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The Personal Use of Relative *which* in Shakespearean English: The Relevance of Social and Emotional Factors

DOI 10.1515/anglia-2016-0024

Abstract: This paper explores Shakespeare's use of *wh*-relative pronouns with personal antecedents, particularly the personal use of *which*, which had started to be marginalised before Shakespeare's period and replaced by *who* and *whom*. The present survey of Shakespeare's plays reveals a significant fact with relation to the second person pronouns *thou* and *you* (including their inflected case forms) as antecedents: *which* is common with *thou* but extremely rare with singular *you*; on the other hand, *who(m)* shows no preference for either form and occurs with them equally. The association of *which* with *thou* and its avoidance of *you* suggests that Shakespeare may have exploited personal *which* in contexts where *thou* is generally preferred – when the speaker is superior in social status to the referent or the speaker is highly emotional. Evidence is presented from close examination of three plays (*Romeo and Juliet, King Richard II*, and *King Lear*), demonstrating that characters of high status may use *which* if the referents are social inferiors but not vice versa. In addition, personal *which* is associated with heightened emotion and dramatic tension. In fact, *fellow, knave*, and similar insulting words are commonly used as antecedents of *which*. On the other hand, social status or emotional states of characters are not relevant to the use of *who(m)*. Hence in Shakespeare's English, *who(m)* is the unmarked form as a personal relative pronoun, while *which* is the marked form, usually used, just like *thou*, to refer to social inferiors or to mark strong emotions.

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1 Introduction

It is well known that relative *which* as well as *who* and w*hom* were available with personal antecedents in Early Modern English.[1] In fact, Barber (1997: 211) states that *which* was "freely" used with personal antecedents in this period.[2] The personal use of *which* had never been proscribed by grammarians prior to Shakespeare's time until James Greenwood clearly restricted *which* to things and *who(m)* to persons during the first decade of the eighteenth century (Bately 1965). Much earlier, however, in the fourth edition of his *Grammatica linguae anglicanae* published in 1674, John Wallis proposed, as regards "our Father which" in the Lord's Prayer, that *who* was more proper and more elegant:

> Which, *qui*.] Relativum; De Rebus pariter & Personis dictum. [...] Poterat autem (quia de Personâ agitur) non minus *Who* hoc loco dici; quod Personis magis est proprium, & quidem nunc dierum frequentius; (sed *which* de Rebus.) Hinc factum est, quod in Liturgiâ Anglicanâ, ubi ante dicebatur *which* de personis, substituitur in ejusdem nuperâ recensione ut plurimum (& fere semper) *who* & *whom*, tanquam de personis elegantius. (John Wallis, *Grammatica linguae anglicanae*, as cited by Bately 1965: 246)

> 'Relative *which* is used for both things and persons. However, when persons are referred to, *who* could be used just as often for it is more appropriate when referring to persons, and it is of course more frequent these days; *which*, however, is used to refer to things. Hence, in the Anglican Liturgy, where *which* was used to refer to persons, it was usually (almost always) replaced by *who* and *whom* in recent recensions as they were considered more elegant for referring to persons'.[3]

This stylistic trait of *who* may lie behind its generalisation and final replacement of *which* as a personal relative pronoun. From the perspective of grammatical systematisation and sociolinguistics, Rissanen (1999: 294) states that the development from *which* to *who*

> is in accordance both with the tendency to systematise the use of various grammatical forms in the course of the Early Modern English period and with the polite and formal expressions

1 A general description of relative pronouns in the Early Modern English period is given in Jespersen (1927: ch. 6). For the emergence of *who(m)* as a relative pronoun in Middle English, see Mustanoja (1960: 199–201), Meier (1967), and Rydén (1983).

2 More recently, Johansson (2012: 785) notes that "it is not possible to ascertain whether the use of *which* with persons in my spEModE data [speech related texts] is typical of a particular social rank or speaker role".

3 My own translation.

> of Tudor and Stuart society, which probably emphasised the observation of the 'personality' of the referent.[4]

Evans's (2013) investigation of the idiolect of Queen Elizabeth I provides empirical support for Rissanen's view. Referring to her own compilation, the *Queen Elizabeth I Corpus* (QEIC), and Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg's (2002) research into the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), Evans considers the frequency of *who* and *which* after animate antecedents (101–112).[5] She finds that *who* accounts for 100% in Elizabeth's pre-accession period (1554–1558) and 92.2% in her post-accession period (1559–1603), while *who* is significantly less frequent in the 1560–1599 CEEC texts (at 76% to 24% *which*). The disparities between CEEC and QEIC (either pre- or post-accession period) are statistically significant. Evans (2013: 108) concludes that "Elizabeth's social status and experiences, as both princess and queen, position her within those circles that would be interested in 'polite and formal expressions'".

Shakespeare composed his plays from 1589 to 1613; he was born into Elizabeth's reign and worked all but his final ten years within it.[6] Personal *which* is not uncommon in Shakespeare's English (unlike Elizabeth's), but has so far received relatively little attention. As *which* and *who* can appear in parallel after the same antecedent, as in (1) below,[7] the two forms might well be taken as exhibiting free variation:

(1) PROSPERO. I am Prospero, and **that very duke** / **Which** was thrust forth of Milan, **who** most strangely / Upon this shore (where you were wrack'd) was landed (*Tmp* 5.1. 159–161)

Indeed, comprehensive studies of Shakespeare's language have not identified any differences, grammatical or semantic, between the two relative pronouns after personal antecedents (cf. Franz 1939: §335; Brook 1976: §103; Blake 2002:

4 Romaine (1980: 224) also states that the use of *who*, which can verify the animacy of antecedents, was preferred for stylistic purposes in Early Modern English.

5 Evans's animate antecedents include 'God, spirit, king, and human'. In the present survey, divine and spiritual beings are excluded; see Section 2.

6 Composition dates of Shakespeare's works are proposed in Evans and Tobin (1997: 78–87).

7 Examples of relative pronouns were compiled from Spevack's *A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare*. Citations refer to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by Evans and Tobin. Abbreviations of play titles are those proposed in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition).

§§3.2.2.4 and 3.3.2.6). Since no articles or monographs have focused on Shakespeare's use of personal *which* so far, this issue is worthy of investigation.[8]

Which began to be used as a relative pronoun in the earliest Middle English period (Mustanoja 1960: 195).[9] By Shakespeare's time, *who* and *whom* had also been firmly established as relative pronouns. According to Rydén (1983: 126–127), *whom* began to be used as a relative pronoun around 1100, and the first indubitable example of relative *who* is recorded about 300 years later, in a Paston letter of 1426. "By 1600 *who* had clearly got the upperhand of personal *which*" (Rydén 1983: 132), so that *who* and *whom* are prevalent in Shakespeare's plays (see Table 1 in Section 2 below). Previous scholars dealing with the historical development from *which* to *who* have rarely included the inflected form *whom*, confining their survey to relative pronouns in subject roles (cf. Meier 1967; Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2002). Yet, as *which* is common in object roles in Shakespeare, competing with *whom*, the present study takes into consideration the inflected form as well. On the other hand, relative *that* is outside the scope of this survey because its function is mainly to introduce restrictive relative clauses and the restrictive/non-restrictive distinction seems to be the primary factor in choosing between *that*- and *wh*-relative pronouns, rather than the socio-pragmatic factors that this study is concerned with (Franz 1939: §339).[10]

The present study investigates Shakespeare's use of personal *which* in comparison with *who* and *whom*, paying special attention to the social distance between the speaker and the referent and also to the speaker's emotional state. Section 2 begins by mentioning some exclusions and then surveys the frequency of *which, who*, and *whom* used with personal antecedents in Shakespeare's plays. Section 3 evaluates the influence of the antecedent category on Shakespeare's choice between *which* and *who(m)*. Section 4 focuses on the second person pronouns *thou*/*thee* and *ye*/*you* as relative antecedents;[11] the determiners *thy*/

8 Recently, Kikuchi (2015) demonstrated that *wh*-relativizers are more frequent in the speech of gentry in Shakespeare's drama, concluding that they indicate the level of formality of the characters' languages. However, the distinctions of antecedents (personal vs. non-personal) and the forms of *wh*-relativizers (*who(m)* vs. *which*) are not taken into account in his analysis.

