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THE OTHER

BY
REGGIE SIRIWARDENA

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A Three Language Study in Power, Personal Relations and Second Person Pronouns

by

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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES
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PREFACE

This monograph grew out of a paper read at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies and published in *The Thatched Patio*, March/April 1991. In writing it I have made extensive revisions of and additions to the earlier material, on the basis of further research and reflection, in the course of which I have modified some of my former ideas and originated others.

I have been considerably helped by comments on earlier versions by Ranjini Obeyesekere and H.L. Seneviratne, and I have used some interesting information from Eric Meyer and Nira Wickramasinghe with regard to a new phenomenon in French usage. I am also grateful to Jani de Silva, the most appreciative and most critical of my readers, for constant encouragement and stimulus.

R.S.

1

I should like to begin with a poem of mine, 'Colonial Cameo':

In the evenings my father used to make me read
aloud from Macaulay or Abbot's ***Napoleon*** *(he was short,*
and Napoleon his hero; I, his hope for the future).
My mother, born in a village, had never been taught

that superior tongue. When I was six, we were moving
house; she called at school to take me away.
She spoke to the teacher in Sinhala. I sensed the shock
of the class, hearing the servants' language; in dismay

followed her out as she said, 'Gihing ennang.'
I was glad it was my last day there. But then the bell
pealed; a gang of boys came out sniggering,
and shouted in chorus, 'Gihing vareng' as my farewell.

My mother pretended not to hear the insult.
The snobbish little bastards! But how can I blame
them? That day I was deeply ashamed of my mother.
Now, whenever I remember, I am ashamed of my shame.[1]

That scene in a suburban school in the late 1920s was a situation of considerable sociolinguistic significance. What outraged my classmates and found expression in their taunt was that somebody they had regarded as one of themselves had been unmasked as an impostor, with a mother ignorant of English. One could proceed from this incident to question

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1 *Gihing ennang* (literally, 'I'll go and come') is a customary polite salutation in Sinhala on leaving. *Gihing vareng* (literally, 'Go and come') has the impolite imperative used in giving orders to social inferiors.

whether divisions of class are as simple as the conceptualisations of them by those Marxists who see them only in terms of relations of production, and whether cultural stratifications aren't as important in determining class distinctions. Remember that it was sufficient for my schoolmates to hear my mother speak to the teacher in Sinhala for them to assign her to a class category -- one of those people to whom one can, and indeed should, say *vareng*; they didn't need to ask what her income was or whether she owned any property.

But that isn't my main concern here, though it does have a bearing on the importance I want to give to linguistic usages. My subject is second person pronouns -- that is, the pronouns used in addressing people. There was no pronoun actually articulated in the two rude words that my classmates shouted after my mother and me, but there was one implied by the form of the verb *vareng* -- the non-polite imperative used in giving orders to social inferiors. The pronoun implied was, of course, *umbe*, also used in such situations. In that colonial context my middle-class schoolmates would have been accustomed to speak Sinhala only to servants and other menials; and the non-polite pronoun and the corresponding verb would have been the natural form for them to use in addressing a Sinhala-speaking person. But in that world of the 'twenties, still largely static and hierarchical, *umbe* was also the second person pronoun my mother used in speaking to anyone among the succession of female domestics who passed through our home. Most of them, I remember, were named (or renamed) either Jane or Alice, as were women servants in many middle-class households at that time. This expropriation of personal identity through renaming was as sociologically significant as the pronominal and verbal forms by which they were addressed.

Today, however, in the home in which I now live, I hear my sister speaking to her domestic help in terms such as these: *Gunavati, oyate kaeme rath karanne puluvandhe?*' (Gunavati,

can you warm the food?) The instruction phrased not as a command but as a question and the adoption of the egalitarian pronoun *oya*, when compared with my mother's usages, are part of a process of social change that has taken place over the intervening decades.

You will notice that in that last sentence I said that these linguistic changes were part of a process of social change, not that they 'reflected' or 'were the product' of it. That, to my mind, would have been an incorrect formulation. It would have implied that society was one thing and language another, and that change in the former was related to change in the latter as cause and effect. But language is within society, not outside it, and linguistic practices are part of a network of many different social practices interacting with each other in ways that are too complex to be reduced to that simple formulation I rejected.[2]

Linguistic practices are in fact one of the elements that are constitutive of class relations, gender relations, familial relations, and even -- in some societies -- race relations. It is on this basis that I wish to examine the functions of second person pronouns. When, as in many languages, there is more than one such pronoun, the particular pronoun or pronouns two speakers use in addressing each other define the relationship between them. The total utterance in which a second person pronoun occurs may carry a propositional or emotive content, but the use of the pronoun itself is a form of linguistic behaviour whose principal function is to situate the speaker in relation to the person addressed. To be sure, it doesn't stand alone in serving this function. The grammatical form of an utterance (as in my sister's instruction to her maid), or the

[2] cf. Foucault (1971), pp. 52-53: 'As history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle.' Also cf. Fowler *et al.*, (1979), p. 2: 'Language use is not merely an effect or reflex of social organisation and processes, it is a *part* of social process. It constitutes social meanings and thus social practices.'

intonation with which it is spoken, or the facial expression (say, the smile or frown) which accompanies it -- all these and several other linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic features may help to place the speaker in a particular relationship with the person addressed. But second person pronouns are the central structural element of language that has been developed for this purpose.

I hope that introduction will have indicated the kind of sociolinguistic phenomena I shall be dealing with. This monograph is based principally on case studies of second person pronouns in three languages at particular stages of their development -- English in the age of Shakespeare (late 16th-early 17th centuries), 19th century Russian and modern Sinhala. In the second section of this monograph I describe the system of second person pronouns common to most European languages -- one based on a distinction between two pronouns. I call such systems of second person pronouns *binary systems*. I make comparisons and contrasts in this section between the structures and usages of second person pronouns in 19th century Russian, taken as a prototypical binary system, and those of Elizabethan English, which I describe as a modified binary system.[3] As I shall try to establish, the pronominal structures and usages in Elizabethan English[4] were in some respects isomorphic with those of other European binary systems of second person pronouns, but had also their unique features, which were related to the context of English society of that time. In the third section I examine further the usages of

[3] Although 19th century Russian belongs to a later period, the bureaucratically ossified character of Russian feudalism, described later in this study (section 3), with an underdeveloped middle class, meant that the second person pronouns as modes of address were more rigidly structured, more consistently hierarchical, than those of Elizabethan English in a society where bourgeois development was well under way.

[4] I define below the way in which this term is used in the present study.

a simple binary system from the case of Russian in the pre-revolutionary era, with examples drawn from dialogue in 19th century Russian fiction -- nearly always from Tolstoy and Chekhov. In the fourth section I analyse the modified binary system of second person pronouns in Elizabethan English through the dialogue of Shakespeare's plays. The fifth section is devoted to a discussion of the sociolinguistic shift which gave modern English its single second person pronoun *you*, and to the developments in systems of second person pronouns in other Western European languages after the French Revolution as well as in Russian after the 1917 revolutions. In the sixth section, I take Sinhala as a language that, like many other South Asian languages, has traditionally had a system of second person pronouns very different from the binary systems referred to earlier -- a multiplicity of pronouns instead of two. I then discuss the changes that are taking place today in Sinhala second person pronoun usages, which are of great sociolinguistic interest. I conclude in Section 7 with some comparative observations.

In using the literary material from English drama and Russian fiction I have two purposes in mind. Spoken utterance in face-to-face encounters between people is the focus of my study; and dramatic and fictional dialogue represents an important part of the sources on which we can draw in identifying and analysing pronominal usages in spoken language in the past. It must be remembered that the technological means of recording real-life conversation didn't exist before the twentieth century, and the spoken word was rarely even transcribed outside the courtroom and the legislative chamber. It may be asked whether I am entitled to equate the pronominal usages in the literary texts I am using with those of the spoken languages of their times, particularly in the case of Shakespearean drama which is for the most part in the heightened language of poetry. I am under no illusion that any fictional or dramatic dialogue, even in realist novels or plays, can be presumed to be a faithful representation of real-life conversation. It is only after the taping of actual speech during the present century that linguists

have become fully aware of how far spoken utterances diverge from grammatically well-formed sentences. In real speech, people often don't complete their sentences, or they start them in one way and finish them in another, or they interrupt each other, or they say things that can be understood only by the hearer in the immediate context; but dialogue in plays or novels is usually more deliberately organised and coherently shaped by the writer. But here I am not dealing with the whole range of linguistic elements in the texts concerned, but only with the second person pronouns -- that is, with one of the basic structures of language crucial in the definition and regulation of social and personal relationships.

It is reasonable to suppose that in plays written for performance in the popular theatre in Elizabethan England, these pronominal usages would have had to correspond to those familiar to the audience in their daily linguistic transactions to be intelligible. However, the speech community represented by this audience was that of the metropolis, London. Theatre companies sometimes went on tour to provincial towns, but it is the London audience that the plays were written for. 16th and 17th century English undoubtedly had a variety of regional dialects, but these are not represented in the plays, except occasionally, and even then usually in forms conventionalised in the theatre.[5] I use the term 'Elizabethan English' only as a convenience, where it would have been more accurate to speak of 'Elizabethan and Jacobean London English' as the form of the language represented in the plays, so I hope the reader will take the former term as standing for the latter. As for differences between class dialects within this speech community, I shall presume, since the Elizabethan theatre was multi-class, that the pronominal usages of lower-class characters in the plays corresponded to those

[5] e.g. Edgar's assumption of a stage-rustic idiom in his conversation with Oswald in *King Lear*, 4.6.

that would have been heard in the London streets and market-places.

In the case of the 19th century writers of Russian prose fiction whose work I am using, both Tolstoy and Chekhov write in the tradition of formal realism; they both create characters from a wide social spectrum, ranging from the aristocracy and gentry at one end of the social scale to the peasantry at the other; and their regional locales have also a comparable spread. Both writers had an attentive and discriminating ear for nuances of speech, so that in respect of those features of the spoken language that this study is concerned with, we can take them as reliable observers.

I have, however, a further purpose in my use of this literary material: I wish to demonstrate that pronominal usage can be a most valuable tool of interpretation of literary and dramatic texts in respect of characters and the social and personal relationships between them. Literary scholars and critics have rarely been concerned with Shakespeare's pronouns, which have for the most part been relegated to the grammarians, the historians of language and the lexicographers.[6] The French and Russians take their pronouns more seriously. Even French school editions of Racine draw attention to such effects as the change of pronoun by the heroine of *Phedre* at the critical moment of the declaration of her guilty love for her stepson Hippolyte:

> Ah! cruel, tu m'as trop entendue.

One would suppose that readers of Shakespeare, for whom *thou* is an archaism would need more help in this respect than French students, who are familiar with the distinction between *tu* and *vous* from living usage in their language.
However, annotated editions of Shakespeare's plays, such as

[6] Abbott (1890), Brook (1976), Onions (1986).

the New Penguin, the New Arden and the New Cambridge, do not in gneeral explain the significance of the second person pronouns, even when these, as I shall try to establish, are vital to the dramatic situations in which they occur. It is rare for an editor of a Shakespeare play to include even half a paragraph on the second person pronouns, as H.J. Oliver does in his introduction to *As You Like It*; but even he, in doing so, depreciates the subject by describing it as 'a minor point of usage'.[7] I must say that I too had failed to understand the wealth of dramatic meanings encoded in Shakespeare's second person pronouns (because nothing in my academic training or my reading of Shakespeare criticism had given me that understanding) until I returned to Shakespeare from a reading of Russian. The material in this monograph on Shakespeare's pronouns derives from my on-going study of them (and what they reveal of power and personal relations), involving a scrutiny of every occurrence of a second person pronoun in the canon of the plays, which is part of my research project.

The question may be asked how important an examination of Shakespeare's pronominal usages is for an understanding of his plays as theatre or as literature, and whether this isn't a trivial or pedantic pursuit. I hope that the discussion of specific examples later in this study will answer that question, but I may perhaps indicate my view by a comparison with another tool of Shakespeare criticism which was at one time much in vogue. I refer to the analyses of iterative imagery and image clusters in the plays, concerning which there was a great deal of interest in the period from the 'thirties to the 'fifties as a result of the work of Caroline Spurgeon, Wilson Knight, Wolfgang Clemen, D.A. Traversi, L.C. Knights and others. I don't doubt that the patterns of imagery these critics discerned were there, but one may ask how far these patterns would have been apparent to an audience in the theatre (other than

Oliver (1968), p. 33.

subliminally, perhaps) as distinct from the reader or scholar in the study. But pronouns of address are, as I have already indicated, a central feature of language from the point of view of interactions between people, which are, of course, the very stuff of drama. When -- to take an example I shall discuss more fully later -- Emilia in the last scene of *Othello* shifts within two lines from *you* to *thou* in addressing Othello, is it likely that the dramatic significance of this change would have escaped the Elizabethan audience, who would have known how to interpret a similar linguistic phenomenon in their daily lives?

