# The Language of Quarrels

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**Synopsis**: This essay proposes to analyse the mechanisms of quarrels from a theoretical perspective largely informed by linguistics, and more specifically, by pragmatics. It connects with some of Jean-Jacques Lecercle's argument, but takes the analysis in different directions. Looking at a number of examples of quarrels, this paper purports to identify the different participants and parameters in the development of a quarrel. These include speakers (authors), texts (more often than oral discourse), institutions which (might) adjudicate, an audience, rules, as well as material conditions under which disputes develop. These parameters provide a framework, rather than a rigid construction, within which speakers may change positions. Special attention is given to the beginnings of a quarrel (what counts as the start of a quarrel ?) and to the ends of a quarrel (do they end, or simply cease to be of interest ?). The essay concludes on the dynamic of quarrels, which precludes modelisation.

One of the high points of the conflict between romanticism and classicism took place in France over Hugo's play, *Hernani*. Remembering this battle, Théophile Gauthier, who was one of the protagonists and also the historian of the battle, wrote: 'never was literary quarrel more passionately debated! The performances were genuine military battles…'.[1] The passion for literature, the fight for the 'freedom of the mind', the rebirth of poetry characterise the era. This indicates the vital importance of literary quarrels for the protagonists, the possibility that crucial departures in literature happen in these moments, the metaphorical as well as real violence which inhabits such events. They point to complex modes of quarrelling when writers, the public, institutions (the Académie, the Theatre) are involved. They generate, or perhaps thrive on, exceptional publicity, reverberating in the press as much as among the public. They show not so much that literary texts can be the occasion for conflicts and controversies but that they enable the articulation of profound differences and disagreements. They also show that quarrels die—Gauthier remembers with melancholy the times when *Hernani* was interrupted by more than polite clapping from the audience. There are many battles of *Hernani* in literary history, in France as well as in England. Not all are as fierce and important for the development of literature, not all happen in times of revolutions, but they all, at some level, reveal the dissensus on which societies are based, and more specifically, the nature of a given intellectual field at the time when they occur.

While their importance reverberates in domains ranging from music to religion, from natural philosophy to contemporary theatre, their diversity seems at first sight to preclude any attempt at understanding possible patterns of development, calling only for case studies of such empirical phenomena. In some ways, if one wants to understand the issues involved and the nature of the quarrels, a comprehensive, detailed study of individual quarrels is crucial. But there is also the possibility that beyond the empirical differences between quarrels patterns are reproduced, ways of quarreling are transferred from one quarrel to the other, from one participant to the other, perhaps even from one country to the other. The unfolding of debates, the desire to triumph over an opponent, the expected reward—including publicity—constitute possible common points across quarrels.

Specifically, the beginnings and endings of quarrels need to be understood. The parameters of a quarrel may vary from one dispute to the next, but the necessity for certain conditions to be in place seems always to be present. Although a number of quarrels lead to violent outcomes, sometimes through institutionalised violence as is the case with duels, they all take place in language or involve at first a linguistic component. A quarrel may well lead to a total breakdown of discourse, but it is precisely the language strategies at work, the nature of the discourse, and the conditions for this interruption which require analysis. So that the aim of this essay is not so much to provide a model for all quarrels, or even a series of models, but rather to interrogate the ways in which quarrels materialise in language, to understand the nature of the linguistic phenomena at work when a quarrel takes place, perhaps to suggest that certain features of quarrels resist any attempt at theorization.

1.  The discourse of quarrels

Although we have mainly used the word 'quarrel' in this issue, it is important to note that a number of categories seem to be relevant to describe polemical exchanges. Such words include *dispute*, which originates in the rhetorical category of *disputatio* and therefore suggests arguing on both sides of the issue without coming to a conclusion; *controversy*, sometimes used in religious contexts and which does not presuppose a procedure for the resolution of the conflict; *quarrel*, which involves an initial complaint and seems to imply a more circumscribed field of debate, although the *querelle des anciens et des modernes* was perhaps one of the longest and most widespread quarrels in intellectual history; *affair*, which generally involves a wider public than a well-defined quarrel and possibly a public

