Shakespeare, Language, and Change
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ABSTRACTS

Hannah Crawforth

Historicizing Language in *Two Noble Kinsmen*

This paper will address Shakespeare's response to ongoing contemporary debates surrounding the history of the English language. I will situate his work within the context of the increased interest in the origins of English words that came about as a result of debates about the status of the vernacular, attempts to taxonomically account for the etymology of native words, early dictionaries, and the polemically-motivated efforts to study Anglo-Saxon instigated by Archbishop Matthew Parker in the mid-sixteenth-century. My focus will be primarily upon *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare's most self-consciously Chaucerian of plays. Critical discourse surrounding the play's diction has tended to take the form of computational or other stylometric analysis with a view to the authorship question; little attention has been paid to the linguistic relationship between this drama and Shakespeare's sources. Taking my lead from Robert Turner's suggestion that it was Speght's 1602 edition of Chaucer's *Workes* that underpins Shakespeare and Fletcher's play, I will explore the relationship between the language of *Two Noble Kinsmen* and the glossaries that were appended to Speght's Chaucer, in order to gain insight into Shakespeare's sense of the historicity of his own language. Where did Shakespeare think his words came from? How did this understanding of past usage and etymological origins of language impact upon his writing? What are the political and poetic consequences of using language in a self-consciously historicized way? These are some of the questions I will consider.

Jennifer Forsyth

"He Did Provoke Me With Language": Shakespeare's Language, Textual Studies, and Digital Editions

The history of employing language studies in the service of authorship attribution, including, at the more recent end, Jonathan Hope's *The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays*: *A Socio-Linguistic Study* and MacDonald P. Jackson's *Defining Shakespeare: Pericles as Test Case*, amply demonstrates a complementary intersection of interests. This extended body of the work is of great utility to editors of Shakespeare plays whose authorship has been debated; editors of such plays generally address the evidence cited in these studies in forewords or appendices. However, this information rarely escapes its quarantining even as far as the footnotes, the most visible part of the textual apparatus. While attribution represents only one application of language studies, it may signal a broader trend towards decreasing comments on Shakespeare's language. For instance, even while introductions have been ballooning in size, some scholarly editions no longer dedicate a segment of the introduction to style.

I would argue that because a mere handful of English Shakespeare editions combine to reach the majority of Shakespeare readers, the material which modern editions elect to include or omit—and where and how they choose to present it—has the power to affect the interests and skills of current and future generations of scholars and readers. As more publishers are investing in digital editions, though, our tools for making more and different kinds of information readily accessible are increasing. As a result, I wish to examine the most recent significant editions of the *Henry 6*

plays and *Cymbeline* and bring them into dialogue with new directions in digital editions to suggest some possible ways of productively integrating the two.

Jonathan Hope

'Some whynes lyke a Pig': Early Modern comment on 'outlandishe Englishe'

What did Shakespeare and his contemporaries make of linguistic variation (and change) in English? This is hardly a new question, but it is, I think, one that requires more work - particularly in terms of rereading the 'standard' texts that get quoted in relation to the topic (Puttenham, Gil, Wilson et al.). It is very tempting to read much of what they say in terms of later prescriptivism: apparent condemnation of variation and change, and calls for a 'common' standard which we equate easily with Standard written English. But this is to ignore the historical difference of the Early Modern context: a still largely oral society, without comprehensive vernacular dictionaries, where linguistic judgments are informed by the (again oral) rhetorical tradition, which prized effective, stylish writing ('bene') over correctness ('recte').

I will consider several commentators on language to ask what it is they are really commenting about - especially Thomas Wilson, George Puttenham, and Edmund Coote. I will argue that their approach to variation is rather more sophisticated and subtle than that of later prescriptivists. I also suggest that there is virtually no contemporary evidence for the stigmatisiation of regional or class-based phonetic features: the phonetic features of speech people noticed were those controlled by the learned, rhetorical field of 'pronuntiatio' (conscious performance/delivery).

