The Choice of Relative Pronouns in the First Quarto and First Folio Texts of Shakespeare’s Richard III: Testing the Memorial Reconstruction Hypothesis

1. Introduction

Shakespeare’s Richard III is extant in two texts: the First Quarto published in 1597 and the First Folio published in 1623. In his 1936 monograph, The Textual History of Richard III, Patrick explores the relationship between the Quarto and Folio texts of this play, proposing that the Quarto version is a memorial reconstruction of the Folio version. His argument is based on an examination of variants between the two texts, which are classified in four groups: (1) repetitions arising from
anticipation or recollection of materials elsewhere in the original, (2) transpositions of lines or parts of lines, (3) omissions of passages, and (4) substitutions of synonyms or synonymous phrases. Individual variants are minor in most cases, but by accumulating such small changes, Patrick claims that the Folio text is closer to Shakespeare’s original text, whereas the Quarto text, which he believes contains metrically irregular lines, colloquial expressions, and grammatical errors, is considered as having descended from a record that the actors made relying on their inaccurate memories. Agreeing with Patrick’s view, Hammond elaborates on this point in his Quarto-based edition of Richard III, suggesting that substitutions or verbal variants (the fourth category in Patrick’s categorisation above) provide crucial evidence in favour of the hypothesis of memorial reconstruction:

A further class of variant which Patrick considers is substitution of various kinds; there are synonyms (such as avenged/revenged, murder/slaughter), changes in number (water/waters) or in tense (did I enjoy/have I enjoyed) or in terms of address (my gracious/noble Lord), the introduction of exclamations or interjections such as ‘O’, ‘Why’, ‘Tush’ and so on (and the omission of some present in F), and various kinds of change in enormous number. It is, finally, the sheer quantity of variation which tells most heavily in favour of Patrick’s theory. He lists, for instance, over two hundred cases of synonymous substitution, over seventy cases of change in number, nearly a hundred of various kinds of paraphrase. It is hard to argue that a consciously revising author would have introduced such sweeping changes into the texture of his work without altering it in more fundamental ways;... (Hammond 1981, 6)

Thus, Patrick and Hammond argue that the “sweeping” verbal changes that make no significant differences in the reading of the texts would not have been introduced in a process of conscious revision. They also assume that the Quarto is suffering from corrupted readings, relating these to the faulty memories of actors who participated in reconstructing the Quarto text. On the other hand, Urkowitz, who conducts a performance-based analysis, provides empirical evidence showing the dramatic excellence of the Quarto and questions the hypothesis of memorial reconstruction, though he finds little significance in the substitutions of synonymous words, stating that writers will make such minor changes “simply as part of their delight” (Urkowitz 1986, 462).

Smidt conducts a much closer investigation into verbal variants in his two monographs, Iniurious Impostors and “Richard III” (1964) and Memorial Transmission and Quarto Copy in Richard III: A Reassessment (1970). Using the same method as Patrick, Smidt assesses the adequacy of the hypothesis of memorial reconstruction. Here are two of the examples he refers to (Smidt 1970, 16):

(1a) Thy George, profan’d, hath lost his lordly [Q holy] honor (R3 4.4.369)
(1b) God knows, in torment and agony [Q anguish, pain and agony] (R3 4.4.164)
In (1a), *holy*, which is antithetical to *profan’d*, is more appropriate than *lordly*, suggesting that the Quarto’s reading is right. In (1b), *pain* and *agony* in the Quarto are tautological and the Folio’s reading can be seen as authorial. Variants of these kinds are so numerous that it is hard to decide, on the basis of verbal differences, which text represents Shakespeare’s original writing. In fact, Smidt challenges Patrick’s hypothesis in his first monograph, but he partly amends his claim in his second, admitting that some of the changes owe to the actors’ inaccurate memories. However, Smidt still believes that the Quarto’s readings are certainly better than the Folio’s in many details, hypothesising that a memorial report may have been collated with Shakespeare’s original papers; he also infers that some variants in the Quarto text may have been approved or even introduced by Shakespeare himself during the production of the Quarto text or its original text. (Smidt 1970, 44–47). Similarly, Jowett (2000, 119–127), Lull (2009, 220–222), and Urkowitz (1986) argue that the Quarto’s readings are better than the Folio’s in numerous details. Lull, in particular, considers that the Quarto may have come from one Shakespearean draft or it may have been revised by Shakespeare himself.