prosecution ('l'affaire Calas', 'the Rusdhie affair').[2] The vocabulary of war is frequently encountered in the descriptions and practice of polemics. Furetière's *La Nouvelle allégorique* gives an account of the French literary landscape through the story of a war between two countries, led by Princess Rhetoric and Prince Mumbo-Jumbo.[3] Swift's *Battle of the Books* takes its cue from the 1688 *Histoire poétique de la guerre nouvellement déclarée entre les anciens et les modernes* by François de Callières—complete with map of opposing armies. The vocabulary used in quarrels is predictably more often agonistic than irenic, favouring opponents, fights or weapons, reminding us that physical encounters are sometimes a temptation, sometimes the outcome, and that at certain periods of history they were dominant in certain circles.[4]

There have been attempts at introducing some coherence in such uses. Marcelo Dascal, for instance, favours the word 'controversy' to analyse debates within the Republic of Letters and makes a distinction between disputes, where opponents seek victory, discussions, which imply a resolution procedure and where the protagonists want to reach truth, and controversy, where persuasion is all-important.[5] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, in this issue, offers that disputes are only a possibility in a generally irenic context whereas quarrels are a threat to language. While definitions can be invoked and these concepts, thus defined, enable the analytical investigation of quarrels, in practice it is quite often difficult to use such concepts systematically. Although they do translate from one language to another, meanings do not always coincide—English literary historians have for instance tended to use the French word *querelle* to refer to the Ancients and Moderns divide rather than the Swiftian *battle*, sometimes considered as an episode in the wider quarrel.

In the early modern Republic of Letters as in the contemporary period, there are many different ways of quarrelling, but they always involve the written word—pure violence is predominantly an aggression or a fight rather than a dispute or a quarrel. And if such language exchanges may take place orally, the written text is a surer way of developing an argument. This is not only because written traces are ubiquitous whereas oral exchanges, apart from accounts of debates in Academies or Assemblies, disappear, but because one of the dominant features of intellectual quarrels is the publicity they require. There are two reasons for this. First, quarrels are sometimes a means of enhancing a profile or a reputation in order to construct a public persona. Such was the case perhaps for Alexander Pope, whose literary reputation was also based on his satirical attacks and on the resulting quarrels with a number of his contemporaries. The second reason for the importance of publicity, of the kind provided by the written word, is that quarrels do need the approval—or the rebuttal—of an audience,

perhaps even of a judge, in order to develop into fully-fledged arguments. Two further consequences may be noted: the public sphere in its different incarnations and interpretations can be seen to provide resonance for these quarrels; but quarrels are not usually *sui generis* and proceed from an intellectual context which contributes to shape them. Such context is therefore part of the quarrel itself, of the ways in which it unfolds. In turn, of course, the arguments developed during the quarrel contribute to the constitution of the context.[6] Debates about the necessity to ban the practice of duelling, for instance, could not take place without this specific social practice based on conceptions of honour, while they contributed in turn to a reflection on the nature of honour and its place in society.

Such reliance on the written word elicits a variety of publications, which sometimes take the form of recurrent generic forms. While a manifesto is usually a way of seizing the initiative, of claiming a stake in a given field (such as Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* or Breton's *Manifeste du surréalisme*), quarrels are more usually found in correspondences in all their forms. A private correspondence can develop into a controversy, such as was Leibniz's practice; conversely public letters contribute to quarrels, open letters being a common way of indulging in a quarrel. They have a long history, and occasionally relied on publications, bearing titles such as *Letter to … concerning…* or *Reply to…* The dispute between Stillingfleet and Locke over the language of ideas, for instance, which is examined by Daniel Carey in this issue, took the form of such publications as *A Letter to Edward Ld Bishop of Worcester, Concerning some Passages Relating to Mr Locke's Essay of Humane Understanding, in a late Discourse of his Lordships, in Vindication of the Trinity*, by John Locke, Gent. or *Mr Locke's reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his Second Letter, Concerning Some Passages Relating to Mr Locke's Essay of Humane Understanding*. The structure of letter/reply/further letter seems canonical in controversies, pointing both to the dialogical nature of polemics, and to the circumstancial nature of the texts involved. In France, Pascal's use of the polemical *Provinciales* letters proved equally influential. Other related texts include memoir, critique, discourse, observation, essay, history, parallel, digression, etc.[7] This does not of course mean that all these forms are involved in a quarrel, but rather that quarrels often resort to generic forms which are brief and easily published, so as to retain a dialogical pattern and a relevant temporality. Such practice persisted throughout the centuries. Pamphlets, newspaper columns, letters to the editor, shorter essays, various incarnations of review essays[8]—and now of course blogs and new forms of social media exposure—enabled the development of local or global quarrels.