Campbell Lathey

Nashe's 1589 *Hamlet* Q1

Preliminary. The Shakespeare Enterprise was announced by Robert Greene in his *Groats-worth of Wit* (1592).Its three principal writers were Thomas Nashe, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare. They were sponsored by Lady Mary Sidney. Nashe and Shakespeare assisted Lady Mary in her task of preparing her brother's story, *Arcadia*, for publication in 1590, four years after his death. Shakespeare wrote the *New Arcadia* in 1589. Its manuscript, *Cm*, has the date '1584', which I take to be a mistake for '1589'. In his letter of 1586 Fulke Greville says he held the only copy of *Arcadia* fit to publish. Clearly, the *New Arcadia* was written after 1586. The schematic style of the *New Arcadia* (see McCanles' extraordinary analysis) is closely akin to the style, for example, of *All's Well that Ends Well* (1606). So if one likes the style of the *New Arcadia* one will thoroughly enjoy and appreciate *All's Well*. But to improve the argument for this premise, it should be shown that Nashe was involved with the *Old Arcadia* after the first dull pages.
Hamlet Q1. The earliest play of the Shakespeare Enterprise is likely *Hamlet* Q1, written, I would say, about 1589 by Thomas Nashe. This play is an outcast from the Canon, and vilified on flimsy grounds a "Bad Quarto." This misconceived theory of Pollard and Greg has held sway for 100 years, and has effectively blocked progress in Shakespeare analytic bibliography. Jenkins (Arden, 1982) disparages *Hamlet* Q1 in several arguments, which are simple-minded and easy to refute. An effort is worthwhile to see if ideas in the writings of Nashe (especially in *Pierce Penilesse*, 1592) are closely paralleled in this play.
Reference. Michael McCanles,*The Text of Sidney's Arcadian World,* Durham: Duke UP,

1989.

Lynne Magnusson

'History, Language, and Change: The Example of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*'

There is no better place to look for a characterization of the lived experience of the English tongue on native soil in Shakespeare's time than to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This paper argues that at the heart of Shakespeare's only 'English' comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, are some of the most salient conditions of the evolving English tongue. In the play's portrayal of the community in terms of linguistic heterogeneity or a collision of micro-languages, the comedy foregrounds the huge amount of variation that was encompassed within the emerging common ground of 'the King's English'. At the same time, it dramatizes a kind of consciousness or semi-consciousness about change in the language. In particular, it takes as its subject the very situation that has so often been advanced as a principal condition of possibility both for the flourishing of English Renaissance literature and for Shakespeare's art – that is, the huge influx of new words into the language as the use of English spread to encompass more fields of experience. More new words were introduced into the English language during the Renaissance, from about 1500 to 1660, than in any other period of its history. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* quite explicitly explores how the variously positioned English speakers and users in the play respond to linguistic flux, to this remarkable pace of change. Complicated and often hilarious interactions are continually being triggered as one character's coinages, novel or unfamiliar words, and creative, fuzzy, mistaken, or unexpected uses of existing words prompt the disoriented reaction of another character, followed usually by some effort at coordination, and the realignment of a communication that has been going off-track. The paper explores the changing language in relation to community from a variety of perspectives, emphasizing the collective rhetorical agency of the townspeople in sustaining civility or toleration, the role of linguistic change in shaping social relations and subjectivities, and the role of speakers from every social level (including oral subjects in an emerging print culture) in contributing to linguistic change and innovation.

Simon Palfrey

Shakespeare's Monads

I want to explore the idea that Shakespearean form is alive with (almost) infinite monads, capable of being found anywhere in the fabric. By monads I am adapting Leibniz's theory of appetitive individual souls or consciousnesses. I begin with the simple question whether the scene does have a dominant monad, in the sense of an intelligent conatus, a drive toward something good. Or is there rather a world of creatures – of living things and animals, entelechies and souls – in the smallest part of matter? I want to think of each 'bit' as something compelled, urgent, irresistible, demanding existence, with a mind of its own: really, truly, a mind of its own. There are dominant and subordinate monads, corresponding to simultaneously present modes or shapes of language, often inside or around each other. The monads attach to bodies, or bodies 'hold' them, but the monad is not 'the body'. Leibniz's constructions can encourage us to think in less singularly anthropomorphic terms, and to think more immanently about the presence of soul or mind – not as diffused or saturating everything, but discontinuously coming-to-be, and never reducible to a corporeal body, even though it will be connected to or discoverable in one. The same claim can be urged, and question asked, of any word, clause, cue-space, soliloquy, acted gesture etc – is

this not the substantial thing? But does this mean that Shakespearean 'substance' is, necessarily, found in 'accidental' details? In which case the monadic playtext bears a quite novel relation to reality, very different from more conventional 16/17C models of the universe. My aim is to use this to approach the question of drama's possible worlds (again partly in the Leibnizian sense of perfection). But of course Shakespeare's monads are in crucial ways different from Leibniz's - they are not always windowless, for a start, and they cherish or produce affects - so do we need to think about intra- and inter-monadic forms, and thus a very different theatