

John Skelton: the Laureate of the People

Dr. Ammar Safaa Hussein
University Baghdad

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the poetry of John Skelton in an attempt to identify his political orientation. Skelton spent many years of his life in the court of Henry VII and his son Henry VIII, but he did not write any poem that glorifies any of them. His true affiliation, it seems, was to the English people and the church which he tried to protect through his poetry as he felt that they are under the control of an unjust person called Cardinal Wolsey.

Keywords:

Skelton, Wolsey, Henry VIII, Gramsci, intellectuals

Introduction

The sheer amplitude of ferocious criticism written against John Skelton (1460-1529) by both his and our contemporaries invites scholars to cogitate the whys and the wherefores that led to misapprehending a poet laureate who spent many years of his life in divulging and exposing the malfeasance at the court of King Henry VIII (1491-1547). One of Skelton's contemporaries, William Lily, (1486-1522) wrote:

With face so bold, and teeth so sharp
Of Viper's venome, why dost carp?
Why are my verses by thee weigh'd
In a false scale? May truth be said?
Whilst thou, to get the more esteem,
A learned Poet fain wouldst seem;
Skelton, thou art, let all men know it,
Neither learned, nor a poet.¹

Such a vehement libel against Skelton in which he is accused of being neither a learned person nor a poet is an inevitable corollary of the War of Grammarians that broke out in 1519 and continued for almost three years during which the champions of the old and new systems of teaching Latin tended to be pugnacious and arrogant, exchanging poems in which the approach of each came under severe censure of the other. There is good reason to believe that Lily wrote these lines in retaliation for *Speke, Parott* in which Skelton vehemently criticizes the new system of education. The acrimonious dispute between the two does not allow accepting Lily's estimation without further scrutiny.

John Grange, the author of *The Golden Aphroditis* (1577) and about whom almost nothing is known, passes a similar judgment on Skelton's poetry, claiming that his major poems cannot pass assessment both for the issues

addressed and the style of writing itself. He claims that poems such as *Speke, Parott, The Tunning of Elynour Rumming, Why Come ye not to the Courte* and *Philip Sparrow*, contain “ragged ryme” and “foolish theames” and that their faults are so noticeable to every person who hears poetry of “such a gibying sorte”.²

If Lily and Grange are to be justified, but not pardoned, for so roughly denouncing Skelton, one cannot identify the reasons that made a poet like Alexander Pope (1688-1744) deny every artistic merit in Skelton’s writing. He believes that Skelton’s poetry consists “wholly of Ribaldry, Obscenity, and Billingsgate Language”.³

In his essay on Skelton, W.H. Auden (1907-73) elucidates his views on the reasons that made critics underestimate Skelton and his poetry, believing that he left no immortal monument in the world of art that reminds later critics or literary scholars of his achievements as a poet laureate. Auden writes:

To write an essay on a poet who has no biography, no message, philosophical or moral, who has neither created characters, nor expressed critical ideas about the literary art, who was comparatively uninfluenced by his predecessors, and who exerted no influence upon his successors, is not easy. Skelton's work offers no convenient critical pegs.⁴

Such claims about lack of originality, message and influence are groundless and show a great deal of common critical misconception about the message of many of Skelton’s poems. The present paper addresses itself, in particular, to the study of a number of Skelton’s poems, illustrating how Skelton’s worldview and ideology about his social and political role made him a harsh critic of the corruption of the courtly life and how his refusal to readjust himself alienated him from his surroundings. The study also illuminates how the poet’s sensitive position, as a poet laureate, made him very careful in his attacks as the real intended target of his censure was, sometimes, the monarch himself; a thing that led some critics to believe that Skelton has no message.

Skelton: a Strict Nonconformist

Skelton’s biographers share a common belief that almost nothing about the poet’s life is known for sure. Even his date of birth is uncertain and is assumed to be 1460 according to speculations as no tangible proof of his birth is available. However, what the biographers and literary historians agree about is that his life, whether at the court of Henry VII, at Diss, at the court of Henry VIII or even at Westminster late in life, was too far from being quiet or peaceful. It seems that Skelton, at the different stages of his life, was determined to stand against everything his religious dogma and ideological orientation rejected. This forced him to be involved in many a quarrel with people of various social and political positions and some of whom, clearly enough, were people of great power, politically and socially.