Undoubtedly, the Quarto’s variants are not always corruptions, as they are sometimes even preferable when compared with the Folio’s, in semantic as well as dramatic quality. However, previous scholars – both supporters of Patrick’s hypothesis and those who deny it – have rarely dealt with function words, which have little effect on the meanings of sentences: the examples of variation that Hammond lists in the quotation above represent changes in content words, except for two that are related to changes in the grammatical number (*water/waters*) or tense marker (*did I enjoy/have I enjoyed*); likewise, as seen in (1ab) above, Smidt is mainly concerned with substitutions of content words such as nouns and adjectives, identifying few differences in the choice of function words. To fill this gap, the present study focuses on the use of relative pronouns, testing whether Patrick’s hypothesis can account for the variants of the function words. Interestingly, the results reveal consistency in the choice of relative pronouns in each text: the Quarto prefers *which* while the Folio uses *that* to introduce non-restrictive relative clauses. It is notable that the non-restrictive use of *that* had already been falling out of use in Shakespeare’s time, and he usually used *wh*-relatives to introduce non-restrictive clauses. Thus, regarding the use of *that/ which*, the Quarto exhibits Shakespeare’s ordinary usage, whereas the Folio deviates from it, which cannot be explained by the memorial reconstruction hypothesis. In conclusion, I shall posit that relative pronouns in the Quarto text may have been deliberately revised, by Shakespeare or someone else, in the process of written transmission.
2. General frequency

The Folio and Quarto texts of Richard III are largely different in length: the Folio is about 200 lines longer than the Quarto; on the other hand, the “clock” passage of about twenty lines is unique to the Quarto (Hammond 1981, 2; Jowett 2000, 120). Due to these discrepancies, a relative clause in one text may not have a counterpart in the other. To concentrate on the correspondence between the two texts, I excluded F-only or Q-only items from the analysis, retrieving 241 instances of relative pronouns shared by the texts. The Folio and Quarto use the same relative pronouns in most cases: they share 56 instances of which, 12 of who, 11 of whom, and 141 of that. In total, they use the same forms for 220 cases out of 241 (91.3%). There remain only 21 cases for which the texts use different relative pronouns. However, these variants indicate a crucial difference that characterises each text: the Folio tends to use that where the Quarto uses which. This that/which variation occurs 13 times. Interestingly, these two items are never substituted the other way around.

After the publication of the First Quarto of Richard III in 1597, eight more quartos appeared between 1598 and 1634; the First Folio was published in 1623 and then three more folios followed between 1632 and 1685 (Davison 1996, 4). The variation in relative pronouns is not attested in different quarto or folio versions. Therefore, we need not take these later versions into consideration.

3. That/which substitution

As mentioned in the previous section, the Quarto uses which where the Folio uses that 13 times, accounting for more than half of the total number of substitutions of relative pronouns. This consistency indicates that variation in relative pronouns was not introduced in the process of memorial transmission. In order to consider which form – which or that – represents Shakespeare’s normal usage, it is necessary to know what parameters he relies on in choosing relative pronouns.

In Present-day English, the choice between wh-relatives and that is determined by the information parameter, which distinguishes restrictive clauses from non-restrictive (Fischer 1992, 295). In the former, the referent is only identifiable through modification of the relative clause; in the latter, the referent can be identified without modification and the information given by the relative clause is nonessential or merely additional. In Present-day English, non-restrictive clauses cannot be introduced by that and wh-pronouns must be used. In Early Modern English, this distinction had not been so firmly established, but the non-restrictive use of that was rare in Shakespeare’s English (see section 4 for more details). The boundary between restrictive and non-restrictive is not always clear, and Jespersen labels several instances as “doubtful” when listing examples of non-restrictive
Hope also recognises that there is “potential for ambiguity” in distinguishing non-restrictive relative clauses from restrictive ones in Early Modern English texts, including Shakespeare’s, where one cannot rely on intonation or punctuation (1994, 32-33). Nevertheless, when the antecedent is a proper name or pronoun, it helps us to determine whether the relative clause is restrictive or non-restrictive. When the antecedent is a common noun, the context in which it occurs may provide a clue. By examining individual examples below with the information parameter in mind, it will be revealed that the relative clauses found in the that/which substitution are non-restrictive in most cases.