If Shakespeare's original audience understood such meanings without need of commentary, the contemporary reader, playgoer, critic, director or actor may also obtain such understanding in the same way that he or she acquires comprehension of other features of Shakespearean language. How, for instance, does one learn the range of meanings of the adjective *rank* in Shakespeare's drama and poetry? Superficially, one may get some understanding from looking it up in a glossary, but the word doesn't really acquire its full resonances until one has come across it in different contexts and responded to its multiple and shifting significances. This is true also of the complex and often subtle dramatic meanings embodied in Shakespeare's second person pronouns, and the schemas relating to them in Tables III and V are meant to be only skeletons that the reader of this paper may fill out in the course of his or her personal engagement with Shakespeare. Unfortunately, I can't recommend a similar course for the reader of classic Russian prose fiction unless he or she already knows the language, but my discussion will at least indicate what is lost in translation: hopefully, it may encourage some readers to learn enough Russian to cope with Tolstoy, Dostoevsky or Chekhov in the original.

2

'Orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, *word is a two-sided act.* It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee.* Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other." I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor.'[8]

This passage is quoted from a book which was first published in the Soviet Union in 1929 under the title *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* and the authorial name 'V.N. Voloshinov'. Many scholars today are convinced that the remarkable Russian thinker of that time, Mikhail Bakhtin, was the real author, or at least the co-author, of the book; moreover, that the reference to Marxism in the title and the use of Marxist concepts at certain points in the book were protective devices on the part of Bakhtin in view of the political climate of the period in the Soviet Union.[9] However that may be, my interest

[8] Voloshinov, (1973), p. 86.

[9] cf. Clark and Holquist (1984), pp. 146-170. Clark and Holquist say, 'The authorship of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*...is clearly Bakhtin's.' (op. cit., p. 166)

in Voloshinov/Bakhtin's[10] observations in the quoted passage is as a starting-point for my exploration of second person pronouns as a component of language. Voloshinov/Bakhtin was not specifically concerned here with second person pronouns; the fact that 'a word is a territory shared by both addresser and addressee' was for him a fundamental reality of language. But that reality manifests itself more clearly in second person pronouns than in most other aspects of language precisely because these pronouns are the main device that languages have evolved by which the speaker situates himself in relation to the person addressed.

However, the 'dialogic' character (to use a favourite term of Bakhtin) of second person pronouns is not exhausted by the fact that they are used to address other people. I present below a table of the two second person pronouns used in Elizabethan English to address single persons, together with the possessive and reflexive pronouns related to them:

TABLE I
SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH

	T	Y
Subject	*thou*	*you*
Object	*thee*	*you*
Possessive	*thy*	*your*
Posesssive	*thine*	*yours*
Reflexive	*thyself*	*yourself*

[10] In view of the uncertainty regarding the author's identity, I shall use this form of reference to him and treat 'Voloshinov/Bakhtin' as a single person.

In Table I *thee* is the form that *thou* takes when it is the object of a verb (e.g. 'I love thee'), but *you* is unchanged in such a case. In the possessive forms *thine*, usually, and *yours*, always, are predicative. I shall denote *thou* and the other forms in the first column of the table by the symbol T, and *you* and the other forms in the second column by the symbol Y.[11]

Let us now consider two short passages of dialogue from two plays of Shakespeare. Here is the first (I have suppressed the names of the speakers in order to concentrate attention on what the pronouns say, apart from any knowledge of the dramatic context):

A: I have forgot why I did call thee back.
B: Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Speaker A uses a T form, and B answers with another. What this reciprocal exchange of T tells us in the pronominal usage of Elizabethan English is that the characters are on a footing of intimate equality with each other. If we restore the lines to their original context -- *Romeo and Juliet*, 2.1.215-216[12] -- we shall find that the two speakers are a pair of lovers. The pronouns alone cannot tell us that, but the relationship between the speakers is compatible with the way in which it is delimited by the pronouns. But what is important to note is that the dialogic exchange of pronouns is necessary to define this significance. The meaning of the first T as an address to an intimate cannot be understood from its syntactical relation to

[11] The idea of using symbols is derived from the paper by Brown and Gilman which will be discussed later, but I differ from these scholars in not adopting for English *you* the V symbol which they apply to the polite pronouns of European languages. The reasons for this difference will be apparent in my analysis of Elizabethan second person pronouns in Section 2.

[12] All act, scene and line references to Shakespeare's plays are keyed to the edition I have used -- Wells and Taylor (1986).

the rest of the sentence in which it occurs, or even from the knowledge that in Elizabethan English T and Y stand in binary opposition to each other; it can be confirmed and completed only by the second T which responds to it. This dialogic character of the pronouns will further be clarified by my second quotation:

A1; Kind Tyrrell, am I happy in thy news?
B1: If to have done the thing you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, be happy then,
For it is done.

In this passage, A1 addresses B1 with a T form and B1 answers with Y. In this case, however, unlike in the first, there is more than one possible relationship between the two speakers with which the T-Y exchange in Elizabethan speech is compatible. It can be that the first speaker is in a position of superior power or higher status; but it is also possible, on the evidence of these lines alone, that the first speaker is more outgoing, effusive, heartier, while the second is more reserved. If we restore the passage to its original context -- *King Richard III*, 4.3.24-27, we find that A1 is Richard III and B1 the murderer he has hired to kill the Princes in the Tower, so that the first conjecture is the right one. But once again the answering second pronoun is necessary to complete the meaning of the first: if B1 had answered with T, it would have placed the two speakers on a footing of equality and intimacy.

The second person pronouns, therefore, by their dialogic character, call in question the approach of traditional linguistics which took the sentence as the highest unit of linguistic analysis.[13] As we have seen, it is impossible to interpret the pronouns in the examples we have considered without going beyond the sentence to the dialogue. This property of second

[13] It is only recently that linguistics has sought to go beyond the sentence to larger units of discourse in what has come to be called *discourse analysis*.

person pronouns has been obscured from the view of the generality of speakers of English because modern English has only one second person pronoun, which is neutral and empty of meaning except in showing that another person is being addressed. However, in the binary systems of second person pronouns in Elizabethan English or of other European languages, we have to place the pronouns in larger units of discourse in order to render them fully intelligible.[14] Indeed, as we shall see, it is sometimes necessary to go beyond even the individual episode or scene to a sequence of such episodes or scenes between two characters in a play or novel to bring out the full dialogic significances of the pronouns they use.

The most notable attempt at a cross-language study of binary systems of second person pronouns was made by two American scholars, Brown and Gilman, in a paper first published in 1960.[15] Although thirty years old, it is still often cited in sociolinguistic literature as the most authoritative work in this field. Brown and Gilman based their study on five European languages -- English, French, Italian, Spanish and German: they didn't deal with Russian at all, and they cited only two examples from the language of Shakespeare. As will be clear later, Brown and Gilman's model is useful only in analysing pronominal structures in European languages or others with comparable binary systems: it is inapplicable to Sinhala and other South Asian languages. Further, without detracting from the importance of Brown and Gilman's pioneering work, I shall make some departures from their analysis of European binary

[14] This is also true of some of the multiple second person pronouns in Sinhala and other South Asian languages. As we shall see in Section 6 of this paper, reciprocal *umbe*, *thamuse* and *oya* in Sinhala speech can be used between equals; non-reciprocally, these pronouns would be an expression of superiority.

[15] Brown and Gilman (1972). Brown and Gilman don't use the term 'binary systems': this is my own innovation.

systems of second person pronouns. However, at this point I adopt their symbols T and V to denote the pairs of pronouns listed in Table II (I modify them in later parts of the paper):

TABLE II
PAIRS OF SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS IN BINARY SYSTEMS

	T	V
French	*tu*	*vous*
Italian	*tu*	*Lei*
Spanish	*tu*	*usted*
Russian	*ty*	*vy*
German	*du*	*Sie*

It is beyond the scope both of this paper and of my capabilities to offer any detailed account of the historical development of the binary system of second person pronouns in all these languages. Such a history would in any case be rendered problematic by the fact that the records on the basis of which one may try to reconstruct the pronominal structures and usages of the past privilege the language of the elite against that of the common people and the written language against the spoken. However, it is likely that the two sets of pronouns originated as constituents of two distinct class dialects in aristocratic societies. To begin with, people of the upper classes said V to each other and T to those below them, while members of the lower classes said T to each other and V to their superiors. Because the V form was thus associated with formality and politeness, a practice later developed of the upper classes too using T in addressing intimates even of their own class with whom they could be informal. T used in this way was, however, distinguished from its use in addressing inferiors. Between

equals T was reciprocal, where between superiors and inferiors it was not: the person in a position of superior power or status said T but was addressed as V. Later still, there was a progressive erosion of the use of T in address to social inferiors, so that the line of distinction between T and V in European languages has increasingly become that of informal address to intimates as against formal address to strangers.

It is best to treat this account as a simplified model of a process which evolved at a different rate in different European languages and was subject to many national as well as regional variations. It is also important to note that the distinctions between T and V explained in the last paragraph applied only in address to a single person; the forms of address to a group of people were not similarly differentiated. In fact, the V forms in French and Russian (as well as English *you*) are grammatically plural and take plural verbs. What happened in these languages was that the plural form was adopted as the polite pronoun in addressing a single person, since speaking to one person as if he were many is a way of showing respect. This was also true of the polite pronouns in Italian and Spanish, which were originally the plural forms *voi* and *vos* respectively. Subsequently they were replaced by *Lei* and *usted*; the first was a contraction of *la vostra Signoria* (Your Lordship) and the latter of *vuestra Merced* (Your Grace), and they take a third person verb. In these two languages, then, honorifics used earlier to address aristocrats became, in abbreviated form, the pronouns for speaking formally to anybody.

It should be noted also that as a result of this process of historical evolution of the second person pronouns -- plural forms being used as polite ways of addressing a single person -- the semantic distinctions expressed by pronouns of address in European languages -- whether of power or of personal relationships -- that will be discussed apply only when a single person is being spoken to. In address to a group of people Russian and French do not make distinctions of superior-

inferior or of strangeness-intimacy through pronominal forms. Nor did Elizabethan English, in which *you* or *ye* was the general second person plural pronoun.[16] Italian and Spanish have in later historical times developed plural forms, *Loro* and *ustedes*, to go with the newer polite singular pronouns adopted in these languages as described in the last paragraph.[17]

The sociological basis of my analysis of binary systems of second person pronouns in European languages differs in some respects from that of Brown and Gilman (for instance, I don't use their Durkheimian concept of 'solidarity'), but, as I have said, I have adopted with modifications their symbols T and V as a convenient shorthand and an easy way of making comparative references across languages. However, in my discussion of Elizabethan English and 19th century Russian, I use these symbols in the following ways, which include some deviations from Brown and Gilman's practice:

a. I use the symbol T to cover English *thou* and Russian *ty* as well as the oblique cases of these pronouns, the related reflexive forms and possessive pronouns, as well as instances where the pronoun is not explicitly stated but implied by the verb.[18] This is in conformity with Brown and Gilman's uses of the symbol.

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16 This is one of the striking differences between the system of second person pronouns in Sinhala and the binary systems of European languages.

17 *Voi* in Italian is still used both to intimate as well as to non-intimate addressees (in the latter case as an alternative to *Loro*).

18 Some readers may be better able to follow what is meant here if I say that I use the symbol T to cover English *thou, thee, thy, thine, thyself*, and all occurrences of a verb taking as its subject an unexpressed thou (e.g. 'Art more than a steward?' spoken by Sir Toby Belch to Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, 2.3.109-110), and corresponding forms in Russian.

b. I use V to refer to the Russian *vy* and related forms, but (unlike Brown and Gilman) I do not extend this symbol to *you* in Elizabethan English, because, as I shall try to establish later in the present study, this *you* is radically different in character from the V-forms of other European languages. I represent *you* and the related possessive and reflexive forms by the symbol Y.

c. Departing again from Brown and Gilman, I indicate the different usages of each of the pronouns denoted by the symbols T, V and Y by a numerical suffix attached to the symbol: e.g. T1, V2, Y0.

The meanings of these suffixes will be explained in the relevant sections of the study, but it is necessary immediately to reassure those readers who may react against the letter symbols and numeral suffixes I have used as intimidatingly mathematical in appearance, or as too abstract or too mechanistic. On the first possible objection, I must say that the symbols have nothing to do with mathematics: as William Empson said of his own symbols in *The Structure of Complex Words*, they are no more mathematical than road signs. Regarding the other two potential criticisms, I wish to say that I don't pretend my categories are more than an analytical convenience, nor do I deny that there are, within the same category denoted by a symbol, distinctions differentiating one relationship or emotion from another. For instance, reciprocal T2 can cover anything from casual intimacy between friends to intensely passionate relations between lovers. The categories defined by the symbols are intended only as a scaffolding through which the reader may come closer to the life of the text, and later in this study they are, I hope, given fuller and more concrete meaning by the verbal and dramatic contexts in which the pronominal usages are placed.

