fantastically “original”— English shapes are both stimulated *and* constrained by the finite, if large, amount of combinations afforded by Quartos, Folios and a multitude of editions (and the speculations upon them, and the speculations upon the speculations, *et caetera*).<sup>1</sup>

But when the translator joins the chase, additional circumstances come into play:

1. El autor *sueña* un espacio o diseño, que es *King Lear*. Llamaremos a ese *sueño* *A*. Su existencia es puramente mental.

2. *A* (el *sueño*) se hace visible a través de unas palabras (que hoy nos llegan por escrito) que son parte —y sólo parte— de un lenguaje total escénico que tiene otros componentes. Llamaremos a esas palabras —a esas partes de un todo— *B*.

\* Paper presented at the Seminar “Shakespeare Translation 1971-1996”, during the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress, Los Angeles, April 1996. The author wishes to thank Alicia Rosenblueth, Dr. Barry Gaines, Dr. Marga Munkelt, and Dr. Enriqueta González Padilla for their help and support.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, in their recent new Oxford edition of Shakespeare's complete works, Wells and Taylor include not one but two texts named *King Lear*, which they evidently identify as *two* distinct, separate, versions of what may have been conceived as *one* play.

3. *B* es *B* por decisión del autor. La decisión es, de algún modo, arbitraria. De hecho, el poeta podría haber utilizado otras palabras. No sabemos cuáles, pero es una posibilidad entre otras. La decisión de utilizar *B* no puede condicionar la totalidad. [...]

[...] Desde luego, el texto definitivo y total no es lo que hemos decidido que se llame *B* solamente. Si ahora y aquí podemos seguir hablando de *King Lear*, es porque existe un diseño *King Lear* (*A*) pensado por el autor; un espacio que existe a pesar de las modificaciones.<sup>2</sup>

Then, precisely because he must write —and *simultaneously* move away— from the constrictions of *Lear B*, the translator is at once the closest to *and* farthest from reaching the heart (any heart) of the Dragon through the creation of one admittedly ephemeral *Lear C*. The translator is not only another hunter, but an interpreter, a performer of the text. Hence, his opportunities to hit the mark proliferate as the life of any *Lear C* grows ever shorter. Yet the ephemeral nature of translation does not constitute a drawback or a flaw but, quite the contrary, it enriches the search by multiplying and diversifying the risks and tasks:

Denn wie Ton und Bedeutung der Großen Dichtungen mit den Jahrhunderten sich völlig wandeln, so wandelt sich auch die Muttersprache des Übersetzers. Ja, während das Dichterwort in der seinigen überdauert, ist auch die größte Übersetzung bestimmt, in das Wachstum ihrer Sprache ein-, in der erneuten unterzugehen. So weit ist sie entfernt, von zwei erstorbenen Sprachen die taube Gleichung zu sein, daß gerade unter allen Formen ihr als Eigenstes es zufällt, auf jene Nachreife des fremden Wortes, auf die Wehen des eingenen zu merken.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Manuel Ángel CONEJERO, "Traducir la traducción (I)", in *La escena, el sueño, la palabra*. Valencia, Instituto Shakespeare, 1985. p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Walter BENJAMIN, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers", in *Delos* 2, 1968, p. 85. Translation by J. HYND and A. M. VALK, "The task of the Translator", in *Delos* 2, 1968, p. 82. "For just as in the course of the centuries the tone and meaning of the great literary works are completely transformed, so too is the translator's native language. Indeed, while the writer's words survive in his own language, even the greatest translation is destined to diminish through the growth of the translator's language and to be lost in its renewed life. Translation is far removed from being the deaf, inert equation of two dead tongues. Translation is, among all communicative modes, the one most concerned to mark the ripening process in a foreign language and the pulse of changing life in its own".

With this in mind, I will try to explore some of the ways in which two recent translations of *King Lear* into Spanish approach the creation of *El rey Lear*. Originally, the following observations derive from a now cancelled project to select, edit and adapt a text in Spanish for a small company of performers. Therefore, my aim is not only to examine the translations as texts for the page, but as texts for the stage.<sup>4</sup> Due to obvious restrictions, I have chosen to examine two fragments of *King Lear* which include what I regard as significant examples of poetic drama involving the participation of the central character.<sup>5</sup>

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The first translation is a first in many ways. The translation of *King Lear* as *El rey Lear* (henceforth *ISV*) by a team from the Instituto Shakespeare of Valencia, Spain, under the direction of Manuel Ángel Conejero, was the first translation of Shakespeare into Spanish purportedly conceived as a group endeavor. Naturally, it was also the first translation undertaken at the Institute, whose output has consistently increased in the last fifteen years. Two editions of *ISV* are available in the Spanish-speaking markets. The first, by Alianza Editorial of Madrid, is dated 1980. It includes a brief prologue signed by Conejero (pp. 7-16), where the principles underlying the translation, and the general objectives of the Instituto Shakespeare are succinctly discussed. This prologue hints at the scholarly rigour that the Valencia team have displayed in their later work, some of which is now being published in a bilingual format. The second edition, by Ediciones Cátedra of Madrid, 1986, differs from the first only as far as the scholarly apparatus is concerned. It is profusely annotated (for a Spanish translation, that is), and contains a brief prologue which, somewhat after the fashion of the major editions in English, discusses *King Lear* at many levels, including information on sources, date of

<sup>4</sup> Much of what is included below relies on discussions of the texts with a group of actors who kindly helped test some of my ideas, and contributed valuable insights. Additionally, several recordings of the fragments were consulted —especially two by Paul Scofield, including the soundtrack of Peter Brooks's film— as well as Laurence Olivier's *Lear* for the 1984 Granada TV version, and the 1982 BBC/Time-Life version, with Michael Hordern as *Lear*.

<sup>5</sup> For easier reference, the fragments in Spanish are included together with their corresponding source texts as an appendix. The Spanish texts are labeled *ISVa* and *ISVb*, and *EGPa* and *EGPb*, while the English texts are labeled *KLa* and *KLb*. In all cases, lineation starts at number 1. *KL* is a composite —mainly from Wright's 1877 *Clarendon*, and Muir's 1972 *Arden* editions— trying to reconcile the (few) obvious discrepancies between the translations.

composition, text, editorial procedures, performance and critical history, and translation history and criteria. The volume is supplemented with a solid bibliography.