I shall begin with examples using personal antecedents. In example (2), two relative pronouns are used in parallel, whose antecedents are the proper name Edward combined with a common noun thy son or our son:

(2) MARGARET. Edward thy son, that [Q which] now is Prince of Wales, / For Edward our son, that [Q which] was Prince of Wales, / Die in his youth by like untimely violence! (R3 1.3.198–200)

Since a proper name refers to a unique person, the relative clause used with it simply adds further information concerning the referred person(s); hence, the relative clause is non-restrictive (Quirk et al. 1985, §§5.64, 17.5; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1060). In (3), the antecedent is the reflexive form of thou, i.e. thyself:

(3) ANNE. And by despairing shalt thou stand excused / For doing worthy vengeance on thyself, / That [Q Which] didst unworthy slaughter upon others. (R3 1.2.86–88)

The relative clause here is also non-restrictive because the antecedent is a second person pronoun, which refers to a unique person that is identifiable without a further qualification (Quirk et al. 1985, §6.20[c]). Likewise, the antecedents of the two relative pronouns in (4) are personal pronouns, one being her and the other thy:

(4) RICHARD. I was provoked by her sland’rous tongue, / That [Q Which] laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

ANNE. Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind, / That [Q Which] never dream’st on aught but butcheries. (R3 1.2.97–100)

With a third person pronoun, the function of the relative clause varies depending on whether the pronominal antecedent has its referent in the preceding context or not: if the referent of the pronominal antecedent is mentioned in the preceding context and the referred person is identifiable without further qualification, the relative clause following it is non-restrictive; however, if the pronominal antecedent cannot be individualised without the qualification of the relative clause, it is restrictive
Following this criterion, the relative clause in Richard’s lines is interpreted as non-restrictive because the referent of Richard’s *her* (i.e. Queen Margaret) is found in the preceding lines of Anne: “Queen Margaret saw / Thy murd’rous falchion smoking in his blood” (R3 1.2.93–94). The relative clause in Anne’s lines is also non-restrictive, whose antecedent is *thy*, an inflexional form of *thou*, just like example (3).

When a common noun is the antecedent, as in (5ab), only context provides a clue to determine whether the relative clause is restrictive or non-restrictive:

(5a) **RICHARD.** Tell her the King, *that* [*Q which*] may command, entreats. (R3 4.4.345)

(5b) **DUCHESS OF YORK.** If so then, be not tongue-tied; go with me, / And in the breath of bitter words let’s smother / My damned son *that* [*Q which*] thy two sweet sons smother’d. (R3 4.4.132–134)

From the context, it is obvious that the antecedents, *the King* (5a) and *My damned son* (5b), refer to Richard; therefore, the relative clauses are both non-restrictive.

Next to be considered are examples with a non-personal antecedent. Example (6) comes from Clarence’s account of his dream in Act 1 Scene 4:

(6) **CLARENCE.** Ah Keeper, Keeper, I have done these things / *(That [*Q Which*] now give evidence against my soul)* / For Edward’s sake, and see how he requites me! (R3 1.4.66–68)

What Clarence implies by *these things* is his two past misdeeds: one is his swearing an oath of allegiance to the Lancastrians and the other his butchering Edward of Lancaster at Tewkesbury. These treacherous behaviours are described by Clarence himself about ten to fifteen lines above, being expressed by means of the voice of Warwick: “What scourge for perjury / Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?” (R3 1.4.50-51) and that of Prince Edward: “Clarence is come: false, fleeting, perjured Clarence, / That stabbed me in the field by Tewkesbury” (R3 1.4.55-56). Thus, the relative clause is non-restrictive, as what *these things* indicates is clearly understood by the audience as well as by the Keeper that Clarence talks to. Example (7) comes from the scene of the Duchess of York’s lamentation of her two late sons:

(7) **DUCHESS OF YORK.** But now two mirrors of his princely semblance / Are crack’d in pieces by malignant death, / And I for comfort have but one false glass, / *(That [*Q Which*] grieves me when I see my shame in him)*. (R3 2.2.51–54)

By *two mirrors*, the Duchess of York metaphorically refers to her late sons, King Edward IV and the Duke of Clarence. The antecedent *one false glass* is also
a metaphorical expression, whose referent is obviously her third son Richard. Hence, the relative clause following it is non-restrictive. The antecedents in (8a–c) are all modified by the possessive pronoun your, which helps to individualise what they refer to:

(8a) RICHARD. Your beauty was the cause of that effect— / Your beauty, that [Q which] did haunt me in my sleep / To undertake the death of all the world, / So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom. (R3 1.2.121–124)