9 Saito (1960: 84–85) and Dekeyser (1984: 71) describe the history of the personal use of *which* over a longer term, including the eighteenth century, when it was completely abandoned.

10 Hope (1994: 41–43, esp. his Tables 3.8 and 3.9; 2010: 152–153) indicates that in all instances of relative *that*, about 10% introduce non-restrictive clauses. The proportion may vary between different genres (tragedies and comedies), as suggested in Sato (2015).

11 Originally, *ye* was nominative and *you* dative/accusative, but this distinction was no longer observed as *you* had almost ousted *ye* by Elizabethan times (Lutz 1998: 196–197). In Shakespeare, the use of *ye* is mostly confined to questions, entreaties, and rhetorical appeals, and otherwise *you* is used as nominative as well as accusative; see Abbott (1870: §236) and Busse (2002: 255–256).

thine/*your* and the reflexive pronouns *thyself*/*yourself* are also included.[12] Interestingly, personal *which* is common with *thou* but extremely rare with singular *you*; on the other hand, *who(m)* is found with both forms equally. This suggests that *which* may be used, just like *thou*, in contexts in which the speaker is superior in status to the referent or is highly emotional. Section 5 conducts a close analysis of the three plays where personal *which* is most frequent: *Romeo and Juliet* (ten instances), *King Richard II* (nine instances), and *King Lear* (twelve instances).[13] The results indicate that personal *which* rarely occurs when the antecedent is higher in social rank than the speaker; in addition, characters tend to use personal *which* in highly emotional contexts. Hence both social status and emotion are shown to influence Shakespeare's choice of personal relative pronouns.

2 General Frequency

Before surveying the frequency of relative pronouns, it is necessary to mention some exclusions. First, in order to focus on unambiguously personal antecedents, non-human referents (spirits, animals, and qualities) are excluded throughout. In fact, Shakespeare seems to avoid using *who(m)* to refer to supernatural beings. In *The Tempest*, for example, Ariel is referred to by *which* three times, e.g. "**This gallant which** thou seest" (*Tmp* 1.2.414),[14] but never by *who(m)*; other spirits such as Juno and Ceres are also referred to by *which*: "**Spirits, which** by mine art / I have from their confines call'd to enact / My present fancies" (*Tmp* 4.1.120–122). Therefore, *which* seems to be the ordinary choice when non-human, albeit animate, beings are referred to. Also excluded are beasts referring to human beings, as in "They are **sheep and calves which** seek out assurance in that" (*Ham* 5.1.116–117). A non-personal antecedent combined with a personal one is ignored: "Spare **thy Athenian cradle and those kin** / **Which** [...] must fall" (*Tim* 5.4.40–41). The sequence *that [...] which* referring to some quality or aspect of a person, not the person him/herself, is excluded, e.g. "**That which** you are, my thoughts cannot transpose" (*Mac* 4.3.21) or "I, your glass, / Will modestly discover to yourself / **That of yourself which** you yet know not of" (*JC* 1.2.68–70). Second, so-called free relatives such as "**Who** steals my purse steals trash" (*Oth* 3.3.157)

12 *Thou* and *you* are used here as cover terms including these variant forms.

13 The frequency of relative pronouns in each play is shown in the Appendix at the end of this article.

14 The other examples are "**your fairy, which** you say is a harmless fairy" (*Tmp* 4.1.196–197) and "Hast **thou, which** art but air, a touch, a feeling / Of their afflictions" (*Tmp* 5.1.21–22).

are not included.[15] Finally, the antecedent of *which* can be ambiguous between a personal and a sentential referent. An ambiguous example is in "you must now speak Sir John Falstaff fair, / **Which** swims against your stream of quality" (*2H4* 5.2.33–34), which Harrison (1938: 144) explicitly analyses as having personal reference (to Falstaff), but *OED* sees it as "[r]eferring to a fact, circumstance, or statement" (*OED* s.v. *which*, pron. and adj. 7c.). There are four more instances of this kind, all of which have been left out of this survey.[16]

After such exclusions, 446 instances of *who*, 320 of *whom*, and 188 of *which* (including seven instances of *the which*) were retained for analysis.[17]

Table 1: Frequency of *who, whom*, and *which* used with personal antecedents in Shakespeare's plays

	who	***whom***	***which***	**Total**
Frequency	446	320	188	954
%	46.8%	33.5%	19.7%	100.0%

Table 1 shows that *which* accounts for only about one fifth of this data, indicating that *which*, albeit still available, had started to be marginalised after personal antecedents. Furthermore, the breakdown by play in the Appendix shows a progressing stronger dominance of *who(m)* over time: the use of *who(m)* shows a higher frequency in Shakespeare's later plays than in early ones, while *which* is distributed more evenly. Hence, while Shakespeare's style shows a substantial increase of relativisation of all sorts over time (Hope 2010: 153), this stylistic change results from the raw frequency of *who(m)*, but not from that of *which*.

3 The Influence of the Antecedent Head Category

The present section will demonstrate how Shakespeare's choice of relative pronouns varies according to the category of the antecedent head. Historically,

15 To my knowledge, Shakespeare uses personal *which* as a free relative only once, viz. "Four of **which** you please" (*2H4* 3.2.242), where *which* means *whichever* [*men*]; see Ichikawa and Mine (1963: 212).

16 They are in *Cym* 1.6.9, *R3* 1.3.135 and 136, and *JC* 4.2.44.

17 According to Raumolin-Brunberg (2000: 217–218), *the which* was largely abandoned in the Early Modern English period. Kikuchi (2013) makes a quantitative analysis of the choice between *which* and *the which* in Shakespeare's plays. The distinction is not dealt with in the present survey.

the use of relative *who* started with nouns higher on a "scale of personhood" (Rydén 1983: 130; Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2002: 118), such as the Deity, and proper nouns, and later expanded into use with nouns lower on that scale, such as collective nouns and pronouns. Hence Shakespeare, writing during the period of transition, may be expected to use *who(m)* more often with proper nouns and less often with collectives or pronouns. Accordingly, antecedent heads in the present dataset were classified into four categories: proper nouns, common nouns, collectives, and pronouns. One complicating factor is that, as a result of apposition, heads of more than one category may be present, as in (2) or (3):

(2) RODERIGO. That **thou, Iago, who** hast had my purse / As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this. (*Oth* 1.1.2–3)

(3) AEMILIUS. They hither march amain, under conduct / Of **Lucius, son to old Andronicus**, / **Who** threats, in course of this revenge, to do / As much as ever Coriolanus did. (*Tit* 4.4.65–68)

Such cases were (somewhat arbitrarily) classified according to the head closer to the relative pronoun; hence the antecedent head in (2) is taken as the proper noun *Iago*, and that in (3) as the common noun *son*. Table 2 shows the resulting distribution of the relative pronouns *who, whom*, and *which* across head categories.

Table 2: Categories of antecedent heads used with *who, whom*, and *which* in Shakespeare's plays

Head Category	*who*	*whom*	*which*
Proper Noun	111 (24.9%)	72 (22.5%)	17 (9.0%)
Common Noun	242 (54.3%)	164 (51.3%)	90 (47.9%)
Collective Noun	6 (1.3%)	3 (0.9%)	8 (4.3%)
Pronoun	87 (19.5%)	81 (25.3%)	73 (38.8%)
Total	**446**	**320**	**188**

Shakespeare's use of personal relative pronouns is consistent with the broader direction of historical development: *which* is particularly rare with proper nouns but is more strongly associated with collectives or pronouns than are *who* or *whom*. Thus, the antecedent head category is relevant, at least to some extent, to Shakespeare's use of *which* instead of *who(m)*.

4 *Thou* vs. *you* and the Choice of Relative Pronouns

Section 2 has shown that *which* was much less common than *who(m)* after personal antecedents, accounting for about one-fifth of such instances in Shakespeare's plays (Table 1 in Section 2). Moreover, the use of *who(m)* increases largely in his later plays, and the proportion of *which* becomes much smaller. This suggests that personal *which* might be confined, as the marked form, to some particular context(s). Pursuing this line of argument, the present section examines whether the same sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors which determine the choice between *thou* and *you* in Early Modern English are at work in the choice between *which* and *who(m)* after personal antecedents.