One remarkable aspect of *ISV* is that it is the result of team work, which demands a strict discipline that these translators have applied to the rest of their work. Ever since they were confronted with the alternative whether to use a standard high-quality edition or to prepare a text as the basis for this and the rest of their endeavors, the Instituto Shakespeare team decided to edit its own source texts from Quartos, Folios and relevant editorial contributions, both old and modern, as well as from the exploration of extensive bibliography and even previous translations. Their goal is to write a text in Spanish that responds to the dramatic and poetic demands of the source text. The final version includes contributions by specialists in prosody with modifications based on recordings of the text by professional actors. *ISV* does not purport to provide strict Spanish equivalents for Shakespeare's verse. The translators of *ISV* do not favor the use of any specific Spanish meter, and pointedly reject resorting to the masters of Spanish drama of the Golden Age. Instead, they regard the prosody of the source text primordially as an index to dramatic effects. Nonetheless, the translators of *ISV* make a point of writing the exact same number of verses as included in the source text, and have extended this practice to the rest of their work.

The second translation of *King Lear* as *El rey Lear* (henceforth *EGP*) is the work of Dr. María Enriqueta González Padilla, from the National University of Mexico. *EGP* was published in 1994 by the National University, and was the ninth play translated by Dr. González Padilla as head of the *Proyecto Shakespeare*. According to her own review on the project, the number of plays so far translated by this outstanding scholar amounts to about 13. *The Proyecto Shakespeare* is a program that purports to carry out the translation of the complete works of Shakespeare by individual translators with an understanding of the needs and problems involved in the task. Contributors to the project are invited to select a modern edited text with a comprehensive textual apparatus, such as the Arden, the Oxford or the Cambridge Shakespeare, and are free to choose alternative readings on the basis of the editor's textual notes, collations and appendices whenever they consider it justifiable. The translations thus produced are primarily intended for publication. This does not imply, however, that contributing translators are not urged to envision their yieldings as texts for the stage. Several of Dr. González Padilla's versions have been used by members of the Drama Department of UNAM for public readings, minor productions and the practical training of actors and directors.

*EGP*, as all other plays in the collection, is preceded by a prologue, and contains notes relevant to the source as well as to the translated text. In all the volumes published prior to *EGP*, textual, editorial and historical considerations were restricted to a minimum, as well as explanations concerning the translation process. Unlike the rest, the prologue to *EGP* was not written by Dr. González Padilla but by another outstanding Mexican scholar, Dr. Luz Aurora Pimentel. Dr. González Padilla employs a specific yet flexible versification. In her view, the prosody of Shakespeare is better served in Spanish if the translator tries to preserve a basic set of metrical combinations, all of them revolving around the Spanish *endecasílabo*, our eleven syllables line. Acknowledging that Shakespeare's verse is highly flexible, too, Dr. González Padilla works freely with meters of four, seven, eleven and fourteen syllables, at times combined with verses which are rather stress-based than syllabic. In most cases, her choice of meter is dictated by her perception of the *dramatic* rhythms implied in the poetic fabric. Following historically established conventions, both *EGP* and *ISV* use the two Spanish second person singular pronouns (*tú* and *vos*), very flexibly, to distinguish between less and more formal address, as well as the original second person plural (*vosotros*), although both *vos* and *vosotros* are now totally alien to Mexican usage.

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The two fragments from *King Lear* (henceforth *KL*) that I intend to use for comparison and discussion of *ISV* and *EGP* have been selected for their richness as poetic drama. More specifically, these passages test the actor's—and the translator's—abilities to express a wide variety of emotions within the frame of a predominant mood, with an emphasis on the *delivery*, the *vocal* performance, of the lines. These speeches call for a great variety and modulation of intonation. In both cases the central speaker is Lear, and Gloucester plays the appropriately indefinite combination of addressee, interlocutor and helpless object of the King's rage, pain, kindness and madness.

The framing moods of these fragments differ greatly. In the first case (*KL*<sub>a</sub>, prior to the storm) Lear's condition is already altered by his recent exchange with Goneril, and made worse by the punishment of Kent. But the alteration does not take him entirely back to the wrath of the Dragon. The King of the first scene is gradually vanishing. Now he is trying, unsuccessfully, to keep a grip on his temper and even on his wits, looking for a "sticking place", perhaps, to help him overcome rage in view of his diminished power and the piecemeal but certain realization of the threats of age and isolation.

After his departure from Goneril's house, more spectacular than truly formidable, Lear's second knocking at somebody's door is an act which he performs halfway between royal indignation that struggles to keep rage at bay, and mortal indignation which, lacking the conviction afforded by actual royalty, leans towards playing a part. *KLa*.1-2 indicates a quick process of awareness starting with a question proper, "Deny to speak with me?", followed by three rhetorical questions increasing in length and intensity. The first question is practically self-addressed. The rest gradually open a way out of Lear's barely controlled anger, incredulity and bafflement, towards the last line of the speech, a direct order to Gloucester, his only connection with a world both past and still real in which he would be obeyed, whether understood or not. The last question provides room for ironic intensity leading to the scornful qualification of the excuses of *KLa*.2-3, half to himself, half to the one who will listen yet. The nuance in Lear's order to Gloucester is that he commands not only to be obeyed, but to be helped, introducing a brief moment of composure in the general frame of growing frustration.

A major discrepancy between *ISVa*.1-2, and *EGPa*.1-3 as translations of *KLa*.1-2 is evident from the use of exclamation marks in the latter, and of question marks in the former. Actually, *EGPa* falls short of representing the process in that 9 out of its 11 opening lines are framed by exclamation marks, making them a single outburst of flat rage. In fact, the mere use of the infinitive "¡Negarse..." in the first line sets a tone which can hardly be modulated later. *ISVa* preserves the nature of the first question, and contributes a very good "Que" to it ("¿Que se niegan a hablarme?"), which reminds us that Lear is reacting to a denial reported by Gloucester, and gives the phrase a touch of natural Spanish confusion. But then *ISVa* repeats the strategy in the ensuing questions, leaving little room for variants in intonation. Despite the compression of the almost playfully parallel "they are sick, they are weary" (with a wonderful counterpoint between the dry "sick" and the liquid and longer "weary") into one "¿Que están enfermos y agotados?", the uniformity of the questions of *ISVa*.1-2 flattens Lear's motion towards scorn. In *ISVa*.3 pauses are introduced —marked by a comma and the reiteration of the preposition "de" ("imágenes de rebelión, de huida")—, exclamation marks are avoided, and a weak syllable marks the ending. These features undermine the definitiveness of Lear's derision towards the lame excuses. Despite the flatness of its tone, *EGPa*.4, on the other hand, achieves a powerfully succinct equivalent for this token of Lear's deep intelligence, his abstraction of something he primarily derides and presently, though not yet fully, fears.