The participants in intellectual quarrels include scientists, clerics, writers, journalists or philosophers. But they can of course involve institutions, such as the Académie des sciences or the Royal Society in a number of scientific quarrels, universities, censorship, or the PEN club which defends writers whose freedom of speech is under threat. This does not mean that any individual or institution can take part in a quarrel but on the contrary that actors are sometimes defined through their ability to take part in a quarrel, or through the quarrel itself. In some cases, a wide-ranging quarrel can be identified with an individual: Perrault or Fontenelle for the Ancients and Moderns in France, Boyle or Pascal over the existence of a vacuum in nature; in some ways, Taslima Nasreen's popularity and international reputation sprang from the attacks of which she was the victim in Bangladesh. The positionning of actors in quarrels is therefore a crucial part of their unfolding.

Although they rely mainly on the written word, discourses surrounding quarrels are complex; the vocabulary to describe them fluctuates and testifies to a widespread range of possible categories; a number of actors are directly and indirectly (such as stationers or publishers) involved in the quarrels; the variety of publications can be extensive, although they favour circumstancial, easily produced works rather than long treatises. But the quarrels themselves go through certain stages to materialise.


2.   The stages of quarrels


A quarrel seems to take place when a provocative or debatable argument is put forward. It is generally but not necessarily addressed to someone in particular—a quarrel in a correspondance may proceed from an initial letter to an individual but a quarrel need not start through an intention to create one. It is for instance unclear whether Salman Rushdie intended directly to attack either Islam or Muslim communities in *The Satanic Verses*, although this probably proceeded from the satirical stance adopted in his novel. But for the controversy to develop it needed both a reaction from an 'injured' audience and a public space in which the controversy could resonate. This was first provided following the publication of the novel by an Indian MP, Syed Shahabuddin, urging in *The Times of India* the ban of the book,[9] which came into effect in India in October 1988. This eventually led to the fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeiny in February 1989, which was the culmination of a series of protests and demonstrations not to mention public burnings of the book. Later, arson, deaths, including those of translators and publishers, contributed to the extreme threats and violence surrounding the book, the author, the various parties involved in its production and the

Muslim communities around the world. In the case of blasphemy, which this controversy was partly about, it can be argued that blasphemy only happens when someone deems to have been injured by the blasphemous words. One can of course utter offensive oaths, but what constitutes blasphemy is the recognition by a set of people that an offence has taken place.[10] Ruling authorities such as Al-Azhar in Cairo or Ayatollah Khomeiny reinforced and sanctioned the offence, thus acting both as judges and, because they were not recognised by all parties as relevant jurisdictions, as participants in the controversy. A quarrel therefore does not originate in an opening controversial statement but relies on the constitution of a set of participants taking their cue from a possible offence and responding to it—it is the response which initiates the quarrel rather than the initial statement. This reinforces the view that a quarrel is a dialogical form which properly begins when the participants in the dialogue are in place.