In Elizabethan English, the system of second person pronouns was in transition. *Thou* and *you* co-existed for the second person singular pronoun; however, *thou* was gradually dropping out. Originally, *you* was the polite form used by social inferiors to address social superiors, but it began to be more generally preferred without a particular intention to be polite, and, by the turn of the seventeenth century, could be taken to be the unmarked neutral form in many cases. By contrast, the use of *thou* was more and more limited to socially specific contexts, usually used as a marked form for addressing social inferiors. Against this background, when speakers used *thou* deviating from the socially predictable usage, it carried emotional connotations (Busse 2012: 738–741; Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013: 83–84). This pragmatic effect holds in Shakespeare's English. Dealing with Shakespeare's plays *King Lear* and *As You Like It*, Stein (2003) establishes the normal form of address according to the relative status of the addressee, and then analyses *thou, you*, and their inflected forms used in unpredictable ways. Stein reveals that about 30% of the use of *thou* is marked in Shakespeare,[18] showing that it carries emotional connotations such as "scorn", "disapproval", "complicity", "affection", "intimacy", and "respect" (2003: 265 and *passim*).

Busse (2003) is concerned with the relationship between address pronouns, *thou* and *you*, and nominal terms of address.[19] Grouping nominal terms of address

18 Although *you* is generally considered to have become the unmarked form by 1600 (Görlach 1991: 85; Barber 1997: 155), Stein claims that about 30% of *you*-forms are marked in Shakespeare's English. This may be characteristic of the language of drama, as Stein actually infers that "[t]he concentrated language and emphatic emotionality typical of plays lead to a considerable frequency of marked addresses in numerous address relationships" (2003: 296).

19 Barber (1981) shows the relationship between vocatives (abusive and respectful) and the choice of *thou*/*you* in *Richard III*.

into six categories, Busse shows their relative association with either *thou* or *you*. Terms of endearment (e.g. *burry, wag*), terms of abuse (e.g. *villain, varlet*), and generic terms of address (e.g. *gentleman, friend*) co-occur with *thou* more often than they do with *you*; contrariwise, terms of courtesy (e.g. *liege, monsieur*), terms of occupation (e.g. *doctor, lieutenant*), and kinship terms (e.g. *sister, cousin*) occur more often with *you*. Although the "*thou*fulness" or "*you*fulness" varies among individual nouns, and even though there are exceptions such as *nurse*, which is a "*thou* word" though a term of occupation, Busse's analysis convincingly shows that the choice between *thou* and *you* has a strong relationship with the social position and/or emotional state expressed by nominal terms of address.[20]

To turn to relative constructions, the second person pronouns may stand as antecedents of *wh*-relative pronouns. Table 3 shows the distribution of *who, whom*, and *which* to occur with *thou* or singular *you*. Their inflected case forms and reflexive pronouns are included.

Table 3: Distribution of *who, whom*, and *which* used with second person singular pronouns in Shakespeare's plays

	who	*whom*	*which*	Total
thou	9	8	9	26
you (singular)	6	11	1	18

An interesting picture emerges here: *which* is not uncommon with *thou*, accounting for 34.6% (9 instances out of 26), but it appears only once with singular *you*, accounting for 5.6% (1 out of 18); *who* and *whom*, if put together, occur with *thou* and singular *you* 17 times each, showing no strong association with either form.

The lone instance of 'singular *you* + *which*' appears in *Cymbeline*, used by Jachimo to refer to Imogen:

(4) JACHIMO. In himself, 'tis much; / In **you, which** I account his, beyond all talents. (*Cym* 1.6.79–80)

Jachimo says that Imogen belongs to her husband Leonatus. It seems plausible that the possessive pronoun *his* made *you* (Imogen) sound like something inani-

20 Shakespeare's use of *thou* and *you* has been explored by a number of scholars; to mention some, Mulholland (1967), Barber (1981), Grannis (1990), Adamson et al. (2001: 226–231), Culpeper (2001: 195–199), Busse (2002, 2003), Mazzon (2003), Stein (2003), and Busse and Busse (2010).

mate to be possessed, causing Shakespeare to use *which* here. There is another example of '*you* + *which*' in Shakespeare's plays:

(5) MARTIUS. You cry against the noble Senate, who / (Under the gods) keep **you** in awe, **which** else / Would feed on one another? (*Cor* 1.1.186–188)

However, Martius addresses citizens here, and this *you* is undoubtedly in the plural.

Personal *which* and the pronoun *thou* are also similar in their distribution pattern in different genres of plays. Busse (2003) reveals that the proportion of *thou* is much smaller in the comedies than in the histories and tragedies, claiming that the literary genre affects the *thou*/*you* choice in Shakespeare. The proportion of *thou* is 46.4% in the histories and 48.5% in the tragedies, respectively; in the comedies, however, the proportion of *thou* is only 31.4% (Busse 2003: 216). According to Busse's (2002) more comprehensive survey, this tendency is commonly observed in Early Modern English texts other than Shakespeare. The lower degree of *thou* in the comedies, Busse infers, "could probably be attributed to the fact that even among middle- or lower-class speakers, which constitute the majority of the personnel of the Comedies, the normal form of exchange was *you* and not *thou*" (2002: 58–59). Interestingly enough, the distribution of *wh*-relative pronouns used with personal antecedents shows the same tendency. As shown in Table 4, personal *which* accounts for over one-fifth in both the histories and tragedies, but in the comedies, the proportion of *which* is smaller, i.e. 16.7%.[21]

Table 4: Distribution of personal *who(m)* and *which* in different genres

	who(m)	*which*	Total
Comedies (17 works)	348 (83.3%)	70 (16.7%)	418
Histories (10 works)	203 (77.2%)	60 (22.8%)	263
Tragedies (10 works)	215 (78.8%)	58 (21.2%)	273

Section 2 argued that personal *which* may have been the marked form in contrast to neutral, unmarked *who(m)*. The relatively higher frequency of *who(m)* in the comedies reinforces this view.

21 Following Busse's (2002: 44–45) methodology, the First Folio's tripartite division – comedy, history, and tragedy – is adopted here. The subgenres of romances, Roman plays, and late problem plays are not considered.

In Shakespeare's English, personal *which* undoubtedly prefers *thou*, perhaps avoiding *you*. In addition, personal *which* is rarer in later plays than in early plays, and it is also least frequent in the comedies. It is plausible to say that *which*, like *thou*, was used as the marked form, which entails that personal *which* would be used, just like *thou*, from social superiors to inferiors, and otherwise as a mark of strong emotion such as anger or affection of the speaker. The next section aims to prove this hypothesis by means of a close analysis of three plays, focusing on contexts where *which* or *who(m)* is used with personal antecedents.

5 Case Studies

This section examines the use of personal relative pronouns in three Shakespearean plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Richard II*, and *King Lear*, which were chosen as case studies on the basis of having the most frequent use of personal *which* of all the plays by Shakespeare, with nine to twelve instances in each play, giving 31 instances in total, accounting for 16.5% (31 out of 188) of all the occurrences in Shakespeare's plays. The total frequency of *who* and *whom* in the three plays is 72, which accounts for 9.4% (72 out of 766).[22] Thus, the present survey is limited, but the evidence from the three plays will convincingly demonstrate that the personal use of *which* in Shakespeare is associated with the social distance between the speaker and referent and the speaker's emotional state.

5.1 *Romeo and Juliet*

5.1.1 *Which*

Romeo and Juliet is an early tragedy composed in 1595 or 1596. In this play, there are ten instances of personal *which*. In most cases, the antecedent of personal *which* is clearly of lower status than the speaker or they are of nearly equal rank. In example (6), there is a large social distance between the speaker, Romeo, and the referent, an apothecary:

(6) ROMEO. I do remember **an apothecary** – / And hereabouts **'a** dwells – **which** late I noted / In tatt'red weeds, with overwhelming brows, / Culling of simples; meagre were his looks, / Sharp misery had worn him to the bones (*Rom* 5.1.37–41)

22 For the frequencies, see the Appendix.

As soon as Romeo receives the news of Juliet's death, he decides to kill himself and to buy a fatal poison from the poor apothecary. The antecedent of *which* is *an apothecary* (paraphrased as *'a* 'he'). It is obvious that Romeo, a noble man, is superior in status to the apothecary. The difference in their social status is reflected in the second person pronouns they use: Romeo invariably addresses the apothecary using *thou* or its inflected forms (*passim* in *Rom* 5.1.58–84), while the apothecary only uses *you* to Romeo (*Rom* 5.1.77 and 5.1.79). Moreover, Romeo's insulting description of the apothecary in (6), e.g. "tatt'red weeds" ('ragged clothes'), "overwhelming brows", and "meagre", indicates that he despises the apothecary as a poor social inferior. Thus, Romeo's contemptuous feelings toward the apothecary as well as their social positions may have triggered the use of *which*.