Punctuation becomes crucial in the next few lines. The cumbersome compulsory use of opening exclamation and question marks in the Spanish

language may be responsible for the apparently uniform violence of both *ISVa.7*, and *EGPa.8*. Later in the play, Lear's mind will wander freely between the worlds within and without, a state perhaps best exemplified by the second fragment to discuss here. "Vengeance, plague, death, confusion!" (*KLa.7*) seems to foreshadow the future rambling of Lear by preceding his actual answer to Gloucester's mild attempt at apology (*KLa.8-9*) with an almost rhythmically symmetrical tirade of nouns whose stresses rise and then fall on the exclamation mark. That is, before lines 8-9 Lear turns inwards for a second, to his world of isolated words, and then quickly emerges, still capable of communicating with his interlocutor by being ironic if newly baffled. In *KLa.8-9* he finally makes an effort to implicitly command obedience from Gloucester by explicitly appealing to reason, in a complex combination of overtly patient condescension underscored by hardly bearable impatience.

As mentioned above, *EGPa* seems committed to interpreting Lear's mood as 'uniformly angry'. *EGPa*'s "No, no, Gloucester", precludes attempts at reasonableness from the rest of line 10 and line 11: the interplay between Lear's words of chaos and his efforts to lean on hopeless Gloucester for composure is rendered difficult, despite the solid choice of bringing "¡Peste, muerte, confusión!" together in *EGPa.8*. On the other hand, *ISVa.8-9* are dramatically effective, but line 7 is overcharged with exclamation marks that suggest an interjective, somewhat martial, delivery: an outburst and not a gradation of emotion.<sup>6</sup> The same basic observations apply to *ISVa.11* and *EGPa.13*, where Lear uses the key word "understand", now all important to him if unnoticedly so. Gloucester's answer is little more than an interruption, however, in Lear's painful struggle to convince the wrong party of the justice of his demands: Lear cannot keep the Dragon at bay.

In the longer speech, the early signs of Lear's later rambling between the world that is and the world he projects on it grow and multiply—to end in the portentuous combination of the King's furious and ineffectual orders with his threat to beat the drum at the chamber door, almost childish except for the weight of its poetry. Lear stops twice (*KLa.14* and *16*) to restrain himself. The second time is perfectly evident, and gives way to the quasi-soliloquy of lines 17 to 24, from which Lear is awakened by the sight of Kent in the stocks. The first is one of the thousand variants between the Folio and the Quarto readings: "commands, tends, service" / "commands her service". The Folio

<sup>6</sup> The use of inverted commas, here and elsewhere, seems frankly unnecessary and restrictive—and even contradictory, considering that the prologue to *ISV* explains the translators' decision to avoid most stage directions not found in Q's and F's which result in an excess of information deleterious to interpretative spontaneity.

reading seems more appropriate for the speech, since Lear's struggle with his present situation is reflected in his struggle with words; it would be acted as a smaller instance of self-correction meaning to tone down his previous verb, and perhaps with an unwillingly true though purportedly ironical touch in that he could mean either "awaits" or "offers"—or both—without specifying an indirect object. In any case, this first instance of self-restraint by Lear serves as a prologue to the one on line 17, and offers yet another occasion for the actor's display of vocal virtuosity, as well as a mark for the translator's awareness of the growing richness of emotion within the general mood.

It is here that the diverging approaches of *ISVa* and *EGPa* grow to almost total contrast. In the first place, they seem to opt for opposing readings in translating *KLa*.14. While *EGPa*.16 does assume the existence of self-correction, *ISVa*.14 turns to a choice closer to the Quarto reading, with an additional modification in that its equivalent for "commands", "para exigirles", unambiguously includes Regan and Cornwall as joint indirect objects of the verb. This may be due to a decision either to disregard the "her" preceding "service" in the Quarto, or to compress "commands, tends" into a single verb in Spanish, "exigir", a demanding one. In any case, the text becomes strictly compelling, overlooks the self-correction, and joins the two expressions of desire to speak (separated by a period in *KLa*13-14) by the use of the conjunction "y", and the adverb "también" (*ISVa*.13, 14). Thus the appeal to Regan becomes a subordinate one, and provides the lines with greater cohesiveness than *KLa*'s. Apparently, the translators of *ISVa* lean towards a more "explanatory" version. *EGPa* makes a similar decision in that the verbs employed ("manda, reclama") are strictly demanding words, but happily differs in its preservation of the separation between the two appeals, of the self-correction and of the absence of an indirect object.

These differences suggest the character of the lines that follow. On the one hand, although *ISVa*.16ff. and *EGPa*.19ff. do not seem to dissent substantially in their renderings of Lear's thoughts after *KLa*.16, there is a subtle but certain tendency towards expansion in *ISVa*, that is counterpointed by *EGPa*'s tendency towards synthesis. Compare the length and rhythmical treatment of "puede que no esté bien" (*ISVa*.17) and "quizá no esté bien" (*EGPa*.20), a very brief but significant instance; or the more noticeable contrast between "la enfermedad siempre descuida las obligaciones / a las que nos sujeta el estar sanos" (*ISVa*.18-19), and "la enfermedad descuida siempre / todo oficio al que nuestra salud / está obligada" (*EGPa*.21-22). On the whole, *EGPa*.18-22 seems closer to the rhythms of spontaneous speech, while *ISVa*.17-19 seems closer to those of a written one. This is made noticeable by the preference for subordination in *ISVa* and the leaning towards simpler



coordinated structures in *EGPa*. Take, for instance: “No, / ya no somos los mismos cuando, oprimida, la Naturaleza / obliga a que la mente sufra con el cuerpo” (*ISVa*.19-21), and “No somos los mismos / cuando la naturaleza se siente abatida / y ordena a la mente padecer con el cuerpo” (*EGPa*.22-24). *ISVa* translates *KLa*.19-21 (a sentence followed by an adverbial clause including a parenthetical combination of adjective participles) by a similar structure that ultimately demands the use of a subordinating link (“a que”) which, in turn, introduces a third conjugated verb (“sufrá”). *EGPa* offers a version where the first sentence is followed by a simple adverbial one which is then coordinated with a third by the conjunction “y”. *ISVa* opens with a “No, / ya no...”, a seemingly emphatic reiteration, perhaps meaning to introduce a note of spontaneity in order to compensate for the decidedly complex statement that follows. *EGPa* offers a structure of three simple sentences which, less ambiguous, is more fluent, without being quantitatively dissimilar, and poetically better.