Not everybody can decide to take part in a quarrel. Although the Rushdie affair could at first sight seem like an exception, quarrels usually unfold between 'equals'. Leibniz's arguments developed with fellow-philosophers and scientists. The *querelle des anciens et des modernes* opposed writers of similar social status, with comparable reputations, who would have been looking to reinforce their positions. Fielding had been a celebrated playwright when he attacked and surfed on the popularity of Richardson's *Pamela*. Quarrels pit against each other opponents belonging to the same group rather than participants from different backgrounds. Their disagreements may of course be intense, as is apparent in some of the great literary battles such as the battle of *Hernani*. But they interacted in the same arenas (the Théâtre-Français in the case of *Hernani*), and shared the same codes, the same modes of dissent, if not the same rules. What some of these wider affairs, from the *bataille d'Hernani* to the Rushdie affair indicate, though, is that when the wider public takes hold of the arguments, the nature of the quarrel may change—it does not oppose a novelist or a playwright and his critics, but generates further battles. The Rushdie affair shows that this sudden and brutal amplification of the quarrel relied on a number of (self-styled) spokespersons, such as  Shahabuddin, who took it upon themselves to speak for the community. (Shahabuddin was at the time the editor of a Muslim periodical and an MP who claimed to speak for the Muslim community of India.) The *bataille d'Hernani* on the other hand reminds us that such controversies require a historian to immortalize the conflict—in this case, Théophile Gauthier.

The beginnings of a quarrel rely on the interaction between two (or more) participants, whose exchanges begin in earnest not with an initial attack, but with the recognition by one of

the participants that an offence was committed by the first—this suggests that an intention to create a polemic may fail (perhaps in the same way as a performative utterance may be infelicitous), or, conversely, that a polemic can happen without an initial intention to create one. A polemic can of course fail for a number of reasons, ranging from the lack of interest of the participants to its irrelevance in a given field. It can fail to materialize because the second participant, while recognising an intention to generate a polemic, perhaps even finding that an offence was committed, does not recognise the first participant as a worthy opponent. This was the case for instance in duels—they could only take place between members of the same class (not necessarily the aristocracy, but those whose right to wear a sword was recognised). So that the conditions for a quarrel to begin also demand the recognition by my opponent that I am a worthy enemy. As we saw, an intellectual quarrel further requires a context in which it can develop, which includes the scientific or cultural background that helps make sense of it—the assumptions inherent to this context are obviously not necessarily shared by the protagonists but must be identifiable. Pascal's celebrated letter to Father Noël about the vacuum questions for instance the nature of scientific hypotheses and attacks Noël's Aristotelian physics. Further elements of context include an arena in which the quarrel may develop (ranging from the periodical press to the theatre), an audience which, in some cases, may help it resonate, and intellectual (and perhaps political) relays which can propagate it and give it new leases of life.

Furthermore, quarrels often require a judge, who may of course be a legal instance, but who can be (deemed to be) invested with authority, such as an Academy, a society, a monarch. Leibniz indicated that 'a judge of controversies' had 'the right to terminate controversies', based on the power with which he was invested.[11] This judge can therefore be appealed to by participants in order to resolve the quarrel. In a number of quarrels, though, the ultimate judge of the argument is the audience or the public. When Molière orchestrated a debate around *L'Ecole des femmes*, he was as much defending his own aesthetic principles as appealing to the public to approve them. Corneille had done the same with *Le Cid* earlier in the 17th century. The aim of philosophers such as Fontenelle, the author of *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, and founders of periodicals in France and in England, was similarly to extend the public, and perhaps to define it through quarrels. In 1752, the mathematician Koenig published a text with an emblematic title, *Appel au public*, in which he defended himself against a judgment according to which he had accused Maupertuis of plagiarism.[12]

In order for a quarrel to develop, a number of conditions regarding the participants or the circumstances must obtain. They indicate conversely that quarrels are inscribed in language