Binary systems of second person pronouns are so structured as to articulate different oppositions: domination vs. subordination; superiority of class or status vs. inferiority of class or status; formality vs. informality; strangeness vs. intimacy. In all such systems superiors or persons in positions of authority can say T to inferiors or persons at their command, where the latter say V to the former (Y in Elizabethan English). But T is also used by people speaking informally to each other, when there is no unequal power relation between them. I shall call the first usage of T (non-reciprocal) T1 and the second (reciprocal) T2. How does one distinguish between the first usage and the second? Precisely by whether T is used reciprocally or not. If the speaker says T and receives V or Y, there is a power relationship (whether class or familial) between the two speakers; if the speakers say T to each other, the relationship is one of informality and equality.

In making the broad distinction between these two usages of T, however, certain further clarifications are necessary. It cannot be maintained that the relationships denoted by the two usages of T described in the last paragraph are always mutually exclusive. In 19th century Russian, almost universally, the pronouns exchanged between parent and child are T-V (the parent saying T and receiving V); in Elizabethan English the corresponding pronouns are often, though not always, T-Y[19] How should one define such a relationship? Usually, as one of authority and affection on the parent's side and deference and affection on the child's, but that there is a power element in the relationship is clear from the fact that the pronouns are non-symmetrical. A similar situation may arise in unequal relationships between husband and wife.

For these reasons I use a combination of symbols, T1/2, to denote the T pronoun used by parent to child or husband to wife; the two numerals of the suffix are intended to mark the dual character of the relationship. Of course, the nature of the

[19] As we shall see, in Shakespeare's plays there is sometimes mutual Y between parents and children.

mix between authority and affection will vary between one relationship and another, and even in the same relationship from moment to moment: the symbols cannot be expected to capture these nuances, which can be brought out only by verbal commentary.[20]

A further qualification needs to be made in respect of T2. Since mutual T2 is the common form of pronominal exchange between intimates, it is also usually part of the language of lovers. No problem arises when a pair of lovers -- Antony and Cleopatra or Anna and Vronsky -- say T2 to each other.[21] But there can be situations (there are several in Shakespeare's plays) where a would-be lover addresses the woman he loves with T but she doesn't respond with the same pronoun: she answers coldly, indifferently or shyly with V in Russian or Y in English. How does one represent the man's pronoun in these cases? I would still denote it by T2, even though in such an instance the usage is non-reciprocal.

There are, however, two other ways in which T is used that cannot be contained within the linguistic norms already described. In European languages with binary systems of second person pronouns, the pronoun traditionally used in addressing God or Christ (and often saints and other figures regarded with religious devotion) is T. The source of this usage is that God is treated as an intimate, the object of affection, the beloved. However, in practice, the attitude of the believer to God may not coincide with this relation but may include awe, fear, submission. I therefore set apart this usage; but, probably deriving

[20] When Lear, in his confrontation with Goneril in 1.4, says to her: 'Detested kite, thou liest,' (Folio text, 1.4.241), there is clearly no affection there, and one should represent *thou* in the line by a simple T1, or better, by T4.

[21] Here, and later in this paper, I use the shorthand 'A says T2 to B' or 'A uses T2 to B' to mean 'A uses the T pronoun in addressing B, with the effect categorised as T2', and similarly with other pronoun symbols.

from it, there was also a practice (in English, not in Russian) of using T in showing reverence to persons of high rank (such as kings and nobles) in formal and ceremonial situations. I shall call this use of T (whether in religious or in secular contexts) T3.

There is yet another use of T that we shall encounter in linguistic practice in binary systems. A person may address another as T, even though he is neither a social inferior nor an intimate, when he is the object of anger, scorn or moral contempt.[22] Here the linguistic means of asserting social superiority are carried over into a different context in claiming moral superiority. Such a usage is particularly striking when it runs counter to the relative positions of the two people in the social hierarchy -- when, in other words, T is directed at a person who would normally receive from the other the V or Y of deference. I call this usage T4.

The four usages of T I have explained are summed up in Table III.

TABLE III
THE FOUR USAGES OF T IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN

T1: expressive of social superiority/power/authority
T2: expressive of intimacy/affection/love
T3: expressive of reverence (religious/secular)*
T4: expressive of anger/moral contempt/hatred

* The secular use of T3 is not found in Russian.

[22] It is this use of T that Sir Toby Belch urges Sir Andrew Aguecheek to adopt in his letter of challenge to Viola-Cesario: 'If thou "thou'st" him some thrice, it shall not be amiss.' (*Twelfth Night*, 3.2.42-3). The first *thou* in this sentence is T2 according to the schema in Table I, the second T4.

It may seem confusing that the same pronoun can carry such widely different meanings. But the context, verbal and situational, usually makes it clear which meaning is present. This doesn't mean that there can't be ambiguities, or that the ambiguities can't be used deliberately or creatively. Shakespeare, for instance, employs the difference between T1 and T2 to create a comic misunderstanding in *Twelfth Night*. When Malvolio, taken in by the forged love letter, appears before Olivia in crossgarters and yellow stockings, she, believing that something is wrong with him, says: 'Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?' *Thou* here is the address of mistress to steward (T1). But Malvolio misunderstands both the mention of bed and the pronoun, taking this to be T2 (a lover's address), and answers, 'To bed? "Ay, sweetheart, and I'll come to thee."'(3.4.27-9).[23] Or there is the chilling ambiguity in Dostoevsky's *The Grand Inquisitor*.[24] The Inquisitor throughout addresses Christ as *ty* (the Russian T-form), and we take this at first to be T3 -- the T of reverence. But when he concludes his indictment of Christ, 'For if there was anyone who most of all deserved our fire, it was thou. Tomorrow I will burn thee. I have spoken,' then we have to ask ourselves whether he was using the T of reverence or that of power (T1) -- the pronoun that a jailor would use to a condemned prisoner.[25]

Where Elizabethan English and 19th century Russian can be said to be nearly isomorphic in the usages of the T-form, there are considerable differences between Elizabethan English *you*

[23] Malvolio quotes the line 'Ay, sweetheart...' from a popular song, believing it to be appropriate to his situation.

[24] The story of *The Grand Inquisitor* is told by Ivan in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*.

[25] This effect would have been all the more forceful because in 19th century Russian prisons it was obligatory for jailors to address prisoners by the non-polite pronoun.

and Russian *vy* (and V forms in other European languages). This is why I use two different symbols for these pronouns: V for the Russian and Y for the English.

As has already been mentioned, there was a period in the histories of aristocratic societies when the upper classes said V to each other and T to their inferiors, while the lower classes used T among themselves, regardless of whether they were talking to strangers or to intimates, but V to their superiors. This was the situation that obtained in 17th century French or 19th century Russian; but it has no parallel in Elizabethan English, where either *thou* or *you* can be used in appropriate contexts by speakers of any class. Some scholars writing on Shakespeare's language have failed to appreciate this fact. Thus, G.L. Brook writes:

> *You* is the usual pronoun used by upper-class speakers to one another...*Thou* is used in various special situations...It is used by lower-class characters in speaking to members of the same social class.[26]

The implication seems to be that there is a class distinction in the use of *you* and *thou* in the case of members of the same class speaking to each other, the former being the usual upper class and the latter the lower class pronoun. (Inter-class modes of address are not at issue here.) Charles Barber takes a similar view:

> Among the polite classes, *You* was the normal, neutral form by Shakespeare's time...The artisan classes, however, normally used *Thou* to one another, even if not intimates.[27]

[26] Brook (1976), p. 73.

[27] Barber (1982), p. 237.

The qualifying words, 'usual', 'normal', 'neutral', in these passages are meant to take account of the fact that upper-class speakers may use *thou* to express affection or anger (T2 and T4 respectively in my categorisation). That is not a matter for dispute; what is questionable is the statement that the normal mode of address among lower-class speakers was *thou*. It is possible to produce many counter-examples from Elizabethan literature to refute this view. First, here is a passage from Thomas Deloney's *Jack of Newbury* (1597), which is a novel of middle-class life written in a realist mode. In this novel, the apprentice Jack, a broadcloth weaver, wins the favour of his widowed mistress by his hard work, and later marries her. In the following passage in Chapter 1 some of his friends of the same class scoff at his devotion to duty:

> 'Doubtless,' quoth one, 'I doubt some female spirit hath enchanted Jack to her trestles, and conjured him within the compass of his loom that he can stir no further.' 'You say truth,' quoth Jack, 'and if you have the leisure to stay till the charm be done, the space of six days and five nights, you shall find me ready to put on my holiday apparel, and on Sunday morning for your pains I will give you a pot of ale over against the maypole.'
>
> 'Nay,' quoth another, 'I'll lay my life that as the salamander cannot live without the fire, so Jack cannot live without the smell of his dame's smoke.' 'And I marvel,' quoth Jack, 'that you, being of the nature of the herring (which so soon as he is taken out of the sea straight dies), can live so long with your nose out of the pot.' 'Nay, Jack, leave thy jesting,' quoth another, 'and go along with us. Thou shalt not stay a jot.' 'And because I will not stay, nor make you a liar,' quoth Jack, 'I'll keep me here still, and so farewell.'

It will be noted that throughout this passage Jack addresses his friends as *you* (though the third of his friends says *thou*) -- and

this, even though they are all talking familiarly and jestingly so that *thou* would be quite in place. One can find many parallels in Shakespeare's plays to prove that there was nothing abnormal in lower-class characters saying *you* to each other. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.2., Bottom and his fellow artisans, assembled to discuss the performance of their play, use Y throughout the scene (there are 21 instances, not counting the plural forms). Again, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Dogberry throughout says Y to his fellow-watchmen. Bottom and his friends and Dogberry are surely lower-class enough for Brook's and Barber's analyses to be invalidated.

We must therefore conclude that between T and Y in Elizabethan English there were no rigid class distinctions of usage as far as people of the same class speaking to each other were concerned. I attribute this difference between Elizabethan English and 17th century French or 19th century Russian, as well as other differences that will appear in the course of my analysis, to the fact that by Shakespeare's time England was a society with emergent bourgeois relations in which fixed aristocratic hierarchies of birth had begun to lose something of their force.

In 19th century Russian there are two usages of the V form. One is non-reciprocal V, said by a speaker to one who addresses him as T1. This is a deferential use of V, and I shall call it V1. The second is a reciprocal use of V between non-intimate equals (among the privileged or educated classes) which I call V2. I tabulate these usages in Table IV.

TABLE IV
THE TWO USAGES OF V IN 19TH CENTURY RUSSIAN

V1:	**expressive of deference (to a speaker using T1 (T1-V1)**
V2:	**expressive of politeness to a non-intimate equal (V2-V2)**

Two further comments are necessary with regard to these usages of Russian V:

1) I have referred earlier to the non-reciprocal T pronoun when used by parent to child or husband to wife, which I have marked T1/2. In such situations the child's or wife's responsive V will also often carry both deference and affection, but in order not to multiply symbols over much, I mark this V form as a simple V1, leaving the possible mix of attitudes or emotions of the child or wife to be implied by the T1/2 with which V1 is paired and to be clarified in commentary.

2) Although V2 is normally a polite pronoun used reciprocally between equals who are not intimate with each other, it can be given a different effect in some contexts. When used by a lover or a spouse who normally says T2, a shift to the formal V2 would be a signal of a fundamental estrangement of feelings. This usage will be exemplified in Section 3.

Elizabethan English has two uses of Y corresponding to those of V in Russian, but it has a third which is not paralleled in other European languages with binary systems of second person pronouns at that time. In consequence, scholars writing on Shakespeare's pronouns have often erred by assimilating the Elizabethan Y too facilely to the V forms of other European languages. Among those who have made this error of judgment, I must include myself in my earlier paper. I stated there that *you* in Shakespeare's English indicates that the utterance in which it occurs is 'polite or formal'.[28] Further re-reading both of Shakespeare and of other Elizabethan dramatic texts has convinced me that this interpretation cannot be sustained, as will be evident from what follows. I conjecture that the same

[28] Siriwardena (1991), p. 54.

error of equating Elizabethan *you* with the V forms of Continental languages also led Brown and Gilman astray. In their paper they quote a passage of dialogue from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, in which Tamburlaine is tormenting the captive Emperor of the Turks, Bajazeth:

TAMBURLAINE:	Here, Turk, wilt thou have a clean trencher?
BAJAZETH:	Ay, tyrant, and more meat.
TAMBURLAINE:	Soft, sir, you must be dieted; too much eating will make you surfeit.

Brown and Gilman comment: '"Thou" is to be expected from captor to captive and the norm is upset when Tamburlaine says 'you'. He cannot intend to express admiration or respect since he keeps the Turk captive and starves him. His intention is to mock the captive king with respectful address, implying a power that the king has lost.'[29] As far as this particular passage is concerned, Brown and Gilman are right in their interpretation because there is a shift from the T1 in Tamburlaine's earlier line to Y, which therefore gives the second pronoun the ironic and mocking tone that Brown and Gilman discern in it. But when they imply that *you* said by captor to captive necessarily upsets the norm and therefore cannot be said other than mockingly, they are wrong. In an earlier scene of that extraordinary sadistic orgy that is *Tamburlaine*, we have Bajazeth's queen, Zabina, who is also a captive, upbraiding Tamburlaine for using her husband as his footstool. Tamburlaine asks his own queen, Zenocrate, to chide Zabina for her insubordination, and Zenocrate replies that the latter is the slave of her maid, Anippe, and that Anippe will control her. Anippe then says to Zabina:

[29] Brown and Gilman (1972), p. 279.