When he was eighteen years old, Skelton was very successful in winning the abomination of others especially those who did not win his respect or approval. One example is his attack on the retainers of the Earl of Northumberland. They are vehemently censured for fleeing from the battlefield while their lord was fighting by himself and how they were looking at him falling without offering a hand. They “[f]led away from hym”, because they were fragile men whose hearts were without any sort of faith in God.⁵ Although this incident is of no great significance in itself it throws illuminating light on the nature of the courtly poet who believed in his social role as a secular prophet who has to straighten the crooked wherever and whenever it happens. In his commentary on this poem; William Nelson states that Skelton “considered himself the apostle of reason and of moderation and ... conceived it his duty to whip erring humanity into line”.⁶ [Ellipsis mine]

While at Diss, Skelton did not seek peace with the world and continued his mission as an intellectual who had certain duties towards his community. He did not flatter the rich or the people of power, as many of his contemporaries did. John Clerk and Adam Uddersall, whom he called the knaves of Diss, were not exempt from his attack and against whom he wrote a mock epitaph criticizing them for their anti-Christian conduct and their abuse of Christ, the church, the clergy and the people.⁷ Although the epitaph was written after Clerk and Uddersall’s death, one can easily realize how the poet was forced to align with the church and the poor when they were attacked by ruthless entities that tried to abuse them.

It goes without saying that the poet’s lifelong enemy was Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (1473-1530). Throughout his career, Skelton never stopped writing satires and libels to condemn what he thought to be the erroneous policies of the cardinal. In *Speak, Parott*, the poet accused Wolsey of being responsible for corruption at the state and the church. The cardinal is also blamed for the deterioration of the educational system in England. It is true that the poet uses Biblical names throughout the poem, but the identification between these names and the cardinal does not require much effort. *Colyn Clout*, is an extended discussion of the situation of the church and the corruption of the clergy. The bishop referred to throughout the poem is undoubtedly Wolsey who was held accountable for the difficult conditions of the nuns and monks while he, that is to say Wolsey, and the corrupt clergymen like him were enjoying their luxurious lives. *Why Come ye nat to Courte?* is the most important satire against Wolsey in which the poet pours his anger on the cardinal for his political views and practices, his abuse of the power bestowed on him and his control over the Star Chamber. Wolsey’s policies, Skelton claims, are responsible for the war with France and they led to the loss of many souls and to imposing more taxes on the poor people.

Historians agree that Wolsey had strong influence on the king and that he was, to certain extent at least, the actual ruler of England during the reign of Henry VIII. It is also known that Skelton was the poet laureate, and before that he was the tutor to Henry and his late brother Arthur. Why should a poet endanger all the privileges of his post at the court and the favors he could have won if he decided to be on congenial terms with Wolsey? Skelton could have done so because he was an admirer of the cardinal in his early life and the cardinal was his patron just before his death.

Arthur F. Kinney believes that the anti-Wolsey poems were written in retaliation for the distress of Thomas Howard (1473-1554), the duke of Norfolk, which was caused by Wolsey himself.⁸ Neslon suggests that these satires, which led to all the animosity and hatred between the two men, were motivated by personal jealousy, Skelton's underestimation of Wolsey's "scholarly attainment", the cardinal's humble birth and his becoming the second man in power in England.⁹

Nelson himself is not completely happy with this explanation and he emphasizes the importance of finding a less selfish reason for the antipathy between the two. It is not plausible that personal jealousy can be the only reason that made a scholar like Skelton endanger his very life in a battle the results of which were unpredictable. Wolsey was very powerful and many lords feared his anger. Attacking such a person so overtly and vehemently could have brought about Skelton's death.

Skelton: the Displaced Intellectual

In his discussion of the relation between people in power and intellectuals, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) states that the dominant groups in every society use deputies that help in regenerating a culture that goes along with their own interests. These deputies tend to be highly educated with an ability to ideologically enforce the culture and values of the dominant group, and hence enhancing their position.¹⁰ Unlike those who use force and coercion, the intellectuals, so Gramsci calls them, organize, administrate, direct, educate or lead the masses.¹¹ These intellectuals, the Italian activist laments, are, usually but not always, of peasant origin but they are always employed by the dominant groups to enhance the unconscious oppression of the peasants by the feudal lords.¹²