and that they rely on a number of language procedures. Further, one might suggest that quarrels follow certain rules. This consequence can be derived from Jean-Jacques Lecercle's reinterpretation of Grice's principle of cooperation in his *Philosophy of nonsense*. According to Grice, participants in a language exchange must make appropriate contributions, and if their contributions do not appear to be so, the addressee must look for an implied meaning. Such a conception presupposes that cooperation is the norm, and dissent the exception. Lecercle suggests that linguistic exchanges may on the contrary be based on the idea that each participant follows his or her own goals and interests, thus yielding a 'principle of struggle': 'Make your conversational contribution such as is required by your strategy, at the stage at which it occurs, and by the goal towards which you are moving, which is to defeat your opponent and drive him or her off the verbal battlefield.'[13] Such a principle may be deemed to regulate quarrels. Since it is the mirror image of the Gricean principle, it still presupposes a form of cooperation, one which is not aimed at symmetry but geared towards victory. It further presupposes that in linguistic exchanges quarrels might be the norm rather than the exception, making of language a place of *agon* rather than of *irene*. In such exchanges, though, the speakers still retain control over the state of affairs—as indeed seems to be the case in most quarrels, where participants implement argumentative strategies and tactics in order to win the contest. If Lecercle's conception enables a survey of quarrels and of their linguistic impact, in the essay which opens this issue he indicates that such turning around of Grice's philosophy of language is not radical enough and retains a sense of the dispute as a simple possibility in a generally irenic language environment, rather than as an agonistic principle of language. In particular, he finds that the absence of a genuine analysis of the social conditions which surround these linguistic struggles precludes the possibility of a deeper understanding of the nature of quarrels. His theory of interpellation indicates the lines along which this may develop. Such questions ultimately highlight the fact that quarrels involve a philosophy of language, and conversely that a philosophy of language might account for quarrels.

This argument brings to light a second, crucial aspect of quarrels. Is the aim of a quarrel to reach some irenic resolution and therefore to restore cooperation? Is it on the other hand to deliver resolution through victory for one of the sides? Habermas has for instance argued that the ultimate significance of quarrels lies in their resolution and in the reestablishment of a form of irenic cooperation: he defends the idea of consensus through dialogue.[14] Because participants share a number of experiences and attitudes, their background knowledge guarantees that quarrels will not disrupt and undermine the general consensus. A different

view might of course be that quarrels and dissent, far from being susceptible of solution or eradication are on the contrary constitutive of linguistic, political and social exchanges—dissent is in this analysis the precondition for exchanges to take place.[15]

The tension surrounding the place of quarrels in language may indeed be highlighted when we try to think about the way quarrels end—if ever they do. Certain quarrels terminate with the victory of one side. For instance it may be reasonably assumed that Pascal was on the right side of the argument against Father Noël, in his interpretation of Torricelli's experiments. Other quarrels seem to lead to the victory of one side over the other, such as the Romantics over the Classicists, only to resurface later in other forms. Other quarrels again appear to yield a winner, such as the Moderns over the Ancients, but later analyses by some contemporary scholars have for instance argued that the true winners were the Ancients.[16] A great number of intellectual quarrels, though, appear not to end but rather to peter out. For instance the quarrel surrounding the *Princesse de Clèves*, as analysed by Isabelle Moreau,[17] may be said to have gone through three stages. The first one focused on the Parisian *salons* where questions regarding the verisimilitude of Mme de Clèves's confession to her husband that she loved another man were strongly debated. The second one involved more widely *salons* in the provinces thanks to a survey organised by the periodical *Le Mercure galant* and fuelled by correspondences. It is only at the third stage that the consideration of the aesthetic and literary dimensions of the text took place. It may be added that the issues adumbrated by this quarrel reverberate in the contemporary period, through a critical reworking of the notion of plausibility and an insistence on its gendered dimension. The second unsuspected way in which *La Princesse de Clèves* took center stage in contemporary debates happened when (the not-yet president of France) Nicolas Sarkozy attacked the programme of a national examination for having included Mme de Lafayette's novel. This led for a few years to a marked increase in sales of the book, to public readings of the novel, as well as to various artistic projects which highlighted the political and social relevance of this 17th century text. This shows that the quarrel, or perhaps quarrels, surrounding *La Princesse de Clèves* did not imply, require or yield a resolution, but rather they disappeared and resurfaced later, in different forms. The enduring controversial value of the novel ranges from moral issues about confessions of love to the relevance of classics in 21st century France.