This situation is inverted in the case of *KLa*.22-24. Here *ISVa* achieves a succinct and dramatically effective rendering: “Me irrita este deseo impetuoso de tomar por hombre sano al enfermizo” (*ISVa*.22-23), although “enfermizo” may be a questionable lexical choice. Where *ISVa* is synthetical, *EGPa* becomes excessive in its search for lexical and semantic equivalence, having to resort to a complex structure: “Y me arrepiento del arrebató / que me llevó a confundir la indisposición / y el ataque / de enfermedad con la reacción de un hombre sano” (*EGPa*.25-28).<sup>7</sup> But this is rather the exception than the rule, as witness *ISVa*.24-26 (“Este hecho... una estrategia”) versus *EGPa*.30-31 (“Aquesta orden... mero fingimiento”), from *KLa*.25-27 (“This act... practice only”). Here *EGPa* affords better dramatic delivery, since *ISVa* suffers from a pair of phonetic entanglements and rhythmical heaviness. In the case of the closing threat, *EGPa* achieves a considerable poetic-dramatic effect with “o tocaré el tambor a la puerta de su alcoba / hasta que a gritos proclame la muerte del sueño” (*EGPa*.35-36), while *ISVa* offers a successful dramatic text that only misses a bit of the poetic power of the last line of *KLa* because of an attempt at phonetic evocation (“que con el ruido”) which resembles door-knocking more than drum-beating: “o que a la misma puerta de su cámara golpearé el tambor / hasta que con el ruido le dé muerte al sueño” (*ISVa*.29-30). It is worth noticing, finally, that the two versions differ in their treatment of Lear’s commands to have Regan and Cornwall see him. *ISVa* uses the formal second person for Lear’s imperatives:<sup>8</sup> “Id...”, “Ordenadles...”; *EGPa*

<sup>7</sup> *ISVa*’s “deseo impetuoso” might benefit from substitution by *EGPa*’s “arrebató”.

<sup>8</sup> In Spanish all imperatives are conjugated according to the rules of the second person.

prefers the informal one: "Ve y dile...", "Diles...", thus indicating a discrepancy with regard to Lear's attitude towards Gloucester at this point.

Summing up, *ISVa* is a version which allows for a greater amount of modulation and variation of emotion within the frame of the predominant mood, while being slightly biased towards providing "explanatory" or overtly prosaic versions for certain units of delivery, perhaps with a view to privilege the theatrical over the poetic effect or demand. *EGPa*, on the other hand, achieves a greater degree of poetic equivalence, undermined by the radical division it makes between its flatly outraged Lear of lines 1-19, and its finely poetic Lear of lines 19-36, which makes it less suitable for complex performance.

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As mentioned earlier, the mood framing the second fragment is extremely different from that of the first. The difference, of course, lies in Lear's deranged rambling between highly contrasting degrees of awareness of the world that surrounds him and of his own private universe of poetic truth and deception. The process by which the play, its poetry, and its main character are liberated from restrictions of time and space—from bondage to the logic of action and emotion—is now complete. In the first fragment the range of Lear's fluctuations is determined and conditioned by aspects of characterization and performance (sequential sets of performance tasks, units of delivery, and so on) which are logically definable so that style and performance conform to the framing mood. In the second passage, units of action and delivery exist within a framing mood which, if definable, does not lead to sustained logic; *i. e.*, here the logic of action and emotion is either juxtapositional or self-determined. Moreover, in this fragment the use of verse is resumed after a long period of exchanges in prose.

It is almost inevitable, and then somewhat awkward, to have to say that the best way to define Lear's mood in this passage is by acknowledging that he is mostly talking *and doing*—"matter and impertinency mix'd". Whether he talks and does because he has something to convey, or because he needs to speak—or loves to, or this is Shakespeare's method to poetically expose and dramatically exploit chaos, etc.—depends on such a monstrous amount of considerations that it would be pointless to attempt a discussion of motivations: this is a universe of poetry and emotion in the making and unmaking. A great deal of what he says and does, as implied in *KLb.23*, "I'll preach to thee", resembles acts of teaching, demonstrating, etc.; that is, acts of *performing*—nothing unusual with Shakespeare. And all those things are simultaneously

meant to project the disjoint world within on the world without, equally chaotic and dramatically undifferentiated. The Fool teaches and preaches again, now on “This / [his] great stage”, a barren one, no longer the discernible setting where the former Fool could afford to play with rhyme and reason. There, there was room—an intellectually fertile one—for the exchange between speaker and listener. Here, the new Fool’s lecturing is as ineffectual and isolated as the poetry is austere, nearly rough, brimful of deep self-mockery. Lear’s speeches are essentially self-referential, a monologue where a superimposed and disabled stage audience of two stands midway between the unreachable universe of the Dragon/Fool who speaks and does and the reader/spectator of the disjoint scene. This circumstance compels a tragic compassion pervaded and baffled by the necessarily contradictory effort at keeping track of the potential lesson. The two audiences are constrained to one framing act of their own: *to listen and see*—and listening and seeing become almost pure, almost themselves.

The freedom afforded Lear by the development of the play up to now provides the translator with an extense ground for the poetic performance of another world of madness in his own language. Predictably, *KLb* is consistently simple in sentence structure. There are few cases where the units of delivery become overtly related, and two make use of explicit relational links: *KLb*.12: “me, [...], who have...”, and *KLb*25: “we cry that we are...” The teachings of Lear are superficially linear though greatly entangled at the core, a correlative of the way in which the fragment makes and unmakes its logic.