(8b) RICHARD. Madam, I have a touch of your condition, / That [Q Which] cannot brook the accent of reproof. (R3 4.4.158-159)

(8c) ELIZABETH. Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter: / The King, on his own royal disposition / (And not provok’d by any suitor else), / Aiming, belieke, at your interior hatred, / That [Q Which] in your outward action shows itself / Against my children, brothers, and myself, / Makes him to send, that he may learn the ground. (R3 1.3.62–68)

These relative clauses are non-restrictive as they simply add further information to the traits of the character that the speaker refers to: Anne (8a), the Duchess of York (Richard’s mother) (8b), and Richard (8c). Finally, example (9) affords no substantial clue that allows us to determine whether the relative clause is restrictive or non-restrictive. It can be interpreted either way:

(9) CLARENCE. Some lay in dead men’s skulls, and in the holes / Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept / (As ’twere in scorn of his eyes) reflecting gems, / That [Q Which] woo’d the slimy bottom of the deep, / And mock’d the dead bones that lay scatt’red by. (R3 1.4.29–33)

4. Non-restrictive that

In the previous section, it was shown that in the Folio that introduces a non-restrictive clause in the twelve examples cited in (2)–(8), though it is ambiguous in (9). Historically, that was freely used to introduce non-restrictive as well as restrictive relative clauses, but around the Late Middle English period, non-restrictive that began to be replaced by wh-pronouns (Fischer 1992, 296). The relative that was almost confined to the restrictive use in the Early Modern English period, when Shakespeare was composing his plays and also the First Folio and First Quarto texts were being published (Saito 1960, 82–83; Dekeyser 1984, 68–70; Rissanen 1999, 293). Shakespeare rarely used that to introduce a non-restrictive relative clause. Hope investigates the functions of major relative pronouns (who[m], which, and that) used in six plays that were composed, like Richard III (1592-1593), during the last decade of the sixteenth century. The plays he examined are The Comedy
of Errors (1592–1594), The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1594), Richard II (1595), Love’s Labour’s Lost (1595-1596), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (1595-1596), and The Merchant of Venice (1596-1597). Hope statistically demonstrates the scarcity of non-restrictive that in these plays: there are 477 instances of relative that, and 436 (91.4%) are restrictive while 41 (8.6%) are non-restrictive (Hope 1994, 41). To determine which text represents Shakespeare’s choice, it is necessary to examine the function of relative that shared by the Folio and Quarto as well, which occurs 141 times (section 2), though it is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, Folio’s consistent choice of that, instead of which in the Quarto, suggests that the Folio certainly deviates from Shakespeare’s normal practice, as far as the use of relative pronouns is concerned.

On the other hand, which can be either restrictive or non-restrictive. Using a wide variety of genres of texts, Dekeyser examines functions of individual relative pronouns. His data show that which tends to be non-restrictive in the early seventeenth century: of the 939 instances of which, 381 (40.6%) are restrictive, while 558 (59.4%) are non-restrictive (Dekeyser 1984, 69). Saito also shows that since the middle of the sixteenth century, which has been “used more often non-restrictively” in colloquial English (1960, 79). In the case of Shakespeare, there are 171 instances of relative which in Hope’s sample plays, and they are evenly divided between restrictive and non-restrictive, as 84 (49.1%) are restrictive while 87 (50.9%) are non-restrictive (41). Hence, the Quarto’s which in (2)–(9) can be taken as reflecting Shakespeare’s normal practice, and the Quarto text may be closer to Shakespeare’s original writing.

5. Personal which

Among the that/which substitutions, the Quarto’s choice of which in examples (2)–(5), in which it follows a personal antecedent, calls for explanation. In Early Modern English, when the animacy parameter was less significant, which as well as who(m) was available to refer to a person/persons, though the use of which was gradually being restricted to referring to things, and replaced by who(m) after personal antecedents (Rydén 1966, 366; Rissanen 1999, 294; Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2002, 117–119). In Shakespeare’s English, who and whom are prevalent as personal relative pronouns as well, accounting for about four-fifths of the instances of use, while which accounts for one-fifth (Sato 2016, 212). However, the Quarto’s use of personal which does not dispute its authority; on the contrary, Shakespeare’s choice may be which.