Specific conflicts sometimes demand immediate resolution. The practice of duels can be said to indicate the necessity to solve quarrels, and in this respect may offer the perfect model for an understanding of how to end a quarrel. Although the format may have varied from country to country and may indeed have evolved through the centuries, duels are fairly

ritualised forms of conflict that involve opponents, an argument, a judge (later replaced by witnesses), procedures (as to the place where the duel is fought, the time of day or the choice of arms), and a necessary outcome which restores honour. An interesting feature of duels is that, while they suggest a complex legal process based on honour, they were also outside the law and banned by monarchs in France as well as in England—thereby suggesting an ambivalent relationship between quarrels and the law. Duels can be seen at some level as the purest form of quarrels, because of this extreme ritualization. Like other quarrels but in a more constraining way, they require the opponents to belong to the same social class. Like other quarrels, they do not begin with a provocation, but with the 'giving of the lie' which triggers off the procedure. They further demand complete equality in the fight. The result— death, which is recorded by the witnesses—solves the conflict and restores honour. The outcome resumes the dialogue which had been interrupted by the fight, thereby suggesting a continuity and a rupture between language and duel, between dialogue and fight, between ordinary language and the ritualised language of arms.[18]

In this sense, duels display the complexities of quarrelling for they reveal a strong dissent, exacerbated in the ensuing fight, and a form of consensus as regards both procedures and the linguistic, social and perhaps political equality between participants. Duels are both the epitome of dissent in society but they signal, through their ritualised procedures, the possibility of reaching an agreement. In such instances, a procedure is therefore required to end a quarrel, and the perceived violence of the injury is paralleled by the violence of its resolution. Duels bring to the fore the underlying violence of most, if not all quarrels. They indicate, in the final analysis, the ways in which violence and language can be articulated. Steven Shapin has for instance suggested that this relationship rested

> …upon the existence of a shared understanding that certain sorts of arguments *might* end in violence; second, upon a shared understanding of what forms of discursive behavior would increase or decrease the probability of a violent termination; and last, upon the shared availability of discursive resources that would permit utterances to be skeptically regarded, to be modified, or even negated, *without the risk of violence*.[19]

Albeit they are specific and historically determined instances of a way to end a quarrel, duels suggest the possibility of the existence of a procedure to solve disagreements. This procedure lies outside language and therefore outside the quarrel itself. Further, the practice of duels in early modern societies implied the presence of (ritualised) violence as a

constitutive element of a quarrel. Such a model may not be generalised to all quarrels of course, but indicates that quarrels can end through the threat of violence—and a number of quarrels, including literary quarrels, did resort to violence. They can also end with a procedure, which is binding, and identifies a winner. Other quarrels may of course resort to other procedures, such as a tribunal or a competent authority recognised by all. But what appears in the case of duels is the clear necessity to adjudicate in order to end a quarrel. This means eventually that the end of a quarrel takes place through a legal rather than a linguistic resolution, or that the language exchange is dependent on an authority—'the question is which is to be master—that's all', in Humpty Dumpty's formulation.

3. The morphing of quarrels

At all stages in their developments quarrels interrogate linguistic communication, through the conditions for a quarrel to begin, through the expected outcome, as well as through the procedures for their resolutions. Quarrels force us to think more generally about the nature of dialogue and about our positioning, as speakers, in language. They suggest, beyond the apparent diversity of their incarnations, that certain rules must obtain in order for a quarrel to happen. My analysis has so far presupposed that it was possible to outline the conditions which enable quarrels to take place and disappear, while retaining the variety of empirical data. This analysis presupposes on the one hand that the subject of the quarrel is sufficiently focused to warrant a resolution and that quarrels are relatively circumscribed in time.

Quarrels reveal shifting grounds in knowledge, in society or again in literature. One of the reasons why the Rushdie affair took off in such a way in India, in England and perhaps elsewhere, is that it resonated with the marginalised status of a number of Muslim communities who found in Rushdie's book a convenient means of addressing this inferior status. The debate was not about what the novel said or did not say, but about the grievances that it helped articulate. When Jeremy Collier argued against the morality of the stage at the end of the 17th century, he was reflecting on the nature of the theatre in a way which echoed similar arguments elsewhere in Europe, but he was also fighting a political battle, one which was linked to his status as a non-juror. The quarrel about the theatre was not only concerned with the morality of the genre, but with wider issues concerned with religious conflicts as much as with religious doctrine. While the argument of the Battle of the Books was apparently about authorship and philology in a changing age, some critics have argued that Sir William Temple's attacks on Richard Bentley were irrelevant to an understanding of the

age, while other critics suggest that the fight of the ancients with the moderns was about no less than survival of the culture of the age.[20] Such disagreements indicate that the nature and true aims of a quarrel are sometimes difficult to ascertain, sometimes difficult to interpret. In some cases, it is unclear whether the primary aim of a quarrel is not to gain publicity. Molière's *Critique de l'école des femmes* can be seen as part of a publicity stunt, one which of course was innovative in its form and content and sparked numerous imitations, but which also helped Molière draw attention to his own productions. Far from being an unwelcome effect of his initial play the quarrel was on the contrary part of his conception of comedy.

