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## **Representations of Northern Dialect in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Drama**

In this paper, I will document and discuss pertinent phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic features found in the representations of Northern dialect in drama of the early 17th century, contributing to the knowledge of Early Modern regional variation. I will be focussing on pre-civil war plays, drawing my data from the work of a selection of playwrights, including Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher (*Cupid's Revenge; The Knight of the Burning Pestle*), Richard Brome (*The Northern Lasse; The English Moor, or the Mock-Marriage*), George Chapman (*Two Wise Men and All the Rest Fools*), John Fletcher (*Thierry and Theodoret*), and Ben Jonson (*The Sad Shepherd; The King and Queen's Entertainment at Richmond, Bartholomew Fair; The Alchemist*).

Because of a dearth of direct textual evidence, the Early Modern period (c. 1500 to c. 1800) is under-studied in the field of dialectology, and no comprehensive account exists of the regional variation of Britain during that period. However, literary works, particularly dramatic texts, do provide contemporary linguistic information, notably in the depiction of dialects of England, Wales, and Scotland. On the rare occasions dramatic dialect representations have been considered by linguists, they typically have been either dismissed as examples of an artificial stage dialect or discussed in very abstract terms (Eckhardt 1910). However, Hulme (1937) began to look at the dialect depicted at Tudor drama critically, with representations of Northern dialect generally thought to be more accurate than those of the South. In addition, recent work by García-Bermejo Giner (1999) and Roemer (1998) suggests that dialect representations in Early Modern drama are often authentic, and that their careful analysis can illuminate the knowledge of regional variation in this period.

## **References**

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