Sato (2016) carried out a socio-pragmatic analysis of personal which in Shakespeare’s plays, revealing that the playwright exploits it in the same contexts in which the second person pronoun thou is generally preferred – when the speaker refers to his/her social inferiors or when the speaker is highly emotional, usually
angry at his/her referent(s). In Shakespeare’s English, *thou* is the marked form used to address social inferiors or used with emotional connotations, while singular *you*, an originally polite form for addressing social superiors, is the unmarked form (Barber 1981; Busse 2002). Interestingly, the relative *which* often takes *thou* as its antecedent, but rarely collocates with *you* (Sato 2016, 215).

Regarding examples (2)–(5), social disparities are hardly relevant, because the speaker and his/her referent are equal or nearly equal in social rank. (Anne refers to Richard prior to his accession in (3) and (4).) Instead, emotional factors seem to be crucial in the choice of *which*. In (2), Margaret insults the son of Queen Elizabeth, the Prince of Wales; her hatred of him might have triggered *which* in the Quarto. The second relative pronoun in (2), which refers to Margaret’s own son, Edward, probably just repeats the same item for parallelism. (Note that the Folio repeats *that* as well.) Examples (3) and (4) are both in Act 1 Scene 2, where Anne bitterly denounces Richard, consistently referring to him as *thou* or employing its inflexional forms. Barber calls her use of *thou* “hostile *thou*,” which occurs 34 times in her furious words to Richard in this scene (1981, 279). Anne’s *which* in (3) and (4) takes this “hostile” *thou* as its antecedent, i.e. *thyself* in (3) and *thy* in (4). In (4), Richard also uses *which* in reference to Margaret, whom he obviously hates. In (5b), where the Duchess of York abusively calls Richard “My damned son,” an emotional factor (her anger at her son) is relevant. Finally, (5a) cannot be assessed from this socio-pragmatic perspective, because the speaker, Richard, refers to himself.

Thus, personal *which* in the Quarto can be a sign of the speakers’ heightened emotions such as anger or hostility towards their referents. This emotional factor is at play in the personal *which* in the Quarto, except for (5a), reinforcing our argument that the Quarto’s choice of relative pronouns represents Shakespeare’s habits.

### 6. Other variants

Apart from the *that/which* substitution, I shall examine other variant patterns of relative pronouns, which occur eight times. The corresponding patterns and their frequencies in the Quarto (Q) and Folio (F) are as follows: Q omission for F *that* (2x), Q omission for F *whom* (1x), Q *who* for F *which* (1x), Q *that* for F *who* (1x), Q *which* for F *who* (1x), and Q *whom* for F *who* (2x). The first three pairs are cited in (10a–c), where the Folio has *that* or *whom* in the object position while they are omitted in the Quarto:

(10a) ELIZABETH. By heaven, I will acquaint his Majesty / Of those gross taunts *that* [Q omission] oft I have endur’d. (R3 1.3.104–105)

(10b) RICHARD. O, true, good Catesby. Bid him levy straight / The greatest strength and power *that* [Q omission] he can make, / And meet me suddenly at Salisbury. (R3 4.4.449–451)
(10c) BUCKINGHAM. This is the day wherein I wish’d to fall / By the false faith of him whom [Q omission] most I trusted; (R3 5.1.16–17)

It is quite common for Shakespeare to omit an object relative pronoun (Blake 2002, §3.3.2.6[f]). Therefore, the presence or absence of a relative pronoun has little significance in considering the question of the authority of the two versions. Likewise, example (11) yields no clue for solving the question as to which text is closer to Shakespeare’s own writing:

(11) HASTINGS. But I shall laugh at this a twelvemonth hence, / That they which [Q who] brought me in my master’s hate, / I live to look upon their tragedy. (R3 3.2.57–59)

Here, Hastings refers to the kin of Queen Elizabeth, who are his “adversaries” (R3 3.2.52); he is pleased to know that Richard is going to kill them, because they caused King Edward to hate Hastings. The Folio’s which follows Shakespeare’s normal way of choosing which with a personal antecedent (section 5). The Quarto’s who is acceptable as Shakespeare’s choice as well.