*ISVb*, however, continues to lean towards explanation in the first half of the fragment, while *EGPb* again sticks to its objective of keeping the profusion of the Spanish language at check, consistently favoring the more succinct options. *ISVb* and *EGPb* confine the uncertainty of “thou mightst behold...” (*KLb*1) into a definite past tense: “Ahí pudiste ver...” (*ISVb*.1) and into a definite present tense: “Ahí puedes / contemplar...” (*EGPb*.2). The latter, however, allows for an expression of probability that the former practically cancels. The second sequence in *KLb* (“Thou rascal beadle... thou whipst her”) reads as a sudden address that consists of a vision of the torturer, an imperative, and a rebuke: three separate movements, the last made more complex by a conglomerate of possible intonations. The poetry is superbly dry: short, harsh sounds and beats—the Dragon is hoarse, not tame. *ISVb* offers a token of the general nature of its first fourteen lines with its translation of *KLb*.3-6. In *ISVb* the passage becomes a more structured sequence: “¡Tú, guardia villano, detén tu mano ensangrentada! / ¿Por qué azotas a esa puta? Descúbrete la espalda, / pues deseas usarla con ardor en aquello / por lo que la fustigas” (*ISVb*.4-7). This version displays logical links (“pues”), pronouns (“Tú”,

“-te”, “lo”, “-la”), and punctuation (exclamation marks at the beginning, commas to set “guardia villano” apart) that provide Lear’s vision of the torturer with an apparent excess of cohesiveness and explicitness.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, *EGPb*.6-10 finds in the directness of *KLb* a support for a less elaborate version—though only partially more effective. Both are newly encumbered by the obtrusiveness of the Spanish opening exclamation marks. Although *EGPb*.6 (“¡Alguacil bellaco...”), is decidedly better than *ISVb*.4 (“¡Tú, guardia villano”), as an equivalent for the beat of the quick vision of “Thou rascal beadle...”; both versions suffer from the suggestion of verbal violence inserted by the exclamation mark at the opening of the phrase. Indeed, the exclamation mark may have been placed (since we still have to place it somewhere) before the imperative “detén”. Somehow neither version manages to capture the hoarseness of the overwhelmingly monosyllabic sequence, although *EGPb* seems closer in terms of rhythm, before giving way to an entangled “para aquello mismo qué la castigas” (line 10)—while *ISVb* seems to draw nearer in phonetic terms, although too sparsely to succeed.

The tendency to overstate of *ISVb* would go unnoticed, except that the signs of overstatement stand too close to each other. Thus, “the usurer hangs the cozener”, immediately following, is rendered by “El usurero cuelga al que es ratero”. There is no clear justification for the inclusion of the clause marker “que”, which necessitates the use of “es”, except that the translators may have tried to avoid a ludicrous rhyme (“usurero”: “ratero”) and an overlapping of /a/ sounds had they used the simple sentence “el usurero cuelga al ratero”. But this near-doggerel does exist in *KLb*, and *ISVb* seems to be looking for an equivalent while trying to subdue the ugliness. And then ugliness is not shunned: a dubious hiatus is created between “que” and “es”, affecting the rhythm, taming the image, and achieving ugliness in a way that does not contribute to textual and dramatic complexity, but encumbers delivery. *EGPb*.11 dismisses the rhyme altogether and mildly approaches the unpleasantness by having four /a/ and three /l/ sounds meet at very short notice: “EL usurero Ahorca AL Ladrón”. Here is an illustration of the great difference between page and stage: this is too demanding for the actor, maybe not so for the silent reader.

The four units that precede the wonderfully simple core of the speech, “None does offend...”, are treated in distinct ways in each version. For *EGPb* there is no need whatsoever to assume a sequence other than the one established

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the effort to clarify by linking the units “Descúbrete la espalda” and “deseas usarla con ardor” by the use of “pues” introduces an unintentionally ambiguous antecedent for the pronominal suffix “-la”.

by *KLb*. In *KLb*.7-10 there are four units, divided into two groups. One group consists of two simple sentences that establish a comparison of how clothing poor and rich serve justice. However, although the method in Lear's madness is simple enough, it is not without matter: while "Through tatter'd... appear" places the subject "vices" near the end, and "Robes and furr'd gowns" —the subject— opens the second, thus suggesting a kind of symmetry, the nouns that denote the fabrics play different roles within each sentence, and the subject of the first is the (modified) object of the second. Then again, the length and rhythms strongly differ, and the verbs take the final blow in each sentence: the longer first sentence struts, the shorter second beats (*vid.* the opening trochaic variation), thus enriching and breaking symmetry, making the pair more complex than it seems. The second pair features a second comparison: how justice is served by armour rich and poor. The inversion poor/rich:rich/poor holds the four units together, they are simple variations on one theme. The second time, however, Lear seems to be building on his first, more austere, image, by duplicating the number of sentences involved: while the first part of the sequence contains one simple sentence for each unit (one pair), the second part, in turn, includes two coordinated sentences for each of its units (a pair of pairs) indicating a different level of consciousness towards the act of speaking/doing, and evidently, by the imperatives, a different relationship/tone/attitude towards the listener/seer —and the world.

*EGPb* deals with the combination very well, even though it is weakened at the end of the sequence, again, by choosing to invert the order of subject-object in line 19: "y lo atravesará hasta la paja de un pigmeo". "Paja" is tenuous, even though it lexically corresponds to "straw" —a very minor consideration— and may be intended as an instance of (dubious) alliteration. *ISVb*.11 does not suffer from that. "El dardo de un pigmeo lo atravesará" provides strong and expressive closure. Nonetheless, in *ISV*.7, "se ven los grandes vicios", while alliteration is achieved, and thus the verse gains in conclusiveness, "ven" is vague. In *EGPb*.11, instead, the suggestive "appear" is well served by "transparentan", whose length contributes to achieve a contrast between the first unit and the second, enhanced by a great rhythmical counterpoint between "Entre los harapos se transparentan / los vicios pequeños" and "Las túnicas y los mantos / de pieles todo lo ocultan". In *EGPb*, the use of the informal mode for the imperatives, "Recubre" "ármalo", is very good: brief, to the point. The rhythms of *EGPb*.12-19 allow for depth of interpretation by the performer while preserving the intense moral disturbance and insight. *ISVb*, on the other hand, makes a choice that seems to intrude upon its merits. Instead of rendering two sets of two sentences with opening imperatives, *ISVb*.9-11 chooses to open its version of *KLb*.8 ("Plate sin with

gold...”) with a structure that is not similar to its parallel “Arm it in rags...”, but to the preceding ones; *i. e.* “El pecado... se recubre” is structurally identical to “se ven... los vicios” and “las togas y ropajes... ocultan”.