Emotions can be a more significant factor, as shown when Lady Capulet uses *which* to refer to Tybalt and Romeo in her conversation with her daughter Juliet after Romeo has slain Tybalt:

(7) LADY CAPULET. So shall you feel the loss, but not **the friend**
Which you weep for.
JULIET. Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.
LADY CAPULET. Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death,
As that **the villain** lives **which** slaughter'd him. (*Rom* 3.5.75–79)

Here, *the friend* 'kinsman' is Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew, and *the villain* is Romeo, who has slain him. The antecedent *the friend* indicates her intimacy with Tybalt; her affection towards him is obvious in her cry in the scene of his death: "Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child!" (*Rom* 3.1.146). On the other hand, she displays her hatred of Romeo, insultingly calling him *the villain*. According to Busse (2003: 213), *villain*, as an address noun, shows the highest degree of co-occurrence with *thou* of all the abusive vocatives.[23] Thus, *which* appears with the noun that most strongly prefers *thou*.

Personal *which* is also uttered by characters who are highly emotional, as in the next two examples:

(8) JULIET [to Romeo]. Do not swear at all; Or if thou wilt, swear by **thy gracious self**, / **Which** is the god of my idolatry (*Rom* 2.2.112–114)

(9) BENVOLIO. O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead! / **That gallant spirit** hath aspir'd the clouds, / **Which** too untimely here did scorn the earth. (*Rom* 3.1.116–118)

23 See also Barber (1981: 284).

Example (8) is from the balcony scene, in which Romeo and Juliet passionately confess their love for each other. She uses *which* in conjunction with *thy gracious self* to refer to Romeo. It should be noted that *thy*, not *your*, combines with *self* here; the adjective *gracious* 'lovely, attractive' (Schmidt 1971: I, 490 (5)) also reveals her deep love for him.[24] Example (9) is uttered by Benvolio after the disastrous scene in which Mercutio is stabbed by Tybalt and dies. Benvolio shouts to Romeo, using *which* in reference to dead Mercutio. Benvolio must have been stunned by the death of his friend. Likewise, Friar Lawrence's *which* in (10) can be regarded as expressing emotion:

(10) FRIAR LAWRENCE [to Romeo]. Fie, fie, **thou** shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit, / **Which** like a usurer abound'st in all, / And usest none in that true use indeed / Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit. (*Rom* 3.3.122–125)[25]

In this scene, the friar harshly scolds Romeo for crying over his banishment. As a mentor and friend, the friar is always affectionate to Romeo, but now Romeo's womanish tears let him down, and he reprimands Romeo, urging him to be more reasonable (*Rom* 3.3.108 ff.). His exclamation, "Fie, fie", expresses his "indignant reproach" (*OED* s.v. *fie*, int. 1.). Emotions of different sorts – anger and fatherly affection – reside in the friar's words in this passage.

There remain four more instances of *which* used with personal antecedents:

(11) ROMEO. What lady's **that which** doth enrich the hand / Of yonder knight? (*Rom* 1.5.41–42)

(12) CHORUS. **That fair** for **which** love groan'd for and would die (*Rom* 2.0.3)

(13) JULIET. To move the heavens to smile upon **my state**, / **Which**, well thou knowest, is cross and full of sin. (*Rom* 4.3.4–5)

(14) FRIAR LAWRENCE. But **he which** bore my letter, Friar John, / Was stayed by accident (*Rom* 5.3.250–251)

In (11), Romeo has not yet got acquainted with Juliet, and he asks who she is. Example (12) is uttered by the Chorus, whose social status cannot be determined; the antecedent, *That fair*, refers to Rosaline. In (13), Juliet refers to herself.[26] In (14), Friar Lawrence uses *which* to refer to Friar John, whom he asked to deliver his letter to Romeo in Mantua; their statuses are not clarified in the play text, but

24 For this emphatic nominal use of *self*, see Blake (2002: §3.3.2.3 (a)).

25 The antecedent of the second *which* is "that true use".

26 The antecedent can be either *my* or *my state*. For the availability of possessive pronouns as the antecedent, see Blake (2002: §3.3.2.6 (d)).

they may be equal in rank as Franciscan brethren since John addresses Lawrence as *thou* (*Rom* 5.2.15, 5.2.23). These four instances cannot be categorised into either the social or emotional use of *which*. However, it should be noted that personal *which*, including (11)–(14), is never used in reference to social superiors by someone lower in rank in *Romeo and Juliet*.

5.1.2 *Who* and *whom*

Romeo and Juliet contains twelve tokens of *who(m)* (eight of *who* and four of *whom*). As we have shown in the previous section, speakers never employ *which* to refer to people of higher status in this play, but *who* does appear in such a case. The Watchman, for example, uses *who* to refer to Juliet when he finds her dead in the tomb:

(15) FIRST WATCHMAN. And **Juliet** bleeding, warm, and newly dead, / **Who** here hath lain this two days buried. (*Rom* 5.3.175–176)

Whom is available between nobles that are probably of the same rank, as Benvolio uses it to refer to Rosaline in (16), and Juliet to Romeo in (17):

(16) BENVOLIO. At this same ancient feast of Capulet's / Sups **the fair Rosaline whom** thou so loves, / With all the admired beauties of Verona. (*Rom* 1.2.82–84)

(17) JULIET. I will not marry yet, and when I do, I swear / It shall be **Romeo, whom** you know I hate, / Rather than Paris. (*Rom* 3.5.121–123)

People referred to by *who(m)* cover a wide range in social status, including social superiors.

The previous section established that *which* is often used when the speaker's emotions are heightened. Lady Capulet, for example, refers to Tybalt and Romeo by using *which* in high excitement in (7). However, she uses *who* to refer to her husband in less emotional contexts:

(18) LADY CAPULET. Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child, / **One who**, to put thee from thy heaviness, / Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy (*Rom* 3.5.107–109)

Lady Capulet had previously been cursing at Romeo, planning vengeance on him (*Rom* 3.5.87 ff.). Her interjections in (18), "Well, well", may be just an expletive (Schmidt 1971: II, 1351 (4)), but it is more likely to be a signal that her tone as well as her topic has changed here. She soothes Juliet, kindly suggesting

that she should marry Paris; here Lady Capulet talks much more calmly than in (7).

The level of formality may be relevant to the choice of *who(m)*. Examining second person pronouns, Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013: 1) show that an attorney insultingly addressed Sir Walter Raleigh as *thou* during his trial in spite of the formality of the courtroom where *you* was expected. In (19) below, Escalus, Prince of Verona, orders Benvolio to explain the details of the affray that caused the death of Mercutio and Tybalt. Answering the Prince, Benvolio uses relative *who(m)* three times in succession, referring to Tybalt, Mercutio, and Romeo:

(19) PRINCE. Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?
BENVOLIO. **Tybalt**, here slain, **whom** Romeo's hand did slay!
[...] but that he [Tybalt] tilts
With piercing steel at bold **Mercutio's** breast,
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
[...] and then Tybalt fled;
But by and by comes back to **Romeo**,
Who had but newly entertain'd revenge (*Rom* 3.1.151–171)

Interestingly, Benvolio uses *which* to refer to Mercutio immediately after his death, as cited in (9) above. His using *who* and *which* to refer to the same person may be taken as a mark of equivalency between the two relative pronouns; however, the situation markedly differs between the two passages. In the scene where (19) occurs, Lord Montague, Lord Capulet, and their wives are present in addition to Escalus.[27] They are parents or close relatives of those Benvolio names as involved in the affray: Lord and Lady Montague are Romeo's parents; Lady Capulet is Tybalt's aunt, as indicated when she herself cries, "Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child!" (*Rom* 3.1.146); and Escalus is Mercutio's relative, as shown by Benvolio's words: "thy kinsman, brave Mercutio" (*Rom* 3.1.145). When Benvolio speaks in front of these elderly people, that is, in a more formal situation than (9) above, *who(m)*, the neutral form, is likely to be more appropriate.