However, the remaining four instances are not to be dismissed merely as accidental errors or unintentional changes. In particular, example (12), which Hastings utters at the very end of Act 3 Scene 4, suggests that the Quarto’s reading represents Shakespeare’s original writing:

(12) HASTINGS. They smile at me who [Q that] shortly shall be dead. (R3 3.4.107)

By the antecedent they, Hastings implies his enemies, but as it has no referent in the preceding context, the relative clause is restrictive. (For the function of relative clauses after a third person pronoun, see the discussion of example (4) above.) As in the Quarto’s reading in (12), Shakespeare sometimes concludes a scene with the pattern of “a noun/pronoun … restrictive that” (that is always separated from its antecedent), e.g. “The night is long that never finds the day” (Mac. 4.3.240); “All with me’s meet that I can fashion fit” (Lr. 1.2.184); “Go then, for ’tis in vain / To seek him here that means not to be found” (Rom. 2.1.41-42); “Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast” (Rom. 2.3.94). As the last example is proverbial (Evans 2003, 118), these sentences are terse and epigrammatic, fit for the closing line to round off a scene. Interestingly, Shakespeare often concludes a scene with an epigram or adage especially in the plays of his early and middle periods (Clemen 1968, 142). It remains unanswered why wh-relatives are never employed in these scene-ending sentences because wh-relatives can be restrictive as well as non-restrictive in Shakespeare (section 4). Actually, the Folio’s reading is the solitary example using who, to my knowledge. However, from the four examples cited above, it is evinced that the “noun/pronoun … restrictive that”
pattern is a formula that Shakespeare regularly uses to conclude a scene, and the Quarto’s choice of *that* is in accordance with his preference.

Personification is also characteristic of Shakespeare’s relative pronouns: by personifying an inanimate thing, he uses *who(m)* with it (Abbott 1870, §264). In (13), the inanimate antecedent, *my panting bulk*, is personified in the Folio, while the animacy parameter is observed in the Quarto:

(13) CLARENCE. But smother’d it within my panting bulk, / *Who* [Q *Which*] almost burst to belch it into the sea. (R3 1.4.40–41)

As regards personification of antecedents, Abbott (1870, §264) states that “[t]he slightest active force, or personal feeling, attributed to the antecedent, suffices to justify *who*,” citing, for example, “The dispers’d air, *who* holding Lucrece’ life, / Answer’d their cries…” (*The Rape of Lucrece* 1805–1806), where the verb *answer* justifies the use of *who*. In the case of (13), *who* is justified by *panting* and *belch*. Thus, the reading of the Folio represents Shakespeare’s typical usage, though it does not necessarily exclude the possibility of the Quarto’s authority.

In (14ab), the Folio has *who* in the object position, while the Quarto has *whom*:

(14a) RICHARD. Clarence, *who* [Q *whom*] I indeed have cast in darkness, / I do beweep to many simple gulls— / Namely to Derby, Hastings, Buckingham— (R3 1.3.326–328)

(14b) TYRREL. Dighton and Forrest, *who* [Q *whom*] I did suborn / To do this piece of ruthless butchery, / Albeit they were flesh’d villains, bloody dogs, / Melted with tenderness and kind compassion, / Wept like two children in the deaths’ sad story. (R3 4.3.4–8)

In Early Modern English, as in Present-day English, both *who* and *whom* were available in the object position. It is impossible to say which text is authorial or close to Shakespeare’s own writing, because both forms were common in that position in Shakespeare’s English, who “was in advance of other writers of his time in the use of *who* instead of *whom* in oblique cases of the relative pronoun…” (Blake 2002, §3.2.2.4). Certainly, however, the Quarto text is more sensitive to grammatical correctness than the Folio. Franz argues that objective *who* tends to be corrected into *whom* in the seventeenth century: “Im 17. Jahrhundert, als man größeren Wert auf sprachliche Korrektheit legte, war man bestrebt, den Obliquus wieder in seine alten Rechte einzusetzen, und daher erscheint häufig in der zweiten Folio-Ausgabe und in den darauf folgenden Ausgaben *whom* an Stelle eines *who* der älteren Quartos und der ersten Folio-Ausgabe…” (1939, §333). *Who* was not uncommon in the object position in Shakespeare’s day, but changing a grammatically “correct” form into an “incorrect” one was less likely in
the Early Modern English period, when grammatical correctness was considered as particularly important, as Franz argues.

To sum up, the Quarto’s *that* in (12) and the Folio’s *which* in (13) reflect Shakespeare’s normal practice in the choice of relative pronouns. Otherwise, we have found no clue for solving the question as to which text is close to Shakespeare’s language. Yet, the last two examples, (14ab), indicate that the Quarto prefers the grammatically “correct” form, suggesting that someone sensitive to grammar may have participated in the process of composing the Quarto text.