> Let these be warnings then for you, my slave,
> How you abuse the person of the king,
> Or else I swear to have you whipped stark naked.

There is no question of irony in this characteristic piece of Marlovian brutality ('these' are probably slaps or blows). We may say that Anippe doesn't need to use *thou* in order to assert her power over Zabina because the other aspects of her speech and behaviour convey this explicitly enough.

A further problem that has arisen for scholars attempting to analyse the usages of Elizabethan *you* is that while T1 is the normal pronoun of address by masters/mistresses to servants and other persons of low rank, it is not uncommon for them to say *you*. In some of these instances, the effect may be one of ironic politeness, particularly when it is accompanied by 'sir', in which case we should categorise the pronoun as a mocking Y2, but this explanation is not always available. In the scholarly literature there are different interpretations that have been given of the fluctuations between *you* and *thou* on the part of masters/mistresses speaking to servants. Thus, Brook says: '*Thou* is used to express good-humoured superiority to servants. When a master is finding fault with a servant, he calls him *you*.'[30] Barber, noting that the use of *thou* to a servant was not compulsory, goes on: '...in many scenes in the drama, a master addressing a servant fluctuates between *You* and *Thou*, sometimes being more condescending, sometimes more peremptory.'[31] This equation of Y with being condescending and T with being peremptory, it will be noted, runs directly contrary to Brook's interpretation of the pronouns in master-servant address. In Onions's *Shakespeare Glossary*, the entry for *thou* lists among its uses: 'by masters or superiors

[30] Brook (1976), p. 74.

[31] Barber (1982), p. 237.

when speaking good-humouredly or confidentially to servants or inferiors'[32] Onions thus seems to be in line with Brook.

Once again, it is possible to refute both sets of interpretations by offering counter-examples. Let us consider the dialogue between Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*, 1.2. S. Antipholus and E. Dromio aren't really master and servant, but this is irrelevant to the present discussion because master and servant are what they take themselves to be owing to the mistaken identities of the two pairs of twins. In the course of the scene, S. Antipholus asks E. Dromio where he left the gold he entrusted to his charge, grows increasingly angrier as Dromio denies knowledge of it, and ends by beating him. While in this passage of dialogue E. Dromio consistently addresses his master as Y, S. Antipholus shifts between T and Y in ways that cannot be reconciled with any of the interpretations offered by the scholars I have cited. Thus, at 72-73:

> Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,
> And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

And again, at 91-92:

> What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,
> Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave!
> *(He beats Dromio)*

There is no clearly no question here of the *thou*'s being more 'good-humoured' or more 'peremptory' than the *you*'s, or of the latter being more 'condescending'. The same point can be made from The Taming of the Shrew, 4.1., where Petruccio treats his servants roughly in order to intimidate Katherine. At 115-117 he says to Grumio:

[32] Onions (1986), p. 284.

You peasant swain, you whoreson, malthorse drudge,
Did I not bid thee meet me in the park
And bring along these rascal knaves with thee?

It is hardly possible to discriminate in tone or attitude between the Y of the first line and the T of the second and third.

The complexity of Elizabethan Y that has caused so much confusion among Shakespearean scholars cannot be properly conceptualised unless we place the pronoun in the context of its diachronic evolution. We know that English pronominal usage in the 'standard' language was to move towards a single second person pronoun -- *you*. Let us consider the function of *you* in contemporary English. Modern *you* is neutral, colourless, and has no meaning other than to indicate that another person is being addressed; it can be used in any situation or relationship and is compatible with any kind of emotion or attitude precisely because it is itself empty of affective content. Thus we can say:

I love you.
You scoundrel!
I wish to acknowledge your letter of the 4th May.

Here the expressions of love, anger and impersonal politeness in the first, second and third utterances respectively are not carried by the pronoun *you* but by other elements (including intonation when the sentences are spoken). Elizabethan English already has such a neutral *you*. When, for instance, masters and mistresses say *you* to their servants, *you* in such a usage is usually neutral -- comparable to modern English *you*. The existence of such a neutral second person pronoun in English already by Shakespearean times marks a divergence from general pronominal usage in European languages, and foreshadows the unique evolution of English in later times towards a single second person pronoun. It is for this reason that I have called Elizabethan English 'a modified binary system' and avoided using the V symbol for *you*; instead I denote it by Y,

and call the neutral use of *you* Y0 -- the zero suffix being intended to suggest that it is empty of content except in indicating that another person is being addressed. I now tabulate the three uses of *you* in Elizabethan English in Table V:

TABLE V
THE THREE USAGES OF Y IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH

Y0: neutral, compatible with any relationship or attitude
Y1: expressive of deference to a speaker using T1 (T1-Y1)
Y2: expressive of politeness to a non-intimate equal (Y2-Y2)

It must be noted that the presence of a neutral Y in Elizabethan English does not mean that *you* and its cognates in Elizabethan texts can be identified with their modern counterparts. In Onions's Shakespeare glossary there is an entry for *thou* but no entry for *you*. Referring to the preface for the principles of selection of words to be included in the glossary, we find the editor of the revised edition quoting the original author to the effect that the book supplies 'definitions and illustrations of words or senses of words which are now obsolete or survive only in archaic or provincial use'.[33] The impression is thus conveyed that in Shakespeare *you* needs no gloss, and the pronoun is therefore tacitly equated with modern English *you*. But the senses of *you* that I have called Y1 and Y2 are as much 'obsolete' in their specific character as any sense of *thou*. Barber, similarly, is wrong, in the passage I have already quoted, when he describes *you* as 'among the polite classes...the normal, neutral form'. In the first place, as I have

[33] Onions (1986), p. v.

established, *you* was not confined to the upper classes in intra-class discourse, and secondly, it was not always neutral (that is, not in the usages Y1 and Y2 -- the first, expressing deference, and the second, marking non-familiarity).

The Y pronoun in Elizabethan English has to be different from modern English *you* because it exists within the linguistic field of force exerted by the other pronoun -- T. In dialogic interaction with T1, Y is deferential (Y1); in contrast with reciprocal T2, it exhibits in its reciprocal usage a lack of familiarity (Y2). Where Y can be said to be clearly neutral (Y0) is when it is used between intimates reciprocally or by a superior to an inferior.

A further problem remains to be resolved: when a servant or other inferior or person in a position of lesser power says Y to a superior and is answered by Y (Y0), can we tell, from the evidence of the pronouns alone, that the first speaker's address is deferential (Y1) and not neutral? The answer is that we can, if (as often) the second speaker shifts between Y and T (that is, between Y0 and T1). This would make it clear that the speakers are not on a footing of equality. As has already been pointed out, we need to go beyond the individual utterance to the whole dialogic exchange in interpreting the pronouns.

The existence of a neutral *you* in Elizabethan English means that the Y pronoun is more flexible, variable and, often, more indeterminate than the V forms in other European languages. In Elizabethan English many speakers -- such as a social superior addressing inferior, lover addressing lover, husband addressing wife, or parent addressing child -- have a choice between using a neutral Y0 or a T which foregrounds the specific nature of the speaker's relationship to the person

addressed.[34] It is also possible, as we have already observed, for a speaker to shift between T and Y in the course of the same relationship, even sometimes within the same situation, as, for instance, within a single scene in Shakespearean drama. This means that in Elizabethan English, unlike in Russian, shifts from T to Y are not always meaningful though shifts from Y to T always are, because of the specific character of T. A speaker changing from Y0 or Y2 to T2 would be moving from neutrality or formal politeness to intimacy or affection: the relationship of falling in love, as we shall see, is often marked by such a pronoun shift. On the other hand, a change from Y1 to T2 would mean an abandonment of deference, an assertion of equality by a speaker who had earlier accepted inferiority vis-a-vis the other. (I shall later point out a striking example of such a shift in the case of Iago and Roderigo, and the even more startling effect of a change from Y0 to T4 by Emilia in addressing Othello.)

However, in the case of a shift in the opposite direction -- from T to Y -- its interpretation may be more problematic. For instance, when a master or mistress who customarily says T1 to a servant uses Y in Shakespearean drama, the effect may sometimes be one of ironic politeness, particularly when it is accompanied by 'sir', in which case we should categorise the latter pronoun as a mocking Y2; but more often than not, it is a casual variation (Y0) which has no dramatic significance precisely because the pronoun is neutral. More complex problems arise when the shift from T to Y occurs in relationships which have a greater emotional significance -- as in the case of husbands and wives, lovers, friends or parents and children. Are we to treat such a shift as another casual varia-

[34] It must be made clear that the same choice is not generally available to a servant addressing master/mistress or child addressing parent, for whom T would be a breach of normal propriety. In the rare situations where T is used by such speakers, as will be demonstrated later, it is explained by exceptional circumstances.

tion to which no dramatic significance is to be attached, or as a mark of aloofness, coldness, alienation, in which the very neutrality of the pronoun signifies a withdrawal of feeling? The question whether we use one description or the other depends on the way we read the relationship, character, situation, mood; and on such questions different individuals may disagree.[35] On the stage the actor's rendering of the lines may be decisive in such indeterminate situations.

It is important for what follows to underline the fact that the neutral character of YO in Elizabethan English does not mean that an utterance in which it occurs is necessarily devoid of any kind of feeling: what it means is that any emotion or attitude towards the person addressed is carried in such cases not by the pronoun but by other features of the utterance. The comparison with modern English *you* should help the reader to bear this in mind.

I depart from chronological order and take the literary examples from 19th century Russian fiction before those from Shakespeare because the social norms of usage affecting the pronouns in the former texts can be contained within a simple schema which is set out in Table VI in Section 3.

[35] As will appear in the next section, corresponding problems do not arise in the case of Russian, where pronominal usages are less variable, so that the effect, say, of a lover or a spouse shifting from T to V is unequivocal.

3

TABLE VI
SOCIAL NORMS OF USAGE OF SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS IN 19TH CENTURY RUSSIAN

Between social superiors and inferiors :	T1-V1
Between equals (non-intimate) - upper classses:	V2-V2
Between equals (non-intimate) - lower classes:	T2-T2
Between equals (intimate) - all classes:	T2-T2
Between old and young:	T1/V1
Between parents and children:	T1/2-V1
Between lovers:	T2-T2
Between husbands and wives:	T1-V1* T1/2-V1* T2-T2

T = ty, its oblique cases and related verbal forms and possessive pronouns. V = *vy*, its oblique cases and related verbal forms and possessive pronouns.

Where the pronouns are non-reciprocal, the person of superior power or status addresses the other as T and is addressed as V.

* Which alternative is used depends on the class and level of education of the speakers.

The uses of *ty* and *vy* in 19th century Russian are in consonance with the markedly hierarchical character of Russian society of the time in respect of class gradations, official ranks, generational differences and relations within the family. The distinctions between T and V were strongly correlated with class differences, since, as has already been indicated and as brought out in Table VI, the upper classes said V to each other except when they were addressing intimates, and the lower classes T except to social superiors.

Russian feudalism had a strongly bureaucratic character; officialdom was organised into a hierarchy of ranks, each of which had its special titles and uniforms, and they were so graded that each civilian rank corresponded to a parallel military rank. In the armed forces, regulations actually prescribed which ranks should be addressed as T and which as V by those above them. But Russian literature shows that even among the civilian bureaucracy officials tended to observe an etiquette of pronouns in address. One of Chekhov's early stories is titled 'Ty and Vy' and is about a minor official who at a railway station runs into another functionary, an old schoolfriend whom he hasn't seen for many years. The first official greets the second with T and begins a conversation with him in hail-fellow-well-met manner, until he is startled to learn that his old friend has climbed several steps higher than him in the official ladder. He then hastily switches to V, and adopts a sickening tone of deference even though the other protests that this is unnecessary.

19th century Russian masters and mistresses said T1 to their servants and were addressed in their turn as V1. The occasional departures from this practice are interesting. In Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* Tatyana and her nurse exchange reciprocal T2 with each other. This is possible because Filippyevna is so much older than Tatyana, and she assumes the position of an affectionate intimate with her young charge. As in the case of social superiors and inferiors, T1-V1 was the norm between

parents and children (even adult children) in the patriarchal families of pre-revolutionary Russia.