This indicates more specifically that quarrels are often about something other than what they appear to be. This does not mean that quarrels are (always) pretexts but rather that the true aims of a quarrel may be buried deep in the culture of the time rather than be obvious for all to see. The intention to quarrel may in this sense vary from its true import. This is why context is all-important to an understanding of quarrels. This is also why quarrels tend to connect with other quarrels. For instance, the *querelle d'Alceste* took place in France in the second half of the seventeenth century and pitted against each other defenders of Lully—such as Perrault—and opponents such as La Fontaine or Boileau. But the attacks, defences and modes of debating indicate that this was perhaps also a dress rehearsal for the battle between Ancients and Moderns which was about to take place. In the same way the quarrel over the genre of the novel, which saw fierce debates between Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin and Boileau in France, connected with the *querelle* and with oppositions between Moderns such as Desmarets and Ancients such as Boileau. More generally, some quarrels tend to circulate, to find a new life in other forms, to re-emerge in different contexts and to bring to light other, similar quarrels. While the Rushdie affair was the most publicized controversy regarding free speech in fictional contexts, very similar debates raged around Naguib Mahfuz's *Children of Gabalawy* (1959), Martin Scorcese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) or around Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja* (1993). In this sense, the Rushdie affair brought into perspective similar controversies and connected them in new ways.

This suggests in turn that quarrels travel and that their circulation connects local and global concerns. This was apparent in the arguments opposing Ancients and Moderns, where the same vocabulary could be used to serve different purposes in France, in England, or in Germany at different times.[21] Although quite different in tone and purpose the controversy surrounding *The Satanic Verses* opposed tenants of different conceptions of free speech within the United Kingdom for instance, while in other parts of the world it was not concerned with issues of literary language but with political and strategic interests—its uses

and goals outweighed the novel itself. This does not only mean that quarrels travel but that they are subject to frequent and sometimes ongoing reinterpretations in local contexts and may thus lose their original significance—or 'intention'. Beyond an apparent unity of controversy, beyond the use of similar vocabulary, it might even be argued that these reinterpretations amount to different quarrels, which are articulated in different contexts.

One of the difficulties which a theory of quarrels seems to face lies in the inability fully to describe how quarrels end. The example of duels is significant in terms of the violence it presupposes and the abrupt interruption of dialogue it enacts, but for historical as well as for intellectual reasons it cannot serve as a model. Although they are circumscribed in both time and place, suggesting a local rather than a global mode of interaction, quarrels often die out, as if the protagonists had lost interest or as if they had become irrelevant, given such elements of context as the advancing state of knowledge, the evolution of social practice, the developments in literary language, the legitimacy of scientific conceptions.

But beyond the strategic and tactical dimensions of quarrels, beyond the inscription in language of the quarrels and of their protagonists, one of the charateristics of quarrels lies in their ability to connect with other quarrels and to be reinvented in other forms. This may ultimately be the reason why quarrels are so hard to define and categorize—they are dynamic modes of interaction which resist classification. A number of quarrels resurface with surprising effects: *La Princesse de Clèves* can still energize debates in the early 21st century; the definitions of modernity are still being debated in sociology and anthropology;[22] Molière's *Tartuffe* still provokes contested interpretations.[23] This in turn explains the complexity of categorizing and of settling quarrels—rather than being the characteristic of certain (meta-)quarrels, such as the Ancients and Moderns or the quarrel about women (the 'woman question'), we may view the possibility for a quarrel to resurface in another form, in another time or place, as fundamental to their definitions—debates and polemics can always be re-opened or reactivated. The movement and the dynamic of quarrels, the possibility that they will return in different forms or contexts, is perhaps their defining feature, one that precludes modelisation.