Similarly, a difference in situation can account for variation in Friar Lawrence's choice of relative pronouns in reference to Romeo. He uses *which* in conjunction with *thou* when he scolds Romeo in (10). However, in his last monologue of this play, he uses *whom* to refer to Romeo, explaining how he and Juliet died:

27 The stage direction before *Rom* 3.1.141 reads "*Enter* PRINCE, *old* MONTAGUE, CAPULET, *their* WIVES, *and all*".

(20) FRIAR LAWRENCE. I married them, and their stol'n marriage-day / Was Tybalt's dooms-day, whose untimely death / Banish'd **the new-made bridegroom** from this city, / For **whom**, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pin'd. (*Rom* 5.3.233–236)

As in the scene of (19), Escalus, Lord Montague, Lord and Lady Capulet are present here.[28] In this formal situation, *whom* may be more appropriate for the friar to use to refer to the late Romeo.

We have examined eight instances of *who(m)* in *Romeo and Juliet*.[29] It refers to people of various sorts of social status; the speaker's emotions are not relevant to the choice of *who(m)*; in more formal scenes they use *who(m)*, not *which*. All this indicates that *who(m)* is the generally preferred neutral form.

5.1.3 Summary

To sum up, two factors are in play in Shakespeare's choice of personal *which* in *Romeo and Juliet*. One is social hierarchy of the speaker and the referent: using *which* with a personal antecedent is permissible when the antecedent is lower in social rank than the speaker, or when there are no particular differences in social power between them. In fact, *which* is never used to refer to social superiors. The other factor is the speaker's emotional state. Personal *which* tends to occur in highly emotional contexts, in which the character speaks with affection, anger, or even strong hatred. On the other hand, *who(m)* is used as the neutral form, referring to both social equals and superiors. In addition, in formal situations where people of high status are present, characters seem to prefer *who(m)*. All this suggests that *who(m)* is the unmarked, neutral form, while *which* is the marked form as a personal relative pronoun.

5.2 *King Richard II*

5.2.1 *Which*

King Richard II is a history play dated to 1595, thus composed around the same time as *Romeo and Juliet*. In this play, there are nine instances of personal *which*.

28 See the stage directions before *Rom* 5.3.188 and 5.3.208.

29 The rest of *who* and *whom* in *Romeo and Juliet* are in *Rom* 1.1.115, 1.4.73, 1.4.74, and 2.4.33.

Other than in Richard's lines, the play contains two instances in which social inferiors are referred to using *which*:

(21) GREEN. Now for **the rebels which** stand out in Ireland, / Expedient manage must be made, (*R2* 1.4.38–39)

(22) BULLINGBROOK. **Bushy, Bagot, and their complices**, / **The caterpillars of the commonwealth,** / **Which** I have sworn to weed and pluck away. (*R2* 2.3.165–167)

In (21), *which* refers to the Irish rebels. Their social status is not clarified, but they are not likely to be superior to the speaker, Sir Henry Green, Richard's retainer. In (22), the speaker, Bullingbrook, is superior in status to the antecedents, *Bushy, Bagot, and their complices*, who are Richard's servants. It is also important that Bullingbrook calls them names: "The caterpillars of the commonwealth". (Note that Bullingbrook is Richard's rival, who eventually ascends his throne.) Bullingbrook's hostile feelings toward his rival's servants as well as his social position may have triggered the use of *which* here.

The significance of social hierarchy is corroborated by the fact that Richard uses personal *which* three times, most frequently of all the characters of this play:

(23) RICHARD. We must supplant **those rough rug-headed kerns**, / **Which** live like venom (*R2* 2.1.156–157)

(24) RICHARD [to Aumerle]. Beshrew **thee, cousin, which** didst lead me forth / Of that sweet way I was in to despair! (*R2* 3.2.204–205)

(25) RICHARD [to Northumberland]. He shall think that **thou, which** knowest the way / To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again (*R2* 5.1.62–63)

The antecedents are all socially lower than Richard. The antecedent in (23) is "kerns", Irish foot soldiers belonging to the poorer class (*OED* s.v. *kern*, n. 1a.). The antecedent *thee* refers to the Duke of Aumerle in (24), and *thou* to Northumberland in (25). In these three instances, *which* may be employed, just like the social use of *thou*, to refer to social inferiors. In addition, Richard's emotions may be another factor to evoke *which* in (23)–(25). As *kern* is often used with contempt (Onions 1986: 148), he is obviously insulting them; also noteworthy is his scornful statement in the relative clause "live like venom". Furthermore, he is extremely emotional towards Aumerle and Northumberland. In (24), he is upset to hear that the Duke of York and southern gentlemen have joined Bullingbrook and suddenly vents his fury on the Duke of Aumerle; Richard's curse, "Beshrew thee", which means 'Evil befall, mischief take, devil take, curse,

hang!' (*OED* s.v. *beshrew*, v. 3b), signals his fierce anger. In (25), Richard addresses Northumberland, who helped Bullingbrook – an "unrightful" king in Richard's words – to ascend the throne. Richard is extremely emotional in the scenes of (24) and (25), in which his disastrous fate was determined. Two factors – social status and emotions – are at play in Richard's using *which* in the three sentences above.

In this play, there are two more instances of '*thou* + *which*', both referring to King Richard. One is uttered by John of Gaunt, Richard's uncle:

(26) GAUNT [to Richard]. Deposing thee before **thou** wert possess'd, / **Which** art possess'd now to depose thyself. (*R2* 2.1.107–108)

Since the unmarked form for addressing sovereigns is *you* (Stein 2003: 270), Gaunt's use of *thou* deviates from the norm. In fact, the Duke of York, another uncle of Richard, consistently addresses him as *you* (*R2* 2.1.141–143 and *passim*). At the opening scene of this play, Gaunt also courteously addresses Richard as "my liege" (*R2* 1.1.7) and "your Highness" (*R2* 1.1.14), but when they meet again in Act 2 Scene 1, he is extremely angry at Richard's misbehaviour. Abandoning his respectful mode of address, Gaunt uses *thou* or its variant forms in addressing Richard over thirty times, never employing *you*-forms (*R2* 2.1.81–136). His consistent use of *thou*-forms in this scene is attributable to his furious emotions, and his use of *which* can similarly be classified as an emotional one.

The other instance of '*thou* + *which*' is uttered by the Queen, Richard's wife. She uses it when she meets the deposed Richard in a London street:

(27) QUEEN [to Richard]. The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw, / And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage / To be o'erpow'r'd, and wilt **thou**, pupil-like, / Take the correction, mildly kiss the rod, / And fawn on rage with base humility, / **Which** art a lion and the king of beasts? (*R2* 5.1.29–34)

Here the Queen is distraught by her husband's deposition; she repeatedly urges him to be strong like a lion, displaying her frustration with the weak, "pupil-like" husband. Since the unmarked form of address from a spouse to a sovereign is *you* (Stein 2003: 271), her use of *thou* here can be considered to deviate from the norm. Actually, she invariably uses *thou* to Richard in this passage (*passim* in *R2* 5.1.7–28) with only one exception (*R2* 5.1.9). Her high emotions may have triggered *which*, just like *thou*, to refer to Richard.

The emotional use of *which* is found in Mowbray's abuse of Bullingbrook, both of whom are dukes:

(28) MOWBRAY. I am disgrac'd, impeach'd, and baffled here, / Pierc'd to the soul with slander's venom'd spear, / The which no balm can cure but **his** heart-blood / **Which** breath'd this poison. (*R2* 1.1.170–173)[30]

We have so far examined all the nine instances of personal *which* in *King Richard II*, except for one: "**I** [...] **Which** elder days shall ripen" (*R2* 2.3.41–43), where Percy refers to himself. Here, social status is unhelpful in assessing the use of *which*. Thus, personal *which* is used to refer to social inferiors or someone equal in social status. Two exceptions, viz. examples (26) and (27), occur with *thou* in reference to King Richard, who is of the highest class. From the contexts, however, these uses of both *which* and *thou* can be regarded as emotional uses.