Russian practices regarding pronominal usage in gender relations were more variable. As the note to Table VI states, pronominal usage between husbands and wives varied with class. In general, among peasant and merchant families, T1-V1 or T1/2-V1 was the rule (with the husband, of course, assuming the pronoun of power). We are dealing here with patriarchal relationships in marriage, but even in such relationships there is usually some degree of affection, even if it is a patronising one on the part of the husband, so that the symbol T1/2 seems legitimate. Among the educated sections of the aristocracy and gentry and the intelligentsia in general, however, reciprocal T2 was used; not that they were necessarily more loving than their inferiors in the social scale but that they were more sophisticated and modernised. However, as 19th century Russian fiction shows, this aspect is complicated by the fact that the Russian aristocracy and gentry of the period often spoke French, sometimes even in preference to Russian. I can't go into this question here in detail, but it has been very fully discussed by John Lyons in an essay on 'the syllstics of bilingualism', where he takes *Anna Karenina* as his text.[36] For my purpose the most relevant fact is that the Russian *vy* was even more formal than the French *vous*. Lyons says that in the same period as *Anna Karenina* some French husbands and wives, both of the aristocracy and of the bourgeoisie, did say *vous* to each other. It would have been impossible for a husband and wife to adopt a comparable usage in Russian (reciprocal *vy*) without giving an effect of deadly coldness. This fact helps to illuminate the scene in *Anna Karenina* where Vronsky falls at the steeplechase while Anna and her husband are watching. Anna openly shows her distress by crying out, and this upsets the public appearance of decorum that Karenin has been striving to enjoin on his wife after her love affair began. There is now a crisis, and it is

[36] Lyons (1979), pp. 235-249.

manifested in the pronoun he uses in speaking to Anna. Up to this point he had addressed her as *ty* (T2), but this is now out of the question for him in the face of her public disregard of the proprieties. On the other hand, he still can't bring himself to use the Russian *vy*, which would be, in the circumstances, almost a declaration of war; so he compromises by speaking French and using *vous*. It goes without saying that this and other such nuances are lost in English translation.

In languages with binary systems of second person pronouns, the move from V2 to T2 is a crucial rite of passage, as John Lyons calls it, in a love relationship; and Russian, like French, has a verb to denote the act of saying *ty* to another person -- *tykat'* (cf. French *tutoyer*). In Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Kitty, after she has fallen in love with Levin, struggles with her embarrassment in using T2 to him. When he bursts into the backroom where she is on the day of the wedding:

'Ah!' she cried out, seeing him and all beaming with joy. 'How is it that you (*ty*) -- how is it that you (*vy*) are here? (Down to that last day she said now *ty*, now *vy* to him.)

English translators naturally find this passage an insuperable stumbling block. But it isn't often noted that there is an opposite but equally critical rite of passage which marks the death of a love relationship -- the shift to the V2 form by a person who has hitherto used T2 in his or her address to the other. Anna reaches this point at the end of her growing estrangement from Vronsky and on the last day of her life:

'Yes, by the way,' he said, when she was already at the door, 'we are definitely leaving tomorrow, aren't we?'
'You, not I,'she said, turning back to him.
'Anna, it's impossible to live like this.'
'You, not I,' she repeated.
'This is becoming intolerable!'
'You...you will regret this,' she said, and went out.

What is 'impossible' and 'intolerable' to Vronsky is not only her refusal to go with him but also the fact that she has used V2, and has emphasised it in the last line of dialogue by pausing and repeating the pronoun with emphasis. It is like a glass of cold water thrown in his face. Even Anna senses that she has gone too far, and the next moment, after he has left, she scrawls a desperate note to him: 'I am to blame. Come back home, we must talk things over. For God's sake come, I am frightened.' In this note she relapses into T2. But it is too late.

One of the subtlest and most expressive uses of the second person pronouns is in Chekhov's short story, 'The Lady with a Little Dog'. The story is justly celebrated, but I am inclined to say that anybody who has read it only in English translation doesn't really know it because some of its effects are untranslatable. In the story Gurov, who is a married man holidaying alone at a seaside resort, meets Anna Sergeevna, who is married too, and has an affair with her. In the first part of the story, after he has made love to her in the hotel bedroom, he addresses her as T2. He is an experienced roue; this for him is going to be one of his casual adventures, and he slips easily into the intimate form. It is all of a piece that immediately after making love to her, he sits down to eat a slice of melon. She on the other hand is deeply troubled by guilt over her infidelity, and she speaks to him, as she had done before, as V2. They leave -- he to Moscow, and she to the provincial town where she lives. In Moscow Gurov finds to his surprise that he can't get her out of his mind as he could other women he had seduced. Ultimately, he goes to the town where she lives in the hope of seeing her, and manages to confront her in a theatre during the interval. In this hurried conversation they both say V2. On Gurov's part this is a move back from T2 to V2; it is a kind of distancing of himself, as compared with the easy intimacy he assumed during their earlier meeting, but it means that he is no longer so complacent as to take anything for granted. Finally, in the last part of the story, we meet them again after several years of a relationship burdened by the constraints of secrecy, and here, for the first time in the text, we find them

both saying T2 to each other. Even though the relationship remains distorted by the need for deceit and concealment, the emotional barriers between them have fallen.

4

In looking at pronominal usages in Shakespeare, we have to remember that Shakespeare is a dramatic poet; therefore it sometimes happens that, for reasons of euphony or smooth speaking, he uses Y where one would expect T; and the existence of a neutral Y (Y0) in Elizabethan English allows him to do this.[37] There are two kinds of situations in which this consideration arises. Shakespeare's ear seems to have been offended by the jingle of *me* and *thee* in a line, and when this might have occurred, he often substituted *you* for *thee*. It also happens sometimes that the consonantal heaviness of a verbal form that *thou* grammatically requires would have created a difficulty for the actor (e.g. *striv'st* instead of *strive*), making it impossible for him to 'speak the speech trippingly on the tongue', in the words of Hamlet's advice to the players. In such cases, too, Shakespeare substitutes *you* for *thou*. Some examples of such substitutions will be noted in the analysis of pronominal forms in *Othello* later in this section.

In Shakespeare there is generally T1-Y1 between masters/mistresses and servants, but, as has already been mentioned, superiors do sometimes use Y0 to their inferiors in the master-

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[37] A shift from T to Y, unmotivated by a change in feeling, would be impossible in Russian, as the discussion in the last section should make clear. It is interesting to go through Pasternak's superb translations of six of Shakespeare's tragedies, noting the many places where he substitutes T for a neutral Y in the original. Thus, in the passage in *Othello*, 2.1. discussed below, where Othello says to Desdemona:

> 'It gives me wonder great as my content
> To see you here before me'

Pasternak translates:

> 'Ya verit' ne mogu svoim glazam.
> Ty zdes'? Kak ty menya operedila?' (Pasternak, 1968, p.276)

servant as well as in other relationships; but the reverse of this situation -- a servant using the T form to master or mistress -- is much rarer because it involves a breach of social propriety. When it occurs, it has to be explained by special circumstances. Between Juliet and her Nurse the pronominal norms are generally observed, but when the Nurse is feeling particularly tender to Juliet, she does use T2 to her (1.3.61-4). This is possible because Juliet's Nurse is much older than and intimate with her young mistress and can therefore take this liberty. Shakespeare's Fools have, in this as in other respects, the license given to clowns and jesters in courts and noble households. Feste in *Twelfth Night* usually addresses Olivia as Y1, but when he interrogates her on her unreasonable mourning for her dead brother, he says: 'Good madonna, why mournest thou?' (1.5.62.) He is assuming a momentary position of power (T1) as a judge questioning a person on trial. The Fool in *King Lear* habitually says T2 to Lear, and this assertion of equality, coupled with the often outrageous content of his speeches, underlines his role as the searching critic of Lear's folly.

The pronominal shift which accompanies the process of falling in love can be exemplified from *Romeo and Juliet*, which adopts the idea of love at first sight. When Romeo approaches Juliet at the ball and takes her by the hand while asking for a kiss, he addresses her playfully as a pilgrim imploring a saint:

O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
They pray; grant thou, lest lips turn to despair. (1.5.102-3)

There is an ambiguity in this *thou*; it is T2 masked as T3. Juliet, however, in her shyness, stays with *you* throughout the dialogue, even after the second kiss: 'You kiss by th' book.' (1.5.109) But when she appears on the balcony soon after, almost the first words Romeo overhears from her are: 'O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?' (2.1.75.) She has

made the transition from Y2 to T2 in her own mind, and thereafter the lovers in their dialogue exchange T2.

The general norm of address between parent and child is seen in a brief exchange between Gertrude and Hamlet:

GERTRUDE: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended. (3.4.9-10)

Hamlet here is conforming to the norm of address between mother and son (T1/2-Y1) even though the content of what he says is rebellious. Gertrude's next line is: 'Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.' Her move from T1 to Y0 is an offended distancing of herself. Such alternations are to be found also between Volumnia and Coriolanus, and similar variations can be noted between husbands and wives. In Elizabethan English, there are several possibilities in this last kind of relationship: T-Y (with the husband saying T), T-T and Y-Y. (The one possibility that is excluded is that of T-Y with the first pronoun being used by the wife.) T-Y, with the husband saying *thou*, would indicate a strongly patriarchal relationship (T1-Y1 or T1/2-Y1); the second, equivalent to the normal usage between lovers, would signify an affectionate or passionate relationship (T2-T2); and the third a more formal one (Y0-Y0). The fact that between Coriolanus and his wife there is throughout T1-Y1 is in keeping with the quite obvious male dominance in the marriage. That Antony says only Y0 to his legal wife Octavia while frequently exchanging T2 with Cleopatra brings out the formality of the first relationship as contrasted with the passionate nature of the second. However, the dramatically most interesting cases are those where there are fluctuations between T and Y which go with the outgoing or withdrawal of feeling towards the other person, and such movements are

capable of many fluxes and refluxes.[38] I shall try to illustrate this in the course of my analysis below of *Othello* -- a play I have chosen for a fuller treatment in respect of its pronouns because it incorporates relationships of class, gender and race.

I begin this analysis of second person pronouns in *Othello* with relations of social hierarchy. Between Othello and Cassio there is nearly always reciprocal *you*, Y0-Y0; between Othello and Iago T1-Y1 is invariable. This difference between Othello's terms of address to his two subordinates shows that he observes the distinction between them in rank. The only exceptions to the usages just described are dramatically significant. In the scene where Othello dismisses Cassio after the drunken brawl, he announces his decision with:

> Cassio, I love thee
> But never more be officer of mine.

At this point, Desdemona, woken by the noise, enters, and Othello continues:

> Look, if my gentle love be not raised up.
> I'll make thee an example. (2.3.241-4)

In his first T Othello is trying to soften the blow to Cassio by indicating that it is not personal animosity but duty that makes him act; but the next moment Desdemona's entrance prompts him to anger against Cassio and he speaks more harshly. Both Ts are compatible with the address of superior to subordinate (T1), but the first is tinged with T2 and the second with T4.

[38] There is here a crucial difference between Shakespearean English and the linguistic practice of other European languages with binary systems. As we have seen from the case of Anna's quarrel with Vronsky shortly before her suicide, a change from T2 to V2 is in Russian an announcement of a fundamental breach in the relationship.

In dialogue between Othello and Iago there is never a departure from the non-reciprocal pronouns (T1-Y1) that are proper between general and minor officer, except when at 1.3.121 Othello says, 'Ensign, conduct them. You best know the place.' Here, in my opinion, Shakespeare wishes to avoid the awkwardness of sound that 'thou best know'st' would have produced. There is one and only one place in the play where Iago uses T to Othello, and that when the latter is approaching but cannot hear him:

> Look where he comes. Not poppy nor mandragora
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou owedst yesterday. (3.3.334-7)

The two T1s here, so contrary to Iago's position as subordinate, are a triumphant assertion of power, mixed perhaps with that racial aversion for Othello which Iago has exhibited since the beginning of the play.

Between Desdemona and Emilia, as might be expected, T1-Y1 normally prevails: there is only one place where Desdemona says Y0 to Emilia: 'and bade me to dismiss you' (4.3.13), which I take to be due to Shakespeare's wish to avoid the echoing vowels of *me-thee*. However, there is a dramatically expressive and touching departure from the norm by Emilia, after Desdemona's death, when she addresses the dead body on the verge of her own death:

> What did thy song bode, lady?
> Hark, canst thou hear me? (5.2.253-4)

Here she is speaking to her dead mistress as a person loved (T2); one may say that she has earned the right to do so, having paid for her affection with her life.

Between Othello and Emilia there is until the last scene of the play only Y0-Y0.[39] That Othello (unlike Desdemona) should use Y0 to Emilia is in keeping with a certain formality of address on his part to a woman with whom his relations are distant. It takes his need to assert his authority over her in the situation after the murder to make him shift to T1. But there is again a more dramatic change of pronoun by Emilia in this scene. On her first learning that Othello has killed Desdemona, she still addresses him as *you*, but reviling him as 'devil'. However, on Othello using the word *whore* of Desdemona, she is so outraged that she shifts from *you* to *thou* (T4):

OTHELLO: She's like a liar gone to burning hell.
'Twas I that killed her.
EMILIA: O, the more angel she, and you the blacker devil! (Y0)
OTHELLO: She turned to folly, and she was a whore.
EMILIA: Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil. (T4) (5.2.138-142)

Emilia continues to hurl T4 at Othello for the rest of the scene. When she learns of the handkerchief, she exclaims in anger and contempt, 'O thou dull Moor...' (5.2.232) There is righteous indignation in Emilia's pronoun here, but there is also racial prejudice, confirmed by the fact that she reiterates *Moor* three times in the scene. Perhaps Emilia had thought the match

[39] The reader should bear in mind the reminder that Y0 doesn't imply that the speaker's attitude to the person addressed is necessarily neutral. By marking Emilia's pronouns Y0 I don't mean that there is no deference on her part to Othello, but that her deference is conveyed not by these pronouns but by other elements of her speech and behaviour on the stage. Since Othello doesn't say T1 to her until the last scene, the pronouns exchanged between them up to this point remain neutral. This is also true of the Y0-Y0 that is predominant in dialogue bwteen Othello and Cassio, where the relations of command and subordination are conveyed not by the pronouns but by other means.

unsuitable just as much as her husband did, and had been restrained only by loyalty to her mistress from articulating her attitude earlier in the play.

Between Desdemona and Cassio we have in the main Y0-Y0, but on Desdemona's arrival in Cyprus, Cassio greets her with a ceremonial T3: 'Hail to thee, lady...' (2.1.86.) Desdemona departs from her normal Y0 to Cassio when she wants to assure him of her goodwill to and concern for him after he has been dismissed:

Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf. (3.3.1-2)

There are other cases in the same scene. If we compare this speech with that of Othello quoted above, 'I'll make thee an example,' we see how important it is to consider the dynamics of pronominal usage in dramatic dialogue. Both Othello and Desdemona normally address Cassio as Y: both of them in these particular situations change that usage for T, but Othello in so doing moves towards T4 and Desdemona towards T2.

That Cassio and Iago should exchange reciprocal Y2 is to be expected because the difference in rank between them is not so great that one of them should use a pronoun of power. But when Iago speaks of Cassio aside in 2.1., seeing him as potential victim, he uses T1: 'Ay, smile upon her, do. I will gyve thee in thine own courtship.' (2.1.72-3) The situation between Iago and Roderigo is more complex. Throughout 1.1. there is non-reciprocal usage (T1-Y1) between them, and this, coupled with the fact that Iago addresses Roderigo as 'sir', points to Roderigo's superior social position (he has been suitor to Desdemona, albeit unsuccessfully).[40] But after Roderigo has

[40] I have been asked whether I believe Shakespeare chose his second person pronouns deliberately. As with any feature of a writer's language, it makes little difference whether he did or not; and since Shakespeare's pronominal usages were derived from those of his speech community, we must suppose

been drawn into the plot against Othello, Iago has sufficiently established himself as Roderigo's confidant and seeming ally to assume the stance of a sympathetic and intimate equal. In the latter half of 1.3., when Roderigo despairingly calls, 'Iago', the latter for the first time answers with T2: 'What sayst thou, noble heart?' (1.3.302) He maintains T2 till near the end of the scene, but is confident enough, having established his equality, to revert to Y (but now a neutral Y0) with 'Do you hear, Roderigo?' Beneath the Y0, the tone is authoritative. In the Quarto text (which was cut in the playhouse version on which the First Folio probably bases itself for this play), Roderigo responds to this Y0 with an answering Y0, 'What say you?' -- thus no longer addressing Iago as T1. By now Roderigo has been sufficiently tamed, so that reciprocity is maintained in the rest of the play: they never return to the unequal positions of the first scene. Indeed, some of Iago's later uses of T (e.g. 'Nay, get thee gone' in 2.3.372.) approaches the tone of a superior giving a subordinate orders. The way the relationship unfolds is a demonstration of Iago's skilful management of power relations.

that they would usually have needed no conscious artifice. However, the opening lines of *Othello* seem to offer an interesting possibility of a conscious alteration by Shakespeare of a second person pronoun in the text. The Quarto text (modernised in spelling and punctuation) of these lines (spoken by Roderigo to Iago) reads:

> Tush, never tell me; I take it much unkindly
> That you, Iago, who has had my purse
> As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

The Folio text, which probably represents a later revision incorporating alterations and cuts made in the theatre, has *thou...hast* instead of *you...has*. Since in the rest of the scene Roderigo says only *thou* to Iago, it is possible that during revision Shakespeare altered the pronoun for greater dramatic consistency.

Brabantio, woken up in the middle of the night in 1.1. by Iago and Roderigo, first addresses Roderigo with T (1.1.197.) as soon as the latter identifies himself. This T, as well as his angry question to Iago later in the same scene, 'What profane wretch art thou?' in answer to his obscene and provocative speech, should be taken as T4. However, by the time Brabantio discovers that Desdemona is in fact missing, he wishes to ingratiate himself with Roderigo, and therefore shifts to Y0. His last line in the scene is: 'On, good Roderigo, I'll deserve your pains.' Although I said in Section 2 that a shift from T to Y0 is frequently without dramatic significance because of the neutral character of Y0, here the shift is in fact very meaningful by contrast with Brabantio's earlier incensed T4.

In the encounter with Othello in 1.2. Brabantio uses the angry and contemptuous T4: 'O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter?' (1.2.62.) -- and so for the rest of this scene as well as 1.3. Brabantio's T4 here articulates not only outrage as a father but also racial aversion, confirmed by his several references to Othello's skin-colour and racial identity. It may be readily conjectured that he would not have used the same pronoun when he earlier entertained Othello as a guest in his house. Othello, on the other hand, replies with a dignified Y0.

I have left to the last the pattern of pronominal exchanges between Othello and Desdemona. It is striking that although reciprocal T is the language of lovers, Desdemona never once says *thou* to Othello. Her maintenance of Y1 throughout is in keeping with the deference with which she regards him as an older man and with her idolisation of him as a warrior and a glamorous figure from the larger world beyond her sheltered life. Neither in 2.1., where husband and wife are joyfully reunited in Cyprus, nor in 3.3., where Desdemona is cajoling Othello to restore Cassio to his place and speaking with teasing affection -- situations in which we would expect T2 -- does Desdemona depart from the deferential pronoun. It is true that by 3.3 she has assumed a stance of pert independence that

tends to run counter to the role of the submissive wife that is implied by the pronoun. It is all of a piece that at the end of the conversation, having wrung from Othello a promise that Cassio may come to plead his case, she reassumes verbally the role of the dutiful wife: 'Be as your fancies teach you./Whate'er you be, I am obedient.' (3.3.89-90) We seem to catch a glimpse in this scene of a Desdemona who might in time stand on her own feet and even learn, like Kitty, to say T2! However, Iago's plot and Othello's jealous suspicions forestall those possibilities, and the more violent Othello becomes in his jealous rages, the more Desdemona withdraws into submission. It has been suggested by some critics that the circumstances in which Othello and Desdemona fall in love with each other do not ofer a secure basis for a lifelong marriage, and Desdemona's Y1 can serve as confirmation of this. They are not, when they are married, on a footing of real intimacy, and they have no time to grow into one before the relationship is destroyed.

Othello for the most part uses T1/2 to Desdemona in the first half of the play (that is, before the birth of his jealousy), but there are some occasional variations that need to be clarified. In 2.1., where he rapturously embraces Desdemona on landing in Cyprus, his first words to her are:

> It gives me wonder great as my content
> To see you here before me. (2.1.184-5)

The substitution of Y0 here seems to be due to Shakespeare's wish to avoid the unpleasant jingle of *see, thee* and *me* which would otherwise have occurred. In 3.3., when Desdemona begins entreating Othello about Cassio's place, Othello in replying to her again uses Y0 (which here, by the absence of the expected T1/2) suggests a slight standoffishness because he isn't exactly pleased that she should try to interfere in official matters), but by the end of his conversation with her he slips back into T1/2, 'I will deny thee nothing' (3.3.77.) because by

then he has softened and wishes to treat her gently like a child he is humouring.

In the second half of the play, Othello's address to Desdemona shifts between Y0 when he is coldly or mockingly polite (e.g. 'I cry you mercy then' in 4.2.92) and the T4 of moral contempt and hate. The murder scene alone offers some very interesting fluctuations. He begins over her sleeping body with T1/2, contemplating her as an object of desire ('thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature', 5.2.11). When she awakes he speaks to her at first formally and coldly with Y0, but as his anger and hate mount he shifts to T4 and sustains it until he kills her. In his act of smothering her, there is a broken exclamation, 'Nay, an you strive --', 5.2.88) in which the Y0 is explained by the need for rapid and unimpeded utterance which 'thou striv'st' would not have made possible. This is not only a matter of the actor's convenience; it would be true also to actual speech in such a context. Once Othello discovers his tragic error and is stricken with remorse, his need to reassert his love over her dead body finds its natural expression in T1/2.

5

A quarter century after Shakespeare's death second person pronouns became a matter of ideological controversy. It was characteristic of the period that social issues should be fought out in religious terms. Radical Puritan sects such as the Quakers and the Diggers wanted to root out the use of the pronoun *you* in the singular and universalise *thou*. Since *you* was a more formal manner of address and was also obligatory for inferiors when they addressed superiors, the radical sects wanted to eliminate it. These sects believed in the imminent dawn of a social millennium of equality and brotherhood. Gerrard Winstanley, the remarkable leader of the Diggers, reinterpreted the traditional Christian doctrine of the Fall of Man. According to him, the Fall took place when the earth, which God had intended people should cultivate in common, was appropriated by people as their private property. It was in keeping with the levelling of class distinctions to which the Diggers and other radical sects looked forward (there was also a group called the Levellers) that they should have tried to level down pronominal usage, making of *thou* a weapon against hierarchy. George Fox, a Quaker, wrote in his *Journal*:

'...moreover when the Lord sent me forth into the world, he forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low, and I was required to "thee" and "thou" all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small.'[41]

Fox even wrote a grammar book in which he tried to establish from several languages that *thou* to one person and *you* to many was the 'natural' form of address.

The struggle over pronominal usage became part of the social and ideological conflicts of the Civil War and its aftermath. But

[41] Quoted from Alexander, (1982), p. 229.

just as the radical Puritans were defeated in the contest for political power, so were they marginalised ideologically. The Quakers (or Society of Friends, as they called themselves) continued to use *thou* or *thee* among themselves, but their linguistic usage had no effect on the larger society. The English bourgeoisie who emerged triumphant from the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 would have shunned *thou*, in its radical version, as a dangerous manifestation of 'levelling'. Thomas Fuller, a 17th century Anglican conservative, writing in 1655, said:

'In a word it is suspicious, such as now introduce thou and thee will, if they can, expel mine and thine, dissolving all propriety into confusion.'[42]

The OED gives as one meaning of *propriety* current in this period 'a piece of land owned; a landed estate.' So the radical *thou* was seen as a threat to property. If the radicals had their way in generalising the use of *thou*, they would end by confounding 'mine and thine' -- the sacred right of property.

The reaction against *thou* was probably due partly to a distrust of its radical associations, and partly to the fact that the old binary system of second person pronouns had belonged to an aristocratic society in which a person's class was determined largely by birth and inherited rank. The new competitive bourgeois society, for whose growth the political changes of the 17th century opened the way, made possible social mobility, and therefore it required forms of address which corresponded to the absence of fixed hierarchies. The new democratic discourse was that of equality of rights, equality of persons before the law and representative government; and the neutral and universal *you*, in which all distinctions of class and power relations seemed to be obliterated, became part of this discourse. However, the democratic discourse masked the realities

[42] Quoted from Alexander (1982), p. 232.

of unequal distribution of property, differential access to political power and male dominance, and the pronoun *you* served the same function in seeming to negate differences in power between one person and another.[43]

The linguistic process by which this ideological transformation was achieved may be described as follows. It will be realised that in the old binary system of second person pronouns in English, the meanings Y1 and Y2 depended on the existence of a contrasting pronoun. T Y1 was the appropriate response to T1, and reciprocal Y2 marked non-familiarity as against the familiarity of reciprocal T2. Hence, the more the currency of T was eroded, the more Y1 and Y2 also fell into abeyance, leaving the neutral Y0 as the norm of usage.

What pronominal usage in the post-Civil War era began to institutionalise therefore, was *you* as the universal second person pronoun, and in the course of the eighteenth century *thou* disappeared except in certain provincial dialects and lower class dialects and as a special usage in religious and elevated poetic contexts (in the latter form corresponding to T3).

The increasing dissemination of *you* was part of the process of the construction of a 'standard' language, based on the institutionalisation of the language of the upper classes as the

[43] It is interesting to compare this with the fact that in the Vedda language of Sri Lanka, which in its dominant form is a Sinhala-creole-Vedda, there is only one second person pronoun, *topan* (de Silva, 1972, p. 35). The single pronoun of address of the Vedda language is the expression of a society with 'a minimum social stratification' (de Silva, 1972, p. 16). Modern English *you*, on the other hand, belongs to an advanced bourgeois society which finds it necessary to conceal the realities of power relations behind a democratic ideology. The single second person pronoun of the Vedda language is that of a society where the linguistic representations of social relations are largely transparent, the English *you* of one where they are opaque.

proper language of the nation.[44] The dialectal forms *thou, tha* and *thee* survived in the speech of provincial and country people, but were despised by the elite, and the spread of education, printed books and newspapers reinforced the elevation of the 'standard' language to the position of an unquestioned norm. Radio and television in the 20th century further accentuated this development. D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, based on his childhood and youth in a Midland mining village in the latter part of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th, illuminates these changes in linguistic practice. The father, a coalminer, uses the dialect *tha* and *thee* habitually; the mother, middle class by origin, says *you*, and the son (Paul Morel) acquires the 'standard' usages both from her and from his education; but it is interesting that when he makes passionate love to Clara for the first time, he slips, whether deliberately or not, into the dialect.