Intellectuals are of two types, according to Gramsci. There are those who emerge from a social group, feel that they are part of it and play an important role in defending and protecting its interests. These are usually part and parcel of the group and use the knowledge they have for improving its conditions. They are always revolutionary in their attempts to decentralizing the centers of power in their communities.¹³ On the other hand, there are those who are highly sophisticated, rarely, or never, use their knowledge for practical purposes and

always defend the status quo as being the best. They defend the interests of the dominant group but, unlike the *organic* intellectuals who focus on practical life; the activities of the *traditional* intellectual tend to be “abstract and arcane”.¹⁴

Here an important question is raised. Where did Skelton stand in this equilibrium? Was he a traditional intellectual, given the title of the poet laureate by the king to defend the political system and the monarch of his time? Did he ever betray the class to which he belonged by glorifying what was believed to be God’s representative on earth? Did Skelton, as a poet laureate, use his poetical prowess to enhance the cultural values of the Tudors at the expense of the poor masses?

Early in life, and at the court of Henry VII, Skelton did not feel comfortable with the nature of competition, fair and foul, among the courtiers. Being an intellectual alienated the poet from the people surrounding him. The courtiers’ main concern was to win the support and the favor of the king. Although he himself was part of this world and benefited from the privileges of being a tutor to the king’s son Skelton never felt a sense of belongingness and was used to distancing himself from the rest of the courtiers.

In his *Bowge of Court*, which is supposed to be written before 1509¹⁵, Skelton elucidates the nature of the relations between the courtiers themselves on the one hand and their relations with the king on the other hand. The court, which is compared to a ship, is presented as a world in which friendship is absent because the main goal of the visitors of this place is to win the favor of the king at the expense of the others. The seven people met by the poet, who is called Dread, echo the seven deadly sins in the Christian culture as each one of them stands for a particular characteristic, criticized and condemned by the poet. Dread, or Skelton himself, seems unhappy and careworn because he finds himself in the wrong place. He complains to Desire, who pretends to try to console him, that he suffers from extreme loneliness and that what he owns does not qualify him to compete with the other merchants who buy the wares of “Dame Saunce Pere” (51). In his conversation with Desire he states:

“Maistress,” quod I, "I have none acquaintance
That will for me be mediator and mean;
And this another, I have but small substance.”
“Peace”, quod Desire, "ye speak not worth a bean!
If ye have not, in faith, I will you lene
A precious jewel, no richer in this land:
Bon Aventure have here now in your hand. (92-8)

What has made it worse for Dread is the vicious advice he receives from Riot who tells him to put aside his sublime and intellectual pursuits for the sake of what Skelton considers lewd and vile basic pleasures.

Thou must swear and stare, man, all day long,
And wake all night, and sleep till it be noon;
Thou mayest not study, or muse on the moon;

This world is nothing but eat, drink, and sleep,
And thus with us good company to keep. (381-5)

This kind of practice contradicts completely what the poet stands for. Skelton devoted his life and poetry to goodness and the welfare of people. Even his political poems put the simple people in mind as a priority. Lust and sensual pleasures were too far from being his goal at the court.

Skelton lived at the court of the king for a while and his biographers state that he was acquainted with the majority of the courtiers. Nevertheless, the poet used to distance himself from the others as he did not share common ideas or goals with those courtiers. For him, they were all like the seven individuals who were with Dread on board; evil, untrustworthy and treacherous. Simultaneously, the courtiers themselves tried to avoid him all the time. He made them feel uncomfortable. His continuous fear, as his name Dread, suggests, made them all decline communicating with him; a thing that augmented his sense of loneliness and solitude.

... oftentimes I would myself advance
With them to make solace and pleasure.
But my disport they could not well endure:
They said they hated for to deal with Drede.(143-6)

The strange thing which the poet faced during his courtly life was that even those who advised him not to put his confidence in any one were themselves untrustworthy. Strangely enough, one of his rivals advised him to be discrete if he wants to continue his courtly life without trouble. "The soveraynst thing that any man may have/ [i]s little to say, and much to hear and see" (211-2). Dread's dread reached its highest point of tension when he heard, by chance, Harvy Hafter and Disdain, conspiring to get rid of him. Their decision to use a "bait" which involves some sort of "deceit" (312-3) made the poet come to the conclusion that it is better for him to depart that dangerous ship before he falls in the trap. Love of being at the court was still strong and it prevented the poet from carrying out his plans. Before the end of the poem, Skelton receives an advice from Dissimulation who plays on his ego by reminding him that the court is not the appropriate place for an intellectual.

I know your virtue and your literature
By that little conning that I have:
Ye be maligned sore, I you ensure,
But ye have craft yourself alway to save.
It is great scorn to see a misproud knave
With a clerk than conning is to prate:
Let them go lose them, in the devil's date! (449-455)

The "leap" Skelton, or Dread, was about to make before the end of the poem, or the dream, was his actual decision to leave the court of King Henry VII. Historians state that the poet willingly decided to leave the court. He could not put up with the "servility and intrigue demanded of a courtier"¹⁶ and decided

to practice his social role at Diss and other places, sacrificing the pleasures and ostensible quietness of courtly life for the sake of living among the naive, but somehow innocent people.

Unlike the sense of foreboding on the ship in the *Bowge of Court*, the reader can easily find a somehow euphoric mood in the *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*, which might have been written around 1505.¹⁷ Unlike the clean and prestigious ship in the former poem, one can easily notice the ugliness; dirt and filth the poor people live in. Ugliness is augmented by the successive and numerous images of animals, dirt and even the smell of the characters that appear in the poem, especially Elynour herself.

She hobbles as a gose
With her blanket hose
Ouer the falowe;
Her shone smered with talowe,
Gresed vpon dyrt
That baudeth her skirt. (85-90)

The dirt described in these lines does not make the poem gloomy or the characters sad. Elynour and her customers are full of life and they are presented to be much better than those who appear in the *Bowge of Court*. It is true that the characters at the Bowdge are socially and politically higher but there is always fear and undermining terror around them. Elynour's visitors are jovial, in spite of their poverty, and the poet who describes them forces the reader, figuratively of course, to enter their world in spite of its ugliness. The conversations between Elynour and her customers¹⁸ and the casual way they use to talk to each other make the reader very close to the characters and give him a sense of intimacy, which might reflect the viewpoint of the poet himself, as no harm is expected from those simple people. "We are observers, but are not detached, for we smell the sweat, our ears ring with shouting, and we almost certainly itch."¹⁹ This nearness employed intentionally by the poet proves that what he feels towards the poor is the opposite of the fear he feels while at the court. People, both in this poem and at Diss, were nice and simple. It is undeniable that they are ugly and sometimes even filthy looking. However, their simplicity, naivety and enjoyment of simple pleasures make them better off than the courtiers whose main concern is their will to power and their desire to rise, even at the expense of the others.

It should not be understood that Skelton is glorifying dirt or the love of the sensual pleasures which are represented by the customers who give their furniture or other personal belongings in return for some drops of drink. Skelton, the organic intellectual, wants to emphasize the innocence and innate goodness of the poor people who seek pleasure without trying to hurt others. His aim in the poem is to draw a comparison between the rich and the powerful on the one hand and the poor who find great pleasure in the simplest things of life, on the

other hand. The detailed and minute description of the characters, the ability to make the reader clearly see, smell or even sometimes touch them and the light and jovial verse employed throughout the poem prove that the poet does not condemn the poverty and filth of the poor people. Skelton has tried to shed light on their way of life to attract the attention of the people in power that those innocent people are the ones who deserve respect and love.

One might argue that Skelton, in this poem, condemns the conduct and practices of a woman like Elynour, who represents everything ugly in the world created by the poet. She hosts people who suffer from all sorts of disease, allowing animals such as dogs and swine to be in direct contact with the costumers and what they drink. Moreover, she is daring enough to blend dung with the ale she gives, claiming that “[i]t will make you loke/ [y]ounger than ye be/ [y]eres two or thre” (213-15). Deborah Baker Wyrick argues that the tavern and those who frequently visit it are traditionally associated with gluttony²⁰, a sin vehemently condemned in the *Bowdge of Court*. The characters and their conduct are too far from being sanitary and their desire for the ale, in spite of all its filth, is completely ridiculed by the poet. Nevertheless, one needs always to remember the general mood of the characters and the atmosphere of the poem itself. The characters are poor, ignorant and dedicated almost completely to sensual pleasures. Nevertheless, they are all vividly and positively presented and their general outlook is not abhorred by the reader. Skelton is smart enough to make the reader love Elynour and her guests. They are too far from the vicious people in the *Bowdge of Court* who are viewed with suspicion and fear. Elynour’s customers are lovely and full of life²¹ while the courtiers are green with envy for each other, a feeling we do not find at Elynour’s tavern.

Skelton’s decision to speak up after his return to the court was impeded by many factors. He was not as strong as Cardinal Wolsey and he needed to endanger his life or, at least, lose the post through which he could preach as a secular prophet by giving the appropriate advice to the king. *Speke, Parott*, which is said to be written in 1521²², or after that at different stages²³, is a poem in which the poet publicly announces his refusal to all sorts of passive silence. Although he uses the parrot as his mouthpiece, Skelton claims his responsibility “to communicate plainly and to address in forceful terms the evils of the day”.²⁴ The poem addresses apparently two different issues but Skelton’s character can be easily traced in the stances he takes through the parrot he employs in the poem. First of all, there is the newly emergent issue that is called the War of Grammarians. During this methodological war, Skelton decided to overtly stand against William Horman (1440-1535) who stood for those who do not respect, according to Skelton, the traditional methods of teaching grammar. His policy, which was based on giving students extracts and quotes to memorize and recite, upset Skelton who “added his voice” to this quarrel.²⁵

At the outset of the poem, Skelton, or rather the parrot, claims “[m]y lady Maystres dame Philology/ Gauē me a gyfte in my nest whan I laye/ To lerne all language, and it to soake aptely” (45-7). This ability to speak many languages enables Parrot to be multilingual on the one hand but unable to communicate with his surrounding on the other hand. To his disappointment, only Galathea is able to somehow understand him while the majority of “fictional and implied readers fail him”²⁶. What Parrot complains about is the bad situation of his country. The comparison between England and ancient Israel gives the reader a hint about the devilish nature of Wolsey who dominates everything to his own interests.

Ulula, Esebon, for Jeromy doth weep!
Zion is in sadness, Rachel ruly doth look;
Madionita Jethro, our Moses keepeth his sheep;
Gideon is gone, that Zalmane undertook,
Horeb *et* Zeb, of Judicum read the book:
Now Gebell, Amon, and Amaloch - "Hark, hark! (115-20)

But how come that Wolsey is responsible for all this misery and sadness? Skelton seems to believe that royalty has significant impact on the life of the entire nation. Henry VIII gave unlimited power to his chancellor. Wolsey abused this power bestowed on him to indulge himself in luxury during his visits to other countries on diplomatic missions. Moreover, Nelson states that Henry endowed Wolsey with all the revenues of St. Albans Abbey in order to cover his expenses and he also tried to ensure electing him pope after the death of Pope Leo in 1521.²⁷ This power and overindulgence led to a noticeable and unacceptable deterioration in the conditions of England and its people while the church itself was not exempt from decay, moral and spiritual. According to Parott:

So many vagabonds, so many beggars bold;
So much decay of monasteries and of religious places;
So hot hatred against the Church, and charity so cold;
So much of "my Lord's Grace," and in him no graces;
So many hollow hearts, and so double faces;
So much sanctuary-breaking, and privileges barréd -
Since Deucalion's flood was never seen nor learnéd. (491-7)

The spread of poverty has resulted from the accumulation of wealth in the hands of few like Wolsey himself and the other people who appear in the *Bowge of Court*. They are the ones responsible for the poor conditions of the people in this poem and in *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*. Dominating the state and its revenues led to the spread of poverty in the realm while the abuse of power by Wolsey and the corrupt clergy led to both decay in the conditions of the church and the religious institutions in England and hatred against them as well. This hatred is the result of the erroneous practices of the corrupt clergy and it is manifested in rarity charity, the hypocrisy of the people and in the deception in

the name of religion, that is to say, a decline in the religious and ethical standards of the people; a thing against which Skelton vehemently stands. Again, Skelton proves his real sympathy to the people and his abhorrence to the people in power. In one way or another, the poet accuses the king of being responsible for the conditions of the kingdom. Wolsey's abuse of power was known, and approved, by Henry. Wolsey and similar politicians could not do whatever they want if the royal eyes did not intentionally blink to overlook their practices against the people and the country.

Colyn Cloute, which is said to be written either in 1522 or 1523²⁸, is the poem in which Skelton illustrates his view about the social and political role of the poet. In spite of the fact that he spent many years of his life at the court of Henry VII and then his son Henry VIII, Skelton believes that his religious, ethical and moral standards force him to speak on behalf of the people, defend their cause and stand against corruption inside the political and religious institutions in an attempt to reform, rather than destroy, them. His anger is at the clergy who have distorted the teachings of the Bible and Christ and at the politicians, Wolsey specifically, who are managing the church and its servants. The different parts of the poem are dedicated to the different sorts of evil resident at the church.