This decision not to use an imperative is a good example of how the translator may unintentionally call havoc on himself from a particular choice that affects the whole of a larger structure, for it unleashes five major problems, all harmful to performance.

The first is that, whatever we may call this type of sentence in Spanish,<sup>10</sup> the phrase is definitely not imperative, and so the sequence is disrupted by becoming ...excessively sequential! —*i. e.*, by creating a sentence-structure link between the first, second *and* third units.

Secondly, this linking forces a narrative mode upon the speech: *things* are said to be doing *things* four times in a row, since “se ven... los vicios”, “las togas y ropajes... ocultan” and “El pecado... se recubre” are followed by “y la... lanza... se rompe”, once more structurally identical. This erases the borderline between the two pairs of units, and makes the sequence yield to monotony, since there is no shift of mode until the last unit, too late for comfort.

Thirdly, the non-imperative nature and ambiguity of “El pecado... se recubre” works against one of *ISV*’s goals: clarity. The coordination between “El pecado... se recubre” and “la lanza... se rompe” by the conjunction “y” provokes the “narrative lapse” mentioned above and, what is worse, cancels the cause and effect relationship between the two coordinated sentences: they read as items of the same status in a list.

Fourthly, this lack of cause-effect connection in unit three, due to the absence of the imperative at the beginning of it, actually obliterates the possibility of equivalence for the important parallel between “Plate... with gold... and the... lance... breaks” and “Arm... in rags, a... straw... does pierce”: if “El pecado se recubre...” does not correspond in mode—as it does not—to “Vestidlo con harapos...”, then “el dardo... lo atravesará” has very little to do with “la lanza... se rompe”.

Finally, the only imperative of the sequence, “Vestidlo...”, opening the fourth and last unit, displays the suffix-pronoun “-lo”, which is used later on, by itself: “lo atravesará”. We know that both “lo’s” refer to “pecado” (“sin”) *because we have Klb at hand (in sight), and have been discussing this ad nauseam*. but a reader confronting the passage solely in Spanish will probably be baffled after reaching the end of the sequence, wondering just what it is that must be “vestido” (“dressed”, rather than “armed”), for nothing has been

<sup>10</sup> The presence of the pronoun “se” introduces an apparent ambiguity whether a reflective or a disguised passive is intended.

commanded to be “dressed” in any way prior to this. But first he will naturally expect the referent for “-lo” to *follow* its pronoun, since it does not seem to *precede* it: he will read “dardo” and “pigmeo”, both masculine nouns, hence possible referents for “-lo”, only to find that the “dardo” belongs to the “pigmeo” and that it actually “atravesará” (“will pierce”) the second “lo”, which can only be understood as the same pronoun —therefore having the same referent— as the first. Neither “dardo” nor “pigmeo” makes sense as a referent. So the reader will have to turn his attention *back* (at least) to the previous unit —the two coordinated sentences beginning with the now monotonous “El pecado con oro se recubre”. Eventually our reader will realize that “pecado” —and not “oro”— is the antecedent for “-lo”, because, although both are masculine nouns that qualify as potential antecedents, “pecado” plays a more important part in that phrase, and because it makes better sense, but *not because of simply being* the antecedent.<sup>11</sup>

The problem becomes greater if we imagine the reaction of a spectator instead of a reader. All this, which in reality takes but a second to perceive, is unfortunately harmful to the dramatic qualities of *ISVb*, for it virtually precludes the performance of the sequence. In all justice, this is a rare case in the mostly successful interpretation from this fine team of translators, and must be understood merely as an example of the hardships we all confront.

To support this, it must be said that *ISVb*.12, the core and crown of the speech, is rhythmically splendid, dramatically moving in its simplicity, thematically round: “yo os absuelvo”. And so are the lines that follow it. In *KLb*.12 Lear reaches moral greatness through the utmost simplicity of expression and intensity of emotion, reinforced by his gracious and generous fall into “Take that of me, my friend, who have the power / To seal the accuser’s lips” (*KLb*.12-13). This is, at once, supreme self-mockery and an indisputable truth from a true royal nature. *ISVb*.13-14 (“pues yo tengo el poder / de sellarle los labios al que acusa”) is a rendering that matches the quiet firmness of the rhythms and phonetic fabric, which, in turn suggest the subdued wrath of our Dragon. *EGPb*. 20-24 is perhaps a bit less beautiful but not less effective. The versification chosen for most of *EGPb* is likewise an achievement. With a

<sup>11</sup> There could have been a sixth problem deriving from the abstention to use an imperative for “Plate”. The translators of *ISV* inverted the usual distribution of the Spanish sentence: normally, “El pecado con oro se recubre” should have been “El pecado se recubre con oro”, though more naturally it would have been “se recubre de oro”. Wisely, having chosen to invert the normal order, they refrained from writing “el pecado de oro se recubre”, thus avoiding an ambiguity, since the preposition “de” could also (though nonsensically) imply that the “sin” is made “of” gold, not merely plated “with” it.

solid phonetic texture, and a simple yet firm construction of the units of delivery, the verse of *EGPb* is nearly fragile, a token of the translator's understanding of Lear's fallen grace. The almost delicate quality of *EGPb*.22-24 flows on to pervade the second and third speeches of the madman, rendering them appropriately tender to the distant yet closest audience, Gloucester, the object of Lear's generous, *fatherly* kindness before his outburst of *KLb*.26-30, an outburst precisely against "son-in-laws". The usually puzzling "Now, now, now, now" of *KLb*.15 is less puzzling if we see it in this light: that Lear is trying to comfort one like him—both being fathers of their misbegotten illnesses—and one unlike him, someone who needs his loving care: the King as father of a subdit/fellow/son whose misfortunes the Dragon, somehow, also begets.

This variation on the framing mood of performing as teacher-preacher—the fellowship and fatherliness of one who tries to comfort—is sustained throughout *KLb*.19-26, not without the sudden explosion of the fallen-subdued wrath, which now is not expressed in furious tones, but rather in the bluntness of diction and rhythm, as with "If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes". One of the paradoxes of translation is that, commonly, maybe conventionally, where there is little fault found (that is, much to praise) there is also little to say. Both *ISVb*.20-27, and *EGP*31-40, as suggested above, achieve poetic drama: both texts offer the reader, the actor and the spectator a blend of sounds, meanings and sights of high quality.