In the era after the French Revolution other Western European languages found another path to democratisation in the use of second person pronouns. Over the last two centuries in these languages the currency of non-reciprocal T and non-reciprocal V has progressively lessened, and reciprocal T and reciprocal V have become more and more the standard forms of address for intimates and non-intimates respectively. In a different way from the English, these pronominal usages also serve the ideological needs of a bourgeois democratic society by doing away with, or minimising the incidence of, the older overtly unequal forms. However, inequality is still inherent, though less openly manifested, in the contemporary T and V usages in modern European languages. The correspondence between reciprocal T and intimacy on the one hand and reciprocal V and non-intimacy on the other hand implies that between superiors and subordinates intimacy cannot normally be carried so far as to make possible reciprocal T. Thus class relations and relations of power are still maintained in pronom-

[44] Crowley (1989) gives a good account of this process.

inal usage. In this context, it is of great interest that in contemporary France, as both Dr. Eric Meyer and Dr. Nira Wickramasinghe tell me, there is a trend among some speakers, particularly the young, to generalise *tu* and use it in addressing even non-intimates. This I would take to be an anti-bourgeois and egalitarian trend.

English, with its single second person pronoun, presents a different case. In contemporary English, relations of power inequality have to be marked not by the pronoun but by other forms of address. Thus, in an office or factory, hierarchy is denoted by the distinctions between people to whom an ordinary employee says 'sir' or 'madam', those whom he addresses as 'Mr. X' or 'Mrs. Y', and those he calls by their first names. In societies such as the southern states of America and South Africa, where rigid racial hierarchies have existed, there have been such linguistic innovations as the practice of whites addressing even older black males as 'boy'.

Russian history took a more belated course than the Western European. It required the February 1917 Revolution and the overthrow of the Tsarist regime to countermand through decrees and regulations the old hierarchical forms of address, including the pronominal usages. I have referred to the attempt made by the radical sects in the English Revolution to universalise the use of *thou*, and in the French Revolution the Jacobins made a similar attempt to establish *tu* as the general pronoun of address -- both conceived as moves against hierarchy.[45] It is interesting, however, that in the Russian Revolution what the revolutionaries sought to do was to eliminate the use of *ty* by social superiors to inferiors, and to establish in the public sphere the general use of *vy* -- thus, to level up pronominal usage, not level it down as their predecessors in the English

[45] Dr. Eric Meyer tells me that in the radical euphoria of the May 1968 days in Paris even strangers began to say *tu* to each other.

and French Revolutions had aimed at doing. But in this, as in other aspects of social relations, neither February nor October could eradicate the ideological roots of long-established practices. Moreover, as a new bureaucracy replaced the old, the inequalities of power remained, and found one expression in the survival of non-reciprocal *ty* and non-reciprocal *vy*. Army officers used *ty* often to address their subordinates, as did factory managers and even officials higher in the political scale. Writing an article titled 'The Struggle for Cultured Speech' in *Pravda* in May 1923, Trotsky condemned 'abusive language and swearing', and went on to say: 'There is no denying that the old pre-revolutionary forms of language are still in use at the present time, six years after October, and are quite the fashion at the top.'[46] Later, in his critique of Soviet society in his book *The Revolution Betrayed*, written in exile in 1937, Trotsky cited from *Pravda* a piece of dialogue between a factory director and a mechanic. 'The mechanic,' commented Trotsky, 'addresses the director with extreme respect, using the second person plural, while the director answers him in the second person singular. And this disgraceful dialogue, impossible in any cultured capitalist country, is related by the director himself on the pages of *Pravda* as something entirely normal.'[47]

These practices in fact outlived Trotsky's lifetime. The excellent study by Comrie and Stone, *The Russian Language since the Revolution*, shows that as late as the 1960s complaints about the use of non-reciprocal *ty* by individuals in positions of authority were being aired in the Soviet press, and that in some factories workers had to persuade the management to institutionalise *vy*.[48]

[46] Quoted from the translation in Trotsky (1973), pp. 53-54.

[47] L. Trotsky (1937), p. 103. The references to the second person plural and the second person singular are to *vy* and *ty* respectively.

[48] Comrie and Stone (1978), p. 175.

The Soviet Union developed its own socialist rhetoric which, like the Western democratic discourse, concealed the realities of unequal power and unequal privilege. However, there was one area of Soviet life in which repressive power manifested itself openly not only in other forms but also in linguistic practices, and that was in the prisons and the forced labour camps. In the Tsarist period it was compulsory that prisoners should be addressed as T, even if they came from the privileged classes. Dostoevsky himself in his Siberian prison camp as well as, fictionally, his character Dmitri Karamazov underwent this humiliation. But the same form of address, apart from other ways of violating human dignity, remained in force in Soviet prisons. This is evident from the flood of prison literature through which Soviet readers in the era of perestroika were told the truth about the recent past. One of the most powerful of these narratives is the memoir of her twenty years in the prison camps by Anna Larina, the wife of Nikolai Bukharin, titled *Nezabyvaemoe* (The Unforgettable). From her story it is evident that she -- an educated and cultured woman -- was consistently addressed as T by her warders and summoned degradingly by her surname 'Bukharina', apart from being insulted as 'bitch' and being made to perform such menial work as shovelling shit. However, when she was once conveyed to Moscow because she had been summoned by Beria, the head of the secret police, the latter received her courteously, and among other shows of politeness addressed her as *vy* and by her first name and patronymic in proper fashion. It turned out that he had a purpose: he wanted to win her over as a collaborator -- an attempt she resisted.[49] (Larina, 1989)

In Dostoevsky's prison narrative, *Notes from the House of the Dead*, we learn of the shock the prisoner got on his first day

[49] I have used this episode, described in Larina 1989, pp. 174-192, as well as others from her prison life in the new version of my play on Bukharin and his wife, *The Long Day's Task*, in *The Thatched Patio*, January/February 1992.

when he found dead cockroaches floating in the cabbage soup served to the prisoners. Ninety years later, Mme. Bukharin went through the same nauseating experience in the Soviet prisons. *Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.* Just as the Revolution did nothing to improve prison sanitation, so it failed to sweep away the filth of the past in the linguistic and non-linguistic assertions of naked power against the victims of the state.

6

In an earlier section of this study I referred to the difficulties, in studying historically pronominal usages in any language, of obtaining reliable evidence regarding the spoken language of earlier times. We are fortunate in the case of Sinhala that we have a record of Kandyan usages in the 17th century by Robert Knox who, as a British captive in the kingdom for nineteen years, knew colloquial and not literary Sinhala. In the chapter of his *Historical Relation of Ceylon* (1681) devoted to 'laws and language', he says: 'They have seven or eight words for Thou, or You, which they apply to persons according to their quality, or according as they would honour them.'[50] He then lists the eight words I have set out in Table VII. Knox doesn't tabulate them but places them in serial order, and adds: 'All these words are gradually one higher than the other.' This last statement is rather loosely expressed, since it is apparent that after the singular form of three of the pronouns Knox places the plural form. I have therefore in tabulating the pronouns set the plural form, where it was given by Knox, on the same line as the singular, but otherwise preserved Knox's order.

Knox's transliterations of these Sinhala pronouns are somewhat distorted by the foreign accent with which he probably spoke them, but it is not difficult to restore the originals. *Tho* and *thopi* are appropriately placed at the beginning as the pronouns which situate the person/s addressed in the lowest position of subordination. In considering the other pronouns, it is noteworthy that *thamuse* and *thamusela*, from the position in which Knox places them, were only less honorific than *thamunnanse*. *Thamuse*, however, has descended considerably in the social scale since Knox wrote.

[50] Knox *(1681)*, p. 168.

TABLE VII

SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS IN KANDYAN SPEECH (17TH CENTURY) AS GIVEN BY ROBERT KNOX

Knox's forms	Actual Sinhala forms
To, Topi	Tho, Thopi
Umba, Umbela	Umbe, Umbela
Tomnai	Thamunnehe[51]
Tomsi, Tomsela	Thamuse, Thamusela
Tomanxi	Thamunnanse

What Sinhala possessed then in the 17th century was a multiplicity of second person pronouns, all of which continued to be in use down to the twentieth century, and this multiplicity can be paralleled in other South Asian languages. European feudalism, even in the strongly hierarchical society of medieval times, could manage with the binary systems of second person pronouns that we have looked at in the earlier parts of this paper. I suggest that why Sinhala, and other South Asian languages, needed an elaborate array of second person pronouns was because the societies in which they were used had a gradation of castes. It is well known that down to near-contemporary times *tho* and *thopi* were used to the castes who were lowest in the hierarchy. In the reverse direction, Knox himself mentions that the Rodi (who were accorded the lowest place of all) were obliged to use the most ceremonious terms in addressing even ordinary people of other castes.

[51] I am indebted for the identification of this pronoun to Tissa Abeysekera.

What has been taking place in the twentieth century is that Sinhala has been striving to develop pronominal usages that are more appropriate to a modern democratic society. The process, I shall suggest, is going on but is still incomplete.

Let us look at the contemporary situation regarding some of the pronouns that Knox lists. *Tho* and *thopi* have virtually disappeared today, except when a speaker uses them deliberately in anger as an insult or when parents and other elders use them playfully or affectionately to children.[52] However, when I say this, I must not omit the case of Yasmine Gooneratne's 'Uncle Frederick' -- at least, because it is an entertaining story. This was Frederick Obeyesekere, the son of Donald Obeyesekere and a Cambridge graduate and lawyer, who in 1960 decided to contest the Dompe seat in Parliament. Since he was a kinsman of the Bandaranaikes, the SLFP would have been glad to give him nomination, but he spurned the offer because he despised mass parties, and stood as an independent against his own nephew, Felix Dias Bandaranaike. According to Yasmine Gooneratne in her family memoir *Relative Merits*, 'Uncle Frederick' stood up at his election meeting in the Dompe Town Hall, and in his 'most polished Cambridge tones' delivered a speech in which he addressed the audience as *thopi*:

> 'And so,' finished Uncle Frederick, beaming kindly from the rostrum on the vulgar multitude below him, whose growing irritation he mistook for murmurs of approval, 'let me not attempt to influence *thopi* in these important deliberations. That is not for me to do. But if any here have a desire to bestow their valuable votes on me, then I will offer them this encouragement: *thopi* have my gracious permission to do so.'[53]

[52] I am grateful to Dr. Ranjini Obeyesekere and Prof. H.L. Seneviratne for bringing this latter usage to my notice.

Umbe has had a much longer life than *tho* and *thopi* as an expression of relations of power. As I said in the beginning of this paper, it was in the days of my childhood the normal pronoun with which middle class people would address anybody who was barefoot and in sarong or cloth and jacket. When I made a first attempt thirteen years ago to treat the subject of second person pronouns in an article in the *Lanka Guardian*[54] -- a rather superficial and amateurish article, I now think -- a Christian priest, the Rev. D.J. Kanagaratnam, wrote a letter to a subsequent issue of the journal offering some interesting information about the pronominal usages of missionaries. He reported that in the first Sinhala translation of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1820) God was referred to as *Unvahanse*, the clergyman as *Unnanse*, and the people as *tho* and *thopi*:

> 'Even in the 20th century till the 50s these forms were retained along with 'obavahanse' for God and 'umba' and 'umbela' used individually and collectively when people are referred to. Some translations even have 'thope hith osavapalla' (lift up your hearts) and 'kapalla' and 'beepalla' (eat and drink).[55]

However, Sinhala nationalists in the early part of this century were not ahead of Christian missionaries in their use of pronouns of address. Anagarika Dharmapala followed the norms of his time when addressing working class audiences,

[53] Gooneratne (1986), p. 84.

[54] Siriwardena (1979).

[55] *Lanka Guardian*, August 1, 1979.

speaking to them as *umbela*.[56] The man who transformed public political discourse in this respect was the labour leader A.E. Goonesinha.

When I was a young student in the 'forties and working for the LSSP, I used to know Henry Peiris, then editor of the illegal *Samasamajaya*; he later became an M.P. in the first Parliament. Henry Peiris had begun his political life with A.E. Goonesinha. He told me that Goonesinha made a tremendous impact on the working class by addressing them for the first time as *mahatvarunt* (gentlemen). This, coupled with his virulent attacks on the imperialist police, Peiris said, raised the self-respect of the workers and broke their fear of authority. Henry Peiris even used to give, for the edification and delectation of younger comrades, imitations of Goonesinha speaking at mass meetings in his heyday.

While *umbela* disappeared from political life as a result of Goonesinha's innovation, both singular and plural forms of this pronoun continued to be alive among middle-class people in address to the lower orders for a much longer period. In *The Cherry Orchard* Chekhov makes his student Trofimov say of some people that they call themselves intelligentsia but they say *ty* to their servants."[57] I don't doubt that there are still some people in Sri Lanka who are in the same position, but their number is dwindling all the time.

However, the movement in the direction of more democratic pronominal usage was for a long time impeded by one fact.