At the outset of the poem, the persona, or Colyn Cloute, elucidates the pathetic ignorance of the clergy who are expected to be teaching the people. They are given the role of the judge to settle problems among people, yet their decisions are not based on reasoning and thinking.

What trow ye they say more
Of the bysshoppes lore?
How in matters they be rawe,
They lumber forth the lawe,
To herken Jacke and Gyll,
Whan they put vp a byll,
And iudge it as they wyll,
For other mennes skylle,
Expoundyng out theyr clauses,
And leue theyr owne causes:
In theyr prouynciall cure
They make but lytell sure,
And meddels very lyght
In the Churches ryght ;
But *ire* and *venire*,
And solfa so alamyre,
That the premenyre
Is lyke to be set a fyre (92-109)

Colyn Clout claims that he has heard the people talking about the corruption of the clergy as they make their decisions in favor of the person who pays them more.

I here the people talke.
Men say, for syluer and golde
Myters are bought and solde ;
There shall no clergy appose
A myter nor a crose,
But a full purse :
A strawe for Goddes curse !
What are they the worse?
For a symonyake
Is but a hermoniake ;
And no more ye make
Of symony, men say,
But a chyldes play. (290-302)

The situation of the clergy is as such because of the negative influence of the politicians. The reference to Wolsey, his low birth and high position in lines 610-636 is so overt that explanation will seem superfluous. The challenge facing Skelton here is that he needs to be very careful in his description in order to avoid writing direct lampoons against a person of unlimited power as the attack here is directed at the king himself: “[f]or one man to rule a kyng/[a]lone and make rekenyng”(991-2). This person, who rules the king, and consequently the kingdom, is the one responsible for the deterioration of the political situation of the country and for the abuses inside the church and against it as well. Nevertheless, Skelton decides to go on with his poem, rejecting all sorts of threats to withdraw from the battle. He represents the voice of the people who “[u]naided... must stand against the doers of evil” [ellipsis mine].²⁹

John Skelton was awarded the title of the poet laureate by the king. However, his poetry and life show that he never flattered those who bestowed the title upon him. He did not feel that he was part of the group of the courtiers. His writings, mostly satires, attack and vehemently condemn the vices of the courtiers and their mischief against each other. Whenever describing the court, Skelton gave his readers the impression that he was not part of that world. Neither his principles nor his ethical standards tolerated the practices at the court. Furthermore, Skelton appointed himself the defender of the interests of the people. The erroneous practices of the politicians, especially those like Wolsey, were scrutinized for their devastating impact on the individual and the realm. The poet did his best to expose the shortcomings of the court, showing that intrigue and deceit were on an incredible scale. On the other hand, the life of the poor was celebrated and granted the ultimate accolade. Although that life was not perfect, due to poverty and the ignorance of the poor people, Skelton gave his message by stating that goodness of life is not measured by the place in which people live but by the kindheartedness and love they have for each other.