5.2.2 *Who* and *whom*

King Richard II contains twenty tokens of *who(m)* (twelve of *who* and eight of *whom*). Examples in this play show *who(m)* referring to people belonging to a wide range of status levels from beggars, as in (29), to nobles, as in (30):

(29) RICHARD. [...] like **seely beggars** / **Who** sitting in the stocks refuge their shame (*R2* 5.5.25–26)

(30) KEEPER. **Sir Pierce of Exton, who** / Lately came from the King, commands the contrary. (*R2* 5.5.100–101)

In (29), the speaker is Richard and the antecedent is *seely* ['poor'] *beggars*; in (30), the speaker is the Keeper and the antecedent, *Sir Pierce of Exton*, is his master. Thus, the antecedents of *who* may be either lower or higher in social status than the speakers. The following two examples support the irrelevance of social hierarchy in using *who(m)*:

(31) RICHARD. [...] **this thief, this traitor Bullingbrook,** / **Who** all this while hath revell'd in the night (*R2* 3.2.47–48)

(32) CARLISLE. **My Lord of Herford** here, **whom** you call king, / Is a foul traitor to proud Herford's king (*R2* 4.1.134–135)

30 The antecedent of *which* is *his*, as Evans and Tobin (1997: 849) note: 'the heart-blood of him who uttered this poison'.

In both (31) and (32), Bullingbrook, Richard's rival, is referred to, but it should be noted that in (31), Richard refers to Bullingbrook before he ascends the throne; in (32), Carlisle refers to Bullingbrook after his accession as King Henry IV. Thus, his status varies between the two scenes. Examples (29)–(32) indicate that *who(m)* is socially neutral as a personal relative pronoun.

Who(m) is also the ordinary choice in comparatively unemotional scenes or a formal situation. In (33)–(35) below, both speakers, Bullingbrook and York, refer to Richard:

(33) BULLINGBROOK. So that by this intelligence we learn / The Welshmen are dispers'd, and Salisbury / Is gone to meet **the King, who** lately landed / With some few private friends upon this coast. (*R2* 3.3.1–4)

(34) YORK. Both are my kinsmen: / T' one is **my sovereign, whom** both my oath / And duty bids defend (*R2* 2.2.111–113)

(35) YORK. I come to thee / From **plume-pluck'd Richard, who** with willing soul / Adopts thee heir (*R2* 4.1.107–109)

In (33), Bullingbrook is reading (or summarising the contents of) a paper of "intelligence", i.e. military information (Gurr 1984: 124); Bullingbrook is probably calm, as he is satisfied with the news about Richard's fall, which is "very fair and good" (*R2* 3.3.5) for his side. In (34), York is at a loss facing the conflict between his nephews, Richard and Bullingbrook, and is caught in a dilemma (Gurr 1984: 103); York is described as a "vacillating and uncertain" figure in this play (Dawson and Yachnin 2011: 75), as illustrated by this scene; his statement reflects baffled puzzlement more than any stronger emotion. The last example is taken from a scene in Parliament: York enters and makes the announcement in (35), whereupon Bullingbrook declares, "In God's name I'll ascend the regal throne" (*R2* 4.1.113); thus, this *who* is employed in a very formal situation.

Whereas Gaunt, when losing his temper, uses *which* to refer to Richard in (26), it is telling that in the very same scene, he also uses *whom*, wishing good fortune to befall his late brother:

(36) GAUNT. **My brother Gloucester**, plain well-meaning soul, / **Whom** fair befall in heaven 'mongst happy souls (*R2* 2.1.128–129)

This example confirms that his use of *which* was triggered by his furious anger at Richard.

These eight instances of *who(m)* in *King Richard II* demonstrate that *who(m)* refers to people of widely differing social status, and that the speaker's emotions

are not relevant to the use of *who(m)*.[31] Hence it can be safely said that *who(m)* is the neutral choice as a personal relative pronoun.

5.2.3 Summary

In *King Richard II*, personal *which* refers to a social equal once, viz. (28), and to social inferiors six times, but the other two instances refer to Richard, a sovereign, viz. (26) and (27). The exceptions, however, do not refute the hypothesis that *which* is distributed similarly to *thou*. Instead, they prove the relevance of the other factor – the speaker's emotional state – in choosing *which*. In (26) and (27), the speakers, Gaunt and the Queen, are so stressed that they address Richard as *thou*, perhaps deviating from the norm. Their use of *which* is also consistent with their high emotional states. In contrast, Richard is referred to by *who(m)* in examples (33)–(35), in which the speakers, Bullingbrook and York, show no obvious strong emotions.

5.3 *King Lear*

5.3.1 *Which*

In *King Lear*, a later play dated to 1605, personal *which* occurs twelve times. These include two instances which cannot be categorised into the social or emotional use:

(37) GENTLEMAN. **Every one** hears that, / **Which** can distinguish sound. (*Lr* 4.6.210–211)

(38) EDMUND. And turn our impress'd lances in **our** eyes / **Which** do command them. (*Lr* 5.3.50–51)

In (37), the antecedent is *everyone*; in (38), Edmund refers to those who were at the British camp including himself. Social status is not relevant here; nor can any strong emotions be recognised.

Yet there is a clear difference in social status between the speaker and the referent in the following three instances, in which the speakers are nobles, while the antecedents are all servants that are not individualised:

31 The rest of *who* and *whom* in *King Richard II* are in *R2* 1.2.28, 1.3.17, 1.3.36, 2.1.10, 2.1.172, 2.2.48, 2.2.83, 2.2.114, 2.2.115, 3.2.138, 3.3.29, and 5.5.73.

(39) KENT. Who have – as who have not, that their great stars / Thron'd and set high? – **servants**, who seem no less, / **Which** are to France the spies and speculations / Intelligent of our state. (*Lr* 3.1.22–25)[32]

(40) GONERIL. And the remainders that shall still depend, / To be **such men** as may besort your age, / **Which** know themselves and you. (*Lr* 1.4.250–252)

(41) GLOUCESTER. [...] **he which** finds him [Edgar] shall deserve our thanks (*Lr* 2.1.61)

In (39), the Earl of Kent warns against treacherous servants that may give information to their enemy France. In (40), Goneril asks her father to employ servants that befit his age and know their places and his; she means 'servants' by *such men*. In (41), the Earl of Gloucester orders his servants to capture Edgar and *he which* could refer to any one of the servants (whichever one(s) succeed).[33]

A particularly impressive contrast is found in the Earl of Gloucester's language. In reference to his son Edgar, Gloucester uses *who(m)* and *which* twice, respectively:

(42) GLOUCESTER. I have **a son**, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, **who** yet is no dearer in my account. (*Lr* 1.1.19–21)

(43) GLOUCESTER. I' th' last night's storm I **such a fellow** saw, / **Which** made me think a man a worm. (*Lr* 4.1.32–33)

(44) GLOUCESTER. And bring some covering for **this naked soul**, / **Which** I'll entreat to lead me. (*Lr* 4.1.44–45)

(45) GLOUCESTER [to the beggar]. Here, take this purse, **thou whom** the heav'ns' plagues / Have humbled to all strokes. (*Lr* 4.1.64–65)

In (42), Gloucester talks about his sons, Edgar and Edmund, using *who* to refer to Edgar. In (43)–(45), Edgar is in disguise as a naked beggar and is feigning madness in order not to be captured and killed (Act 2 Scene 3). In (43), Gloucester remembers the beggar, "such a fellow", whom he saw in the storm scenes of Act 3. Note that *fellow* is an appellation of contempt (*OED* s.v. *fellow*, n. 10c, Schmidt 1971: I, 411 (3)); Barber (1981: 274) points out the collocation of *fellow* and *thou* in

32 Abbott (1870: §266) cites this example, considering that "who seem no less" is parenthetical and could be "they".

33 In reference to example (39), Abbott (1870: §266) states: "[*w*]*ho* indicates an individual, *which* a 'kind of person'". What Abbott means by "a kind of person" is probably people that are not individualised. Examples (39)–(41) may fall within this category, but our data are not sufficient to draw a conclusion about this issue.