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[1] 'jamais la querelle littéraire ne fut débattue plus vivement ! Les représentations étaient de vraies batailles rangées' (*Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans* (Paris: Hetzel, 1859), 129)
[2] See Nicolas Offenstadt and Stéphane Van Damme, *Affaires, scandales et grandes causes: de Socrate à Pinochet* (Paris: Stock, 2007).

[3] My translation of the names of the characters. Antoine Furetière, *Nouvelle allégorique ou Histoire des derniers troubles survenus au Royaume d' Eloquence* (Paris, De Luyne, 1658) ; see http://base-agon.paris-sorbonne.fr/querelles/querelle-de-la-nouvelle-allegorique, consulted 25 April 2016, 11am.

[4] See Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), 51 : 'Physical combat, of a more or less ritualized kind, was a part of masculine culture at every social level.'

[5] See Marcelo Dascal and Cristina Marras, 'The *Republique des Lettres*: A Republic of Quarrels?' http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/philos/dascal/papers/republic1.html, consulted 25 April 2016, 11am.

[6] See Marcelo Dascal, 'Controverses et Polémiques' in *La Science classique*, edited by Michel Blay and Robert Halleux (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 29. Dascal argues that polemics constitue the context which enables an understanding of the theories involved and that polemics connect theories with the social and intellectual context of the times.

[7] See for instance, about the querelle du Cid, the variety of pamphlets published against and in defence of Corneille, at http://base-agon.paris-sorbonne.fr/querelles/querelle-du-cid, consulted 15 April 2016, 2pm.

[8] See for example the rather explicit title of Henri Meschonnic's essay on translations of Paul Celan into French: 'On appelle cela traduire Celan', *Cahiers du chemin*, 14 (1972), 115-49.

[9] The title of his piece ascribed to Salman Rushdie an intention to create trouble: 'You did this with satanic forethought, Mr. Rushdie', *The Times of India*, 13 October 1988.

[10] See Jeanne Favret-Saada, 'Rushdie et compagnie: préalables à une anthropologie du blasphème', *Ethnologie française*, 22: 3 (1992), 251-60.

[11] *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. The Art of Controversies*, Edited by Marcelo Dascal, with Quintin Racionero and Adelino Cardoso (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 58.

[12] http://base-agon.paris-sorbonne.fr/querelles/querelle-de-voltaire-versus-maupertuis, consulted 25 April 2016, 11am.

[13] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Philosophy of Nonsense. The Intuitions of Victorian Nonsense* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 79.

[14] See for instance Jurgen Habermas, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen and Jerry A. Stark (Cambridge: Polity, 1988). See the essay by Anne Tomiche in this issue, on the quarrel between Habermas and Lyotard.

[15] See the essay by Anne-Lise Rey in this issue.

[16] See for instance Marc Fumaroli, 'Les abeilles et les araignées', in *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, edited by Anne-Marie Lecoq (Paris: Gallimard, 2001); and Larry Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[17] http://base-agon.paris-sorbonne.fr/querelles/querelle-de-la-princesse-de-cleves consulted 21 April 2016, 4pm.

[18] See François Billacois, *Le Duel dans la société française des XVIe- XVIIe siècles: essai de psychosociologie historique* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1986), 343.

[19] Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 113.

[20] See for instance Kristine Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); and Howard D. Weinbrot, '''He will kill me over and over again'': intellectual contexts of the Battle of the books', in *Reading Swift: papers from the fourth Münster symposium on Jonathan Swift*, edited by H. J. Real and H. Stöver-Leidig (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2003), 225-48.

[21] See *Ancients and Moderns in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Paddy Bullard and Alexis Tadié (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 'Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment', 2016).

[22] See Bruno Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes* (Paris: La Découverte, 1993) and *Enquête sur les modes d'existence. Une anthropologie des Modernes* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012).

[23] See Marine Roussillon, '*Tartuffe* entre interdiction et création' in *Querelles et Création en Europe à l'époque moderne*, edited by Jeanne-Marie Hostiou and Alexis Tadié, (Paris: Classiques Garnier, forthcoming).