[56] This is evident from the speeches of Anagarika Dharmapala to working class audiences quoted in Gunadasa Amarasekera, *Anagarika Dharmapala Marxvadhiyekdha?*

[57] English translators understandably render this by some such paraphrase as '...they speak rudely to their servants', but the Russian could be exactly translated into Sinhala or Tamil.

Once the old hierarchical pronouns had declined, there was no second person pronoun readily available for use in ordinary conversation in order to place the hearer on a footing of equality with oneself. What was one to use? *Obe* was too stiff and stilted: it could be used in writing, or in formal speeches, or in dialogue in bad historical plays, but it was impossibly bookish for everyday speech. *Thamuse*, which had come down in the world since Knox, was too patronising. I know a middle-class person who once lost his temper when a policeman addressed him as *thamuse*; and I recall an occasion when a film director was most upset and apologetic because one of his assistants, who didn't know me, had said *thamuse* to me. "Thamuse! My heavens!" the director exclaimed. Peasants and urban workers could and did use reciprocal *umbe* to each other in familiar conversation; and this usage has been adopted by some middle-class males (less frequently by females) when they are on a footing of intimacy with each other; but it is obviously unusable by non-intimates. I have been told that *ohe* has existed for a long time in the southern dialect, but in my experience (almost entirely urban) of Sinhala, its currency appears to be declining. *Thama* was apparently widely used by older generations,[58] and I knew a lady from an aristocratic Kandyan family who frequently employed this form, but it tended to send the girls in Colombo who worked with her into fits of giggles. It still exists as a formal and impersonal mode of address, perhaps somewhat patronising in character, and therefore open to adoption by such persons as state officials talking to ordinary citizens,[59] but its stiffness severely limits its range of use.

When I look back on my own practice in the 'sixties and 'seventies, I recall that most often in Sinhala conversation, I

[58] I am again indebted to Dr. Ranjini Obeyesekere for information on this point.

[59] I have recently heard it on two teledramas, on both occasions used by police officers addressing middle class people they were interrogating.

would avoid using a pronoun by addressing the person by name: *'Rani hete gedere yanawadhe?'* Or, if I was speaking to someone with whom I was less familiar, *'Mister Silva mokakdhe hithanne?'* I believe this was a strategy that many others besides myself adopted at that time; and this pointed to a hiatus in pronominal forms.[60]

However, the democratic pronoun that has emerged in the last two decades or so to fill this vacuum is *oya* -- a form of address that was once thought by speakers of the privileged classes to be indecorous or rude. It was almost certainly first adopted in urban speech, where the need for a non-hierarchical pronoun would have been felt most strongly, though there are no field studies on which to base this conjecture. When I wrote on the subject of second person pronouns thirteen years ago,[61] I said that I still had an inhibition against using *oya* to strangers because it seemed to me too brash. In the course of that decade, however, I have overcome those feelings through my own habituation to that usage and through hearing the pronoun every day around me. What is particularly significant is that such persons as bus conductors or peons now use *oya* to people in trousers whom a generation ago they would only have addressed as *mahattaya (sir)*. This is a striking assertion of equality across the class barriers, as is also the habit of younger bus conductors of addressing older middle-class males

[60] Dr. Ranjini Obeyesekere questions my view that there was such a 'hiatus' on the ground that it is always possible in Sinhala speech to use the verb alone without the pronoun: e.g. *Enavadhe?* (Are you coming?). It seems to me, however, that this form of address is possible only with intimates, and that if used to strangers or to persons of higher status, it would seem curt or brusque. It is interesting to note that the same usage exists in Shakespearean English, but only with T: e.g. in the line already quoted from *Twelfth Night*, 2.3.109-110, where Sir Toby says to Malvolio, 'Art more than a steward?' Here the address is contemptuous; elsewhere it may be familiar or affectionate, but it is, significantly, not available with Y.

[61] Siriwardena (1979).

as *Uncle*. Of course, it is true that the former practice of calling anybody in trousers *mahattaya* could not have been sustained in any case because trousers are no longer a badge of class: the bus conductor or peon is often in trousers himself.

While I believe I am right in saying that *oya* emerged in urban speech, it is no longer confined to it. Though my own contact with rural Sinhala is minimal, I have been assured by knowledgeable observers that it is rapidly taking root in the village, especially among the younger generations. I think very plausible a suggestion that Dr. J. Uyangoda has made to me that university students going back to the village from the city carry the usage with them, and that it is also spread by the media -- films, teledramas, radio plays and popular novels. I think, therefore, that we can expect *oya* to become increasingly the standard pronoun of address to persons with whom the speaker has or claims equality -- whether intimate or non-intimate.[62]

Does this mean that *oya* is becoming a neutral all-purpose pronoun of address? No, we are still quite some distance away from such a development. This can be readily perceived if we recognise that no ordinary citizen would dream of addressing a Minister or even a higher official as *oya*; he would have to use an honorific such as *obathuma*, or even *thamunnanse*. What this means is that the old feudal and caste hierarchies have lost their force, but they have been replaced by a new political and bureaucratic hierarchy, and some of the old pronominal usages have been transferred to that context. In short, our linguistic practices and the ideology they incarnate still carry with them a living legacy of the feudal past, which runs counter to the democratic or socialist discourse we have taken over in the

[62] It must be remarked, however, that at the present stage of evolution of this pronoun, it is sometimes used non-reciprocally. My sister says *oya* to her maid, but the latter would consider it an impropriety to say anything to her other than *nonnahattaya* (madam).

course of our political development. That is why our linguistic usages, our thinking and our social relations are so often shot through with contradictions.

7

I conclude this monograph with some comparative observations on the case studies included in it, and in particular on the processes of pronominal change in the three languages dealt with in the course of the study.

The second person pronoun structures in Elizabethan English, when viewed diachronically, have to be seen as transitional. This character of the pronouns is revealed especially in the existence of a neutral *you*. Standing outside the traditional hierarchical relationships and the structure of pronouns of address associated with them, it foreshadows the universal *you* that later became institutionalised in English as the appropriate form of address in a bourgeois society. In Elizabethan English this process was incomplete because non-reciprocal *thou* and *you* continued to be in use side by side with neutral *you*; but when change was consummated in the eighteenth century, what it meant was that pronominal usage had been 'democratised' by levelling it upwards. The attempts of the radical sects, who represented subaltern groups, during and after the Civil War to universalise *thou* failed, and instead the pronoun that had been originally the polite form of address of the upper classes among themselves and the proper form of address of the lower classes towards their superiors was universalised. This, as we have seen, was part of a general refinement of linguistic usage, an emphasis on gentility and correctness of speech, which was in effect the imposition of the speech habits of the elite on the rest of the nation.

In post-revolutionary Russian, as in other modern Continental languages, change in pronominal usage took a different form because the binary structure was preserved, but the lines of distinction between the T and V forms were redrawn to mark the difference not between superiors and inferiors but between familiarity and strangeness. Nevertheless, this was also an example of levelling up pronominal usage -- an extension to the

wider society of one of the speech habits of the educated and privileged former ruling classes. There is no doubt that this change corresponded to popular desires during the revolutionary era; indeed, even before the revolution, workers had demanded that their managements address them with the polite pronoun.[63] Pronominal change was now institutionalised by decree and promoted from above by a revolutionary elite. But as this elite hardened into a bureaucratic one, contradictions between the officially sanctioned ideology and linguistic practice developed which were due partly to the survival of old pre-revolutionary habits and attitudes and partly to the growth of new unequal relations of power. (Perhaps another factor was that some of those who obtained positions of power soon after the Revolution belonged by their social origins to working class or peasant families where the modes of address had been different from those of the more privileged classes.) However, over the seven decades of existence of the Soviet state general pronominal usage evolved towards the norms generally current in Western Europe, except in the prisons, forced labour camps and police stations where the repressive character of the state manifested itself also in linguistic usage. But if the bourgeois democratic transformation of Russia which is now on the order of the day is carried through, these anomalous linguistic practices will be regarded as part of the amalgam of a Communist order with the traditions of a feudal past, and in this as in other respects Russia will probably be anxious to catch up with Western norms.

The current changes in usage in pronouns of address in Sinhala are, however, of a different character from those represented by the other cases that have been studied. The increasing obsolescence of the traditional hierarchical pronouns and the growing currency of *oya* are linguistic changes that are moving away from the heritage of old social relations, though,

[63] Comrie and Stone (1978), p.174.

as with other social changes in the same direction, they are incomplete. Reciprocal *oya* exists side by side with non-reciprocal pronouns, just as in Shakespearean English neutral and reciprocal *you* co-existed with non-reciprocal *you* and *thou*. However, what is most significant is that the emergence of *oya* isn't parallel to earlier European pronominal change because it doesn't spring from a generalisation by the upper classes of their usage. It is not a case of pronominal usage being levelled upwards but one of change from below.

This point will be clear if I take the situation in English in the period when neutral *you* was being universalised. The change had to come from above because what it involved was the abandonment of the T form by superiors addressing inferiors, whereas the lower classes continued to say Y to their betters as they had always done. Of course, in the dialogic exchange Y now took on a different -- a neutral -- character, but at the level of speech habits the shift was on the part of the upper classes and could only be carried out by them. But where a member of the lower classes had used reciprocal *thou* to his familiars, he was now being urged by precept and example to say *you* as the more correct and elegant form of address. English pronominal change, therefore, was clearly from the top downwards. In contemporary Sinhala, on the other hand, the initiation of *oya* has not come from the upper classes.

I would distinguish here between two different aspects of linguistic change in contemporary Sinhala involving class relations. By the 1940s or 1950s (my dating here is based purely on personal memories) a younger generation of middle class or upper middle class people (many of them English-educated) were ashamed of the linguistic habits of their elders in addressing servants or other people of a lower class -- that is, the use of *umbe* and the non-polite verb forms. They were influenced perhaps partly by democratic ideals and partly by the model offered by the English *you*. These local counterparts of Trofimov began to use the polite forms of verbs, regardless of the class of the person they were addressing; but in the

absence of a convenient non-hierarchical pronoun, most of them at that stage would avoid using one at all. This, therefore, was a linguistic change initiated from above, as in the case of the European developments I have been discussing. But the introduction of *oya* is not only more recent, but also came not from the same social groups but from Sinhala speaking people of lower social status than these. Indeed, originally, I remember, many members of the privileged middle classes felt affronted when addressed as *oya* by people from whom they expected more deferential forms of address, and perhaps some of them still do feel that unease. It is one thing to be civilised in addressing your inferiors and abandon overtly humiliating forms; it is another to accomodate yourself to *their* expression of equality with you.

If, therefore, the adoption of *oya*, particularly in address to people normally assumed to be of superior social status than the speaker, is seen as a form of assertion of equality from below, one needs to identify the groups or classes who originated this linguistic practice. Nothing definite can be said about this in the absence of field studies of pronominal usages in Sinhala. But I would guess that the innovation was created not by those at the bottom of the social pyramid but by groups such as students, lower middle class employees and others (I have already mentioned the examples of bus conductors and peons) -- those predominantly urban groups who come regularly into contact with people traditionally regarded as higher in the social scale but who no longer feel obliged to treat them with verbal deference. I wouldn't hazard putting a date on the beginnings of this phenomenon, but it is not older, I believe, than, at most, a quarter of a century. It is post-1956, of course; but just as it is interesting to contrast the failure of the sham levelling in dress through the officially promoted cloth and banian with the popularity today of trousers among urban males of all classes, so *oya* is an interesting example of a spontaneous linguistic change from below, not stopping at the

platform rhetoric of equality but translating it into the language of everyday social intercourse.

However, the future development of *oya* will be determined by the evolving character of our social relations. What will probably happen in the presently foreseeable future is that *oya* will become the normal form of address to equals or those whom the speaker perceives as equals, while more deferential forms will be sustained in address towards superiors, particularly those in positions of authority in relation to the speaker. Such a linguistic situation will be broadly comparable to the contemporary usage of T and V in most European languages, except that the deferential forms in Sinhala -- *obathuma* or *thamunnanse* -- will be more obsequious, carrying as they do the stamp of our feudal past.

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SOUTH ASIA BULLETIN SPECIAL NUMBER ON SRI LANKA

This special number of the journal *South Asia Bulletin* will present material prepared for ICES and will include several papers on Sri Lankan culture. It is edited by Nira Wickramasinghe and Reggie Siriwardena.

In this study, based on original research, the author examines second person pronouns in three languages – English, Russian and Sinhala – as a means of expressing personal and power relationships. While these pronouns are the main structural device that languages have evolved for this purpose, the study shows that they are subject to continual historical variation in changing social contexts. Among the phenomena the study analyses are the emergence of a single neutral and universal second person pronoun in English, the nature of pronominal usages in Russian since the Revolution, and the contemporary changes in this field in spoken Sinhala. As a study which combines sociolinguistic and literary approaches, this monograph should be of interest to readers with diverse interests.

REGGIE SIRIWARDENA is critic, teacher, translator, poet and dramatist. He has translated Pushkin, Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva into English. His other published work includes a collection of poems, *To the Muse of Insomnia*, an anthology and introduction to Romantic poetry, *The End of a Golden String*, and two plays, *The Long Day's Task* and *Prometheus*. He edits the journal *The Thatched Patio* for ICES.