Notes

- ¹ qtd in Anthony S.G. Edwards. Ed., *John Skelton: the Critical Heritage*, (New York: Routledge, 1981), 48.
- ² Ibid, 59.
- ³ Ibid. 75.
- ⁴ W.H. Auden, "John Skelton: the Entertainer" in *The Great Tudors*, ed. Katherine Garvin (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson Limited, 1935), 55.
- ⁵ Philip Henderson, ed., *The Complete Poems of John Skelton, Laureate* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1931), 5.
- ⁶ William Nelson, *John Skelton, Laureate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 67.
- ⁷ Nelson, 103.
- ⁸ Arthur F. Kinney, *John Skelton, Priest as Poet: Seasons of Discovery* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 193.
- ⁹ Neslson, 208.
- ¹⁰ David Forgacs, ed., *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (New York University Press, 2000), 306-7.
- ¹¹ Ibid, 300.
- ¹² Ibid, 302.
- ¹³ Steve Jones, *Antonio Gramsci* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 85.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 90.
- ¹⁵ Charles H. Herford, *Studies of Literary Relations in England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*, (Oxford University Press, 1886), 351.
- ¹⁶ Nelson, 81.
- ¹⁷ Robert S. Kinsman, "Eleanora Rediviva: Fragments of an Edition of Skelton's *Elynour Rummyng*", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Aug., 1955), 319.
- ¹⁸ See, for instance, lines 200 to 230.
- ¹⁹ Robert D. Newman, "The Visual Nature of Skelton's *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*", *College Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Spring, 1985), 138.
- ²⁰ Deborah Baker Wyrick, "Withinne that Devels Temple: an Examination of Skelton's *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*", *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall, 1980), 247.
- ²¹ See, for instance, lines 113-159. The characters enjoy the simple pleasures they have access to and their life, they think, is perfect while the characters at the *Bowge of Court* are never seen happy or smiling and if they do they are lying to each other.
- ²² F. W. Brownlow, "*Speke, Parott*: Skelton's Allegorical Denunciation of Cardinal Wolsey", in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April, 1968), 124.
- ²³ John M. Bredan, "*Speke, Parott*: An Interpretation of Skelton's Satire", in *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (May, 1915), 140.
- ²⁴ Nathaniel Owen Wallace, "The Responsibilities of Madness: John Skelton, *Speke, Parrot* and Homeopathic Satire", in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Winter, 1985), 77.
- ²⁵ Jane Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority: Defining the Liberty to Speak* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 83.
- ²⁶ Griffiths, 96.
- ²⁷ Nelson, "Skelton's *Speak, Parott*", in *PMLA*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Mar., 1936), 66.
- ²⁸ Nelson, *John Skelton, Laureate*, 188-190.
- ²⁹ Kinsman, "The Voice of Dissonance: Pattern in Skelton's *Colyn Cloute*", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Aug., 1963), 302.

Bibliography

- Auden, W. H. "John Skelton: The Entertainer." *The Great Tudors*, edited by Garvin Katherine, 55-67. London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson Limited, 1935.
- Brendan, John M. "Speke, Parott: An Interpretation of Skelton's Satire." *Modern Language Notes* 30, no. 5 (May 1915): 140-144.
- Brownlow, F. W. "Speke, Parrot: Skelton's Allegorical Denunciation of Cardinal Wolsey." *Studies in Philology* 65, no. 2 (April 1968): 124-139.
- Edwards, Anthony S.G., ed. *John Skelton: the Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1981.
- Forgacs, David, ed. *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*. New York University Press, 2000.
- Griffiths, Jane. *John Skelton and Poetic Authority: Defining the Liberty to Speak*. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Herford, Charles H. *Studies of Literary Relations in England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, 1886.
- Jones, Steve. *Antonio Gramsci*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Kinney, Arthur F. *John Skelton: Priest as Poet: Seasons of Discovery*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- Kinsman, Robert S. "Eleanora Rediviva: Fragments of an Edition of Skelton's *Elynour Rummyng*." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (August 1985): 315-327.
- . "The Voice of Dissonance: Patterns in Skelton's *Colyn Cloute*." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (August 1963): 291-313.
- Nelson, William. *John Skelton, Laureate*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.
- . "Skelton's *Speke Parott*." *PMLA* 51, no. 1 (March 1936): 59-82.
- Newman, Robert D. "The Visual Nature of Skelton's *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*." *College Literature* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1985): 135-140.
- Skelton, John. *The Complete Poems of John Skelton, Laureate*. Edited by Philip Henderson. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1931.
- Wallace, Nathaniel Owen. "The Responsibility of Madness: John Skelton, *Speke, Parott* and Homeopathic Satire." *Studies in Philology* 82, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 60-80.
- Wyrick, Deborah Baker. "Withinne that Develes Temple: an Examination of Skelton's *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*." *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1980): 239-254.

مستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث الى تسليط الضوء على نماذج من قصائد جون سكيلتون لتحديد توجهاته السياسية. لقد امضى الشاعر سنين عديدة من حياته في بلاط الملك هنري السابع و من ثم ابنه هنري الثامن الا انه لم يكتب اي قصيدة لتمجيدهما. ان التوجه الحقيقي للشاعر كان نحو الناس و الكنيسة في انكلترا اذ حاول ان يدافع عنهم من خلال شعره لانه احس انهم تحت حكم شخص ظالم مثل الكاردينال وولسي

الكلمات الاساسية:

سكيلتون، وولسي، هنري الثامن، غرامشي، المثقفون