Let us stop for a second at the question of tone. Lear's vocal performance moves from the violent-loving offer that Gloucester take Lear's eyes ("flesh of my flesh"), through the act of recognition by name (a sort of christening), to the call for patience before pain (a quasi ironic modulation on the theme of the fall, uttered by fellow-father to fellow-son: "Thou know'st"), and the newly abrupt assumption of the performer's task (the inevitable assumption of a role: "I'll preach..."). Perhaps because of the transparency of the diction and rhythms of this sequence in *KLb*, both translations travel the same distance unimpeded by differences native to the languages at play. Despite diverging strategies, both offer the same variety of opportunities for vocal performance. The formal second person of *ISVb* is as kind as the informal of *EGPb*. The free approach to prosody of the former is as rich as the strict but unpretentious of the latter. The discrepancies of diction do not cast a curse on each other, but confirm Benjamin's statement, they enrich both the original—in the true sense of the word—and the new creations mutually: *ISVb* "solloza" (a less intense "crying"), *EGPb* "llora" (a more intense one); the first says that we "gemimos" (a less intense "wawl"), the second, that we "aullamos" ("howl", a more intense one); one "smells" ("olemos") the air, the other "feels" it ("sen-



timos", implicitly through the nose); el rey Lear from Valencia wants to "platicar" [os] with Gloucester (a less severe way to talk than "preaching" with a more formal approach), el rey Lear from Mexico wants to "sermonear" [te] (a severe and strict "preaching" with a less formal approach). All dissent, all concur in the majesty of *King Lear*.

Eventually, this royal motion inwards and outwards reaches a point of disruption which is only natural, naturally inevitable. The Dragon's lectures make it evident: a state of such grace, so fallen, so high, cannot be sustained nor borne for long. Lear puts on the gown of the ultimate performer, begins to deliver the great beginning of the great end, "When we are born, we cry that we are come/ to this great stage of fools", and is suddenly visited by his greatest enemy. Something breaks in: "This' a good block" —a riddle that remains impregnable, the "proof" that *King Lear* will remain impregnable. And then it is back to the beginning, the Dragon and his wrath, more terrible now, for the play is not over. At this point it does not matter that *ISVb* reads "un buen sombrero" (the "hat" speculation) and *EGPb* has "buen bloque" (an indefinite "block").<sup>12</sup> It does not matter either that he moves "sigilosamente hasta mis hijos" (strictly "sons", without explicit "in-laws"), or "con sigilo me acerque a esos yernos míos" (explicitly "in-laws", implicitly "sons"). It does not matter. Both texts "kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill" —one with a vengeance on the first syllable (*ISVb*, "'mata, 'mata..."), the other on the last (*EGPb* "ma'tar, ma'tar..."). So that all the text-texts of the fallen Dragon may be performed, and perform equally well: to the eyes, on the pages, in the voices, and on the stages of the many who will make him theirs.

\* \* \*

In the end, *King Lear* as *El rey Lear*, in both these and all other personalities, is a part, "and only one part", of the fantastic Dragon *King Lear*. If the truth were told (that is, if the truth had existed, if *El rey Lear*, the unfinished project, had been, had existed) my choice between *El rey Lear* and *El rey Lear* by my fellow translators would have been a no-choice: the text-adaptation

<sup>12</sup> Who can refrain to advance his own opinion (or the one he subscribes)? Mine is that "block" is essentially Schmidt's 1) "the wood on which criminals are beheaded", the very place where Lear would have his "in-laws" to "kill, kill...", and not 2) "the wood on which hats are formed", in spite of the "felt". Lear sees "a good block" somewhere, and it leads to performance: Lear as the executioner he earlier rebuked. Paul Scofield and Peter Brooks's choice was Lear's own head, "a good block" to hit when contact with a certain reality is resumed.

for the impossible production would have brought them together, as they bring together King Lear *and themselves*, and as they bring together *El rey Lear* and the Spanish-speaking readers and audiences. As a matter of practice, the comparison is beneficial only if understood as a means to clarify one's own sense of what *King Lear* is, and of what translation —beyond the particular cases— is and can do.

Faults and merits are merely incidental to the performance of the translation. The greatness of translating, of performing, is that it gives life to so much that would otherwise be stale or comfortably numb. The words of the Dragon teach us well: "None does offend, none..." —and it must be remembered that "la fuerça con que ella malfaze non la a en la boca".

## APPENDIX

### Source and target texts

#### KLa

- LEAR: Deny to speak with me? They are sick, they are weary,  
They have traveled all the night? Mere fetches,  
The images of revolt and flying off!  
Fetch me a better answer.
- 5 GLOS: My dear lord,  
You know the fiery quality of the Duke,  
How unremovable and fix'd he is  
In his own course.
- LEAR: Vengeance, plague, death, confusion!  
Fiery? What quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,  
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.
- 10 GLOS: Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.  
LEAR: Inform'd them? Dost thou understand me, man?  
GLOS: Ay, my good lord.
- LEAR: The King would speak with Cornwall. The dear father  
Would with his daughter speak, commands, tends, service.
- 15 Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!  
Fiery? The fiery Duke, tell the hot Duke that—  
No, but not yet. May be he is not well.  
Infirmity doth still neglect all office  
Whereto our health is bound. We are not ourselves



- Me irrita este deseo impetuoso de tomar  
por hombre sano al enfermizo. ¡Abajo mi poder!  
¿Por qué amarrado así? Este hecho me convence  
25 de que el traslado de ella y del duque  
es solamente una estrategia. Dadme a mi servidor.  
Id a decir al duque y a su esposa que quiero hablar con ellos,  
¡y que inmediatamente! Ordenadles que vengan y me escuchen  
o que a la misma puerta de su cámara golpearé el tambor  
30 hasta que con el ruido le dé muerte al sueño.