Richard III. In (44), the beggar comes to Gloucester, who orders his tenant to bring clothes for the naked man but has not yet identified the man as his own son. In (45), Gloucester addresses the beggar with *thou whom […]*. Thus, Gloucester uses *which* twice and *whom* once to refer to Edgar disguised as a beggar, while he only uses *who* when he recognises him as his own son. Gloucester's condescending attitude to the beggar – a man of the lowest status – seems to have triggered the use of *which*.

Personal *which* is found twice in furious quarrels. It occurs with *knave* 'villain', a term of abuse (*OED* s.v. *knave*, n. 3a), in Act 2 Scene 2, where the Duke of Cornwall and the Earl of Kent, both nobles, insult each other:

(46) CORNWALL. **These kind of knaves** I know, **which** in this plainness / Harbor more craft and more corrupter ends (*Lr* 2.2.101–102)

(47) KENT. He that beguil'd you in a plain accent was **a plain knave, which** for my part I will not be (*Lr* 2.2.111–112)

Cornwall refers to Kent by *These kind of knaves* in (46). Alluding to this, Kent retorts using '*knave* + *which*' against him in (47).[34] Similarly, Kent, Lear's servant, uses *which* to refer to Oswald, Goneril's steward:

(48) KENT. […] **the very fellow which** of late / Display'd so saucily against your Highness (*Lr* 2.4.40–41)

The antecedent is *fellow* again here, as in (43) above. Kent has quarrelled with Oswald twice by then, first when Oswald is insolent to Lear in Act 1 Scene 4 (l. 44–92) and again when Kent encounters Oswald in front of Gloucester's castle at the opening of Act 2 Scene 2. Kent's use of *which* in (48) above is probably due to his (mounting) anger at Oswald.

Finally, the Fool uses *which* as follows:

(49) LEAR. **I** should be false persuaded I had daughters.
FOOL. **Which** they will make an obedient father. (*Lr* 1.4.234–235)

34 In Late Modern English, Poutsma (1916: ch. 39, §11) states: "[*w*]*hich*, not *who*, is the ordinary relative when, although the antecedent denotes a person, the reference is rather to a quality than to (an) individual(s)". It is beyond the scope of this study to consider whether this restriction is observed in Shakespeare's English, but example (47) may fall in this category because the antecedent, *a plain knave*, refers to a quality of a man, rather than an individual.

The antecedent is *I*, by which Lear refers to himself.[35] This example – *which* to the King – may seem contrary to the generalisation that *which* does not collocate with social superiors. However, Mulholland (1967: 41–42) shows that the Fool uses *thou* and its variant forms 35 times to Lear,[36] arguing that the Fool's "pronoun usage bears out his unique status in the play". The Fool's use of *which* in (49) is thus entirely consistent with his (exceptional) pattern of usage. The Fool uses *which* once more in his song:

(50) FOOL. **That sir which** serves and seeks for gain, / And follows but for form, / Will pack when it begins to rain, / And leave thee in the storm. (*Lr* 2.4.78–81)

By *That sir* the Fool implies Lear's knights who deserted him (Foakes 1997: 243). In its literal sense, *sir* means 'gentleman', but it is used ironically here, as noted in Onions (1986: 253 (2)) and Schmidt (1971: II, 1065 (1)). The Fool criticises those who leave their fallen master (Lear is implied), mocking their self-serving behaviour. In this context, he actually calls them "knaves" (*Lr* 2.4.76), a word that collocates with *which* twice in this play, viz. examples (46) and (47). Probably, *which* is used here because of the Fool's cynicism towards Lear's disloyal knights.

5.3.2 *Who* and *whom*

King Lear contains forty tokens of *who(m)* in total (twenty-nine of *who* and eleven of *whom*). The far greater total for personal relativisation in this play is consistent with Hope's (2010: 153) finding that there is a substantial increase of relativisation from early to later periods of Shakespeare's career as a playwright. This chronological change is itself intriguing as an index of Shakespeare's changing style; but what is more significant for the present study is that this general tendency is reflected in the use of *who(m)*, but not that of personal *which*, whose frequency remains almost static so that the relative frequency of *which* declines.

There is also some evidence of *who(m)* directly replacing *which* in contexts where it was most dominant in earlier works. It has been pointed out that Corn-

35 For this interpretation, I rely on a note to this line in Johnson and Steevens's edition (1773: 352), but a different interpretation may be possible, as Moessner (1992: 336–337) takes *daughters* in Lear's words as the antecedent of this *which*, claiming that *they* in the relative clause is a repetition of the antecedent.

36 Mulholland makes no mention of the Fool's use of *you* to refer to Lear. As far as I know, he uses it once to Lear: "For you know, nuncle" (*Lr* 1.4.214).

wall and Kent use *which* to insult each other as cited in (46) and (47) above. In the same scene, Act 2 Scene 2, and in the same context of trading insults, they use *who* to refer to each other as well:

(51) KENT. That **such a slave** as this should wear a sword, / **Who** wears no honesty. (*Lr* 2.2.72–73)

(52) CORNWALL. This is **some fellow** / **Who**, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect / A saucy roughness (*Lr* 2.2.95–97)

The antecedents here are abusive terms, *slave* and *fellow*. In (53) below, *villain*, "a typical '*thou*-word'" in Busse's term (2003: 213), is used with *who*. *Beggars*, people of the lowest rank, also occurs as the antecedent of *who* in (54):

(53) GONERIL. Fools do **those villains** pity **who** are punish'd / Ere they have done their mischief (*Lr* 4.2.54–55)

(54) EDGAR. The country gives me proof and president / Of **Bedlam beggars, who**, with roaring voices, / Strike in their numb'd and mortified arms / Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary (*Lr* 2.3.13–16)

When speakers refer to social superiors, they usually use *who(m)* in *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Richard II*; this tendency is also seen in *King Lear*. *Who(m)* refers to social superiors, sovereigns, in the following three instances:

(55) KENT. **Royal Lear**, / **Whom** I have ever honor'd as my king, / Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd / As my great patron thought on in my prayers (*Lr* 1.1.139–142)

(56) KENT. Well, sir, **the poor distressed Lear**'s i' th' town, / **Who** sometime, in his better tune, remembers / What we are come about (*Lr* 4.3.38–40)

(57) LEAR. My Lord of Burgundy, / We first address toward **you, who** with this king / Hath rivall'd for our daughter. (*Lr* 1.1.189–191)

In (55), Kent states that he has been deferential toward Lear; the adjective *royal* displays his respectfulness. In (56), Kent, who is absolutely loyal to Lear, uses *who* to refer to Lear again. In (57), Lear uses *who* with polite *you* to refer to the Duke of Burgundy. According to Stein (2003: 265), Lear addresses Burgundy as *you* seven times in this play, never addressing him as *thou*; as Lear courteously addresses the duke as "noble Burgundy" (*Lr* 1.1.195) and "your Grace" (*Lr* 1.1.200), he is actually very deferential to Burgundy in this scene. When speakers show deference or respect to the referents, *which* is never employed.

The seven instances cited above prove the neutrality of *who(m)*.[37] It can collocate even with abusive terms, such as *fellow*, *slave*, and *villain*, in very insulting contexts. Contrariwise, *who(m)* is also used by speakers who show respect to the referents; our examination of the three plays has not found any instances of *which* in contexts like (55)–(57), in which the speakers are respectful to the referents. It can be safely said that *who(m)* is the neutral form used to refer to people of various statuses in a wide range of situations.

5.3.3 Summary

The investigation of *King Lear* confirms the strong relationship between *which* and abusive terms: personal *which* collocates with *fellow* twice, viz. (43) and (48), and with *knave* twice, viz. (46) and (47). Examples (46)–(48) in particular are found in quarrels, which indicates that *which* is likely to be chosen in a situation of furious emotions. When a character courteously talks to a sovereign, as in (55)–(57), he consistently uses *who(m)*, never *which*. Thus, *who(m)* must be the neutral form that speakers usually use in various situations. The Fool's using *which* to refer to Lear does not invalidate our argument, because as he almost always addresses Lear as *thou*, his use of *which* represents a stylistically consistent choice.