7. Distribution among characters

Patrick, who proposed the memorial reconstruction hypothesis, observed that the actor taking the part of Buckingham must have had trouble memorising his part because Buckingham’s lines contain many more errors than those of other characters (1936, 58–61, 106). Smidt states a different view: “faults are distributed among practically all the *dramatis personae*, though a couple of the characters may be singled out as major offenders” (1970, 45). Before conclusion, I shall summarise the distribution of substitutions of relative pronouns among characters.

The 21 instances of substitution that were found are distributed among nine different characters, ranging from major characters like Richard and Buckingham to minor ones like Tyrrel. Changes in relative pronouns occur in Richard’s lines six times, as cited in (4), (5a), (8ab), (10b), and (14a). It is quite natural that the variation should occur most frequently in his lines, as Bate and Rasmussen (2007, 1302) estimate that they account for 32% of all lines in this play. Changes occur three times in the lines of Clarence, (6), (9), and (13). Otherwise, they occur twice each in the lines of Anne, (3-4), the Duchess of York, (5b) and (7), Elizabeth, (8c) and (10a), Hastings, (11-12), and Margaret, (2) with two instances. There is only one instance in the lines of Buckingham, (10c), and Tyrrel, (14b). Thus, a particular actor or actors, including Buckingham, are not responsible for the changes in relative pronouns.

8. Conclusion

According to the memorial reconstruction hypothesis, which Patrick first proposed, the Quarto text of Shakespeare’s *Richard III* is considered to be a reconstruction created by actors, relying on their inaccurate memories, who, therefore, are largely to blame for the variants in the Quarto text. In this article, we have tested whether this memorial reconstruction hypothesis can account for the variants of relative pronouns in the First Quarto text. It has been demonstrated that when the
Quarto uses different relative pronouns from the Folio, they are substituted quite systematically with a clear linguistic distinction between the two versions. The most remarkable difference is in the use of that and which: the Folio tends to use non-restrictive that, which had been falling out of use in Shakespeare’s English, whereas the Quarto uses which, a common form to introduce non-restrictive clauses (section 4). In addition, the Quarto’s which may follow a personal antecedent when the speaker’s emotions are heightened, which is exactly in accordance with Shakespeare’s practice of employing personal which (section 5). Thus, the Folio deviates from Shakespeare’s ordinary usage, whereas the Quarto accords with it quite well. In (14ab), the Quarto uses whom, the grammatically “correct” form, in the object position, while the Folio uses who; the Quarto’s whom may be a careful correction, because grammatical “correctness” was particularly valued in the Early Modern English period when these texts were printed. We have also identified a few cases showing Shakespeare’s habits, such as the Quarto’s that in a scene-ending line in (12), and the Folio’s who with a personified antecedent in (13), though they do not suffice to prove the authority of either of the texts. To sum up, the bold and consistent choice of that and which could not have taken place due to accidental errors or unintentional changes arising from the lapse of memories, and the memorial reconstruction hypothesis has proved to be untenable regarding the choice of relative pronouns. It would be more reasonable to consider that relative pronouns were deliberately revised in either of the texts through written transmission; the revision was probably made in the Quarto version, which represents Shakespeare’s ordinary usage of relative pronouns. The number of examples we have given is insufficient to confute Patrick’s claim for the effect of memorial reconstruction in the Quarto, but as Smidt (1970) actually conceded with regard to Patrick’s hypothesis, authorial readings can coexist with accidental changes or errors through actors’ faulty memories (section 1). Therefore, the Quarto may well exhibit Shakespeare’s original choice of relative pronouns, alongside memorial corruptions. Further exploration of verbal variants, including function words that have received little attention, may provide corroborative evidence for supporting the authority of the First Quarto of Richard III.

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Notes

1 Citations are made from a Folio-based edition, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by Evans and Tobin. Variant words in question are italicised and the Quarto’s variants are given in square brackets. For the Quarto’s variants, I consulted Davison’s edition. Abbreviations of play titles are those proposed in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (8th edition).

2 Lull (2009, 219–229) summarises the scholarly debate on Patrick’s hypothesis of memorial reconstruction.

3 The composition dates are those proposed by Evans and Tobin (1997, 78–81).

4 Sato (2019) confirms this argument by analysing personal *which* in Shakespeare’s history plays.

References