**EGPa**

- LEAR: ¡Negarse a hablar conmigo!  
¡Están enfermos! ¡Están fatigados!  
¡Han viajado toda la noche! ¡Puros pretextos  
no más! ¡Signos de rebeldía y evasión!  
¡Ve y tráeme mejor respuesta!
- 5 GLOS: Mi señor,  
ya conocéis el carácter fogoso del duque;  
¡que invariable y firme es en su decisión!
- LEAR: ¡Venganza! ¡Peste, muerte, confusión!  
¡Fogoso! ¿Cuál carácter?
- 10 ¡No, no, Gloucester! Quiero hablar con el duque de Cornwall y  
con su esposa.
- GLOS: Bien, mi buen señor,  
ya se los he informado.
- LEAR: ¡Informado! ¡Qué! ¿No me entiendes, hombre?
- GLOS: Sí, mi buen señor.
- LEAR: El rey quiere hablar  
15 con Cornwall. El padre cariñoso quiere hablar  
con su hija; manda, reclama servicio.  
¿Han sido informados de esto? ¡Ah, mi aliento y mi sangre!  
¡Fogoso! ¡El fogoso duque! Decidle al duque  
de mal genio... No, pero todavía no;  
20 quizá no esté bien; la enfermedad descuida siempre  
todo oficio al que nuestra salud  
está obligada. No somos los mismos  
cuando la naturaleza se siente abatida  
y le ordena a la mente padecer con el cuerpo.

- 25 Me contendré. Y me arrepiento del arrebato  
que me llevó a confundir la indisposición  
y el ataque  
de enfermedad con la reacción de un hombre sano.  
¿Por qué tiene que estar sentado ahí?
- 30 Aquesta orden me convence que el retiro  
de ella y del duque es mero fingimiento.  
Que me entreguen a mi servidor. Ve y dile al duque  
y a su esposa que quiero hablar con ellos,  
ahora, inmediatamente. Diles que salgan
- 35 o tocaré el tambor en la puerta de su alcoba  
hasta que a gritos proclame la muerte del sueño.

**KLb**

- LEAR: And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold  
the great image of  
authority: a dog's obey'd in office.  
Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!  
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;
- 5 Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind  
For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.  
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,  
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
- 10 Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.  
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:  
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power  
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes,  
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
- 15 To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now.  
Pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.
- EDG: O, matter and impertinency mix'd!  
Reason in madness!
- LEAR: If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
- 20 I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:  
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:  
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air  
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

GLOS: Alack, alack the day!

- 25 LEAR: When we are born, we cry that we are come  
To this great stage of fools. This' a good block.  
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe  
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put't in proof;  
And when I have stol'n upon these son-in-laws,  
30 Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

## ISVb

- LEAR: ¿Y a la criatura huir del perro? Ahí pudiste ver  
el gran emblema de la autoridad:  
a un perro en su cargo se le obedece siempre.  
¡Tú, guardia villano, detén tu mano ensangrentada!
- 5 ¿Por qué azotas a esa puta? Descúbrete la espalda,  
pues deseas usarla con ardor en aquello  
por lo que la fustigas. El usurero cuelga al que es ratero.  
A través de las telas harapientas se ven los grandes vicios;  
las togas y ropajes de piel todo lo ocultan. El pecado  
con oro se recubre,
- 10 y la fuerte lanza de la justicia se rompe inofensiva.  
Vestidlo con harapos y el dardo de un pigmeo lo atravesará.  
Nadie es culpable, nadie, os digo, nadie; yo os absuelvo.  
Hacedme caso, amigo mío, pues yo tengo el poder  
de sellarle los labios al que acusa. Procúrate unos ojos  
de cristal,
- 15 y como un intrigante rastrero finge ver  
las cosas que no ves... Y bien, muy bien, muy bien.  
¡Quitadme las botas! Más fuerte, más, así.
- EDG: ¡Oh, mezcla de claridad y sinsentido,  
razón de la locura!
- 20 LEAR: Si queréis llorar por mí, tomad mis ojos.  
Os conozco muy bien. Gloucester es vuestro nombre.  
Debéis tener paciencia. Aquí vinimos sollozando;  
sabéis que cuando olemos el aire por primera vez  
gemimos y lloramos. Quisiera platicaros: escuchad.
- 25 GLOS: ¡Ah, maldito! ¡Maldito sea aquel día!
- LEAR: Al nacer lamentamos haber venido a este gran escenario  
de locos. ¡Este es un buen sombrero!

30                   Qué fina estratagema sería herrar con fieltro  
toda una escuadra de caballos. Yo lo intentaré,  
y cuando llegue sigilosamente hasta mis hijos,  
entonces, ¡mata, mata, mata, mata!

# EGPb

LEAR: ¿Y al pobre hombre huyendo de ese perro infeliz?  
Ahí puedes  
contemplar la gran imagen de la Autoridad.  
Al perro se le obedece cuando desempeña  
5                   un empleo.  
¡Alguacil bellaco, detén tu mano  
ensangrentada! ¿Por qué azotas a esa ramera?  
desnuda tu propia espalda; ardes en deseos  
de usar a la mujer  
10                  para aquello mismo que la castigas.  
El usurero ahorca al ladrón.  
Entre los harapos se transparentan  
los vicios pequeños. Las túnicas y los mantos  
de pieles todo lo ocultan. Recubre  
15                  el pecado  
con planchas de oro, y la fuerte lanza  
de la Justicia se romperá sin hacer daño;  
ármalo con harapos,  
y lo atravesará hasta la paja de un pigmeo.  
20                  Nadie es pecador; nadie;  
yo lo digo; nadie; yo responderé por ellos.  
Aprende, amigo mío, eso de mí,  
que tengo poder para hacer que calle  
la boca el acusador. Ponte ojos de vidrio,  
25                  y como un embaucador, finge ver  
lo que no ves.  
Vamos, vamos, ya, pronto;  
quítame las botas; más fuerte, ya.  
EDG: ¡Oh, que mezcla de buen sentido y desatino!  
30                  ¡Razón en la locura!  
LEAR: Si llorar quieres mis desgracias, toma mis ojos.  
Te conozco muy bien; te llamas Gloucester.

- Debes tener paciencia.  
Llorando vinimos aquí. Ya sabes  
35 que aullamos y lloramos  
no bien sentimos el aire. Voy a sermonearte,  
escucha:  
GLOS: ¡Ay, qué día!  
LEAR: Cuando nacemos, lloramos por haber venido  
40 a este gran escenario de locos. ¡Qué buen bloque  
es éste! Bonita idea sería  
herrar todo un escuadrón de caballos con fieltro;  
lo probaré, y cuando con sigilo  
me acerque a esos yernos míos, entonces,  
45 ¡matar, matar, matar, matar, matar!