6 Conclusion

The present paper has investigated Shakespeare's use of *wh*-relative pronouns with personal antecedents with the purpose of answering the question in what circumstances Shakespeare had his characters use *which* in place of the more common forms, *who* and *whom*. By surveying all the plays of Shakespeare, we have revealed a significant fact that has not been recognised by previous scholars: *who(m)* appears after *thou* and *you* with exactly the same frequencies, seventeen times each; on the other hand, *which* occurs with *you* only once, although it is not uncommon with *thou*, occurring nine times. In Early Modern English, *you* was unmarked in most cases, while *thou* was the marked form usually used to refer to social inferiors by social superiors; otherwise, *thou* carried

37 The remaining instances of *who* and *whom* in *King Lear* appear in *Lr* 1.1.20, 1.1.212, 1.1.214, 1.1.277, 1.4.6, 1.4.306, 2.1.92, 2.2.23, 2.2.122, 2.2.167, 3.1.16, 3.1.23, 3.1.31, 3.4.51, 3.4.60, 3.4.134, 3.4.135, 3.7.18, 3.7.90, 4.1.62, 4.1.64, 4.2.52, 4.2.75, 4.6.169, 4.6.206, 4.6.222, 5.1.22, 5.1.26, 5.1.64, 5.3.4, 5.3.42, 5.3.210, and 5.3.220.

emotional senses, either positive or negative (Busse 2012: 738–741; Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013: 83–84). Since *which* rarely collocates with *you* in Shakespeare's language, while '*thou* + *which*' is a firmly established collocation, it is plausible that *which* is the marked form as a personal relative pronoun and used in similar contexts as those in which *thou* is generally preferred. There are two more pieces of evidence supporting the markedness of *which*. Firstly, the use of relative constructions increases in the course of Shakespeare's career as a playwright (Hope 2010: 153), but the increase only affects frequencies of *who* and *whom*, while the frequency of *which* remains almost static, as seen in the Appendix. Thus, personal *which* was getting more and more marginalised in Shakespeare's later plays. Secondly, personal *which* is less frequent in the comedies than in the histories and tragedies, meaning that *who(m)* is the form usually used by people from middle or lower class backgrounds, that is, by characters that are more prevalent in the comedies.

All this suggests that *who(m)* was the unmarked, neutral form, while *which* was the marked form used in specific contexts. To prove this hypothesis, a sociopragmatic analysis of personal *which*, in comparison with *who* and *whom*, was conducted in *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Richard II*, and *King Lear*. In these plays, personal *which* is almost always used to refer to social inferiors or equals. There are three exceptions to this: examples (26), (27), and (49). Pragmatically, many examples of personal *which* are uttered by characters in states of heightened emotion: Juliet's romantic confession of love, Richard's angry shouts, and Cornwall and Kent's scornful insults to each other, just to mention a few. When speakers use personal *which*, it may be accompanied by exclamations such as *fie, fie* and *beshrew thee*, showing that they burst into anger. In two of the exceptional cases, (26) and (27), *which* collocates with *thou* in reference to King Richard. These instances of *thou*, uttered by Gaunt (the King's uncle) and the Queen (his spouse), obviously deviate from the norm (Stein 2003: 270–271). These uses of both *which* and *thou* are considered to be triggered by the speakers' emotional tension. The other exception, example (49), is uttered by the Fool to refer to Lear; but even this demonstrates similar usage conditions for *which* and *thou*, as he almost invariably addresses Lear as *thou* (Mulholland 1967: 41–42). Except for these three instances, *which* is never used by social inferiors in reference to social superiors. On the other hand, the antecedents of *who(m)* may be superior, inferior, or equal in status to the speakers. No particular statuses predominate when *who(m)* is employed.

The relevance of social and emotional factors in Shakespeare's choice of *which* is further confirmed by its collocation with abusive terms: *fellow* and *knave* occur twice each, and *villain* once. As these terms go hand in hand with *thou* in Shakespeare (Barber 1981; Busse 2002, 2003), so they do with *which*. Similarly, *which* occurs with words referring to people of lower status, *servants* and *rebels*,

and those implying the speakers' contempt such as *kerns* and *caterpillars*. Positive emotions such as intimacy and affection may evoke *which*, albeit less often, as shown by Lady Capulet's use of *friend* in reference to her nephew Tybalt and Juliet's *thy gracious self* in her appreciation of Romeo.

As cited in Section 1, John Wallis wrote in his *Grammatica linguae anglicanae* (1674) that after personal antecedents, *which* was replaced by *who* and *whom* in later recensions of the Anglican liturgy because *who(m)* is more elegant than *which*. More than half a century earlier, Shakespeare must have been sufficiently aware of this difference between *which* and *who(m)*. He seems to have found *which* suitable for referring to social inferiors, especially when his characters speak with anger, contempt, affection, or other strong emotions. This explains why his characters rarely use *which* to refer to social superiors, particularly when they are deferential toward their referents or courteously refer to sovereigns. The absence of *which* in formal scenes can also be accounted for along similar lines. In conclusion, personal *which* is not a simple alternative for *who* or *whom* in Shakespearean English, but an effective stylistic device to be exploited when his characters' emotions are heightened.[38]

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38 An abridged version of this paper was presented at the 32nd meeting of the Modern English Association, held at Aichi Gakuin University in Japan on 27 June 2015. I would like to thank the audience at the presentation for their comments. I wish to express my gratitude to Robert J. Sigley for improving the English of the draft. Finally, my sincere thanks go to the editors, Ursula Lenker and Lucia Kornexl, and the anonymous referees for their insightful comments on the earlier version.

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Appendix

Frequency of *who, whom*, and *which* with Personal Antecedents in Shakespeare's Plays

Title (abbreviation)	Date	*who*	*whom*	*which*
1 Henry VI (*1H6*)	1589–1590	5	11	5
2 Henry VI (*2H6*)	1590–1591	9	8	7
3 Henry VI (*3H6*)	1590–1591	9	15	6
Richard III (*R3*)	1592–1593	14	14	7
The Comedy of Errors (*Err*)	1592–1594	7	6	2
Titus Andronicus (*Tit*)	1593–1594	6	8	4
The Taming of the Shrew (*Shr*)	1593–1594	4	7	3
The Two Gentlemen of Verona (*TGV*)	1594	3	6	0
Love's Labour's Lost (*LLL*)	1594–1595	3	5	7
King John (*Jn*)	1594–1596	8	9	4
Richard II (*R2*)	1595	12	8	9
Romeo and Juliet (*Rom*)	1595–1596	8	4	10
A Midsummer Night's Dream (*MND*)	1595–1596	3	4	4
The Merchant of Venice (*MV*)	1596–1597	13	5	5
1 Henry IV (*1H4*)	1596–1597	10	3	6
The Merry Wives of Windsor (*Wiv*)	1597	5	2	3
2 Henry IV (*2H4*)	1598	8	3	7
Much Ado about Nothing (*Ado*)	1598–1599	15	2	2
Henry V (*H5*)	1599	18	9	5
Julius Caesar (*JC*)	1599	8	0	0
As You Like It (*AYL*)	1599	8	3	3

Title (abbreviation)	Date	*who*	*whom*	*which*
Hamlet (*Ham*)	1600–1601	8	3	4
Twelfth Night (*TN*)	1601–1602	3	7	0
Troilus and Cressida (*Tro*)	1601–1602	11	8	2
All's Well That Ends Well (*AWW*)	1602–1603	8	14	4
Measure for Measure (*MM*)	1604	14	8	5
Othello (*Oth*)	1604	6	7	2
King Lear (*Lr*)	1605	29	11	12
Macbeth (*Mac*)	1606	16	9	4
Antony and Cleopatra (*Ant*)	1606–1607	12	11	8
Coriolanus (*Cor*)	1607–1608	27	15	6
Timon of Athens (*Tim*)	1607–1608	12	15	8
Pericles (*Per*)	1607–1608	29	19	5
Cymbeline (*Cym*)	1609–1610	34	20	9
The Winter's Tale (*WT*)	1610–1611	24	16	9
The Tempest (*Tmp*)	1611	17	15	7
Henry VIII (*H8*)	1612–1613	20	10	4
Total	–	**446**	**320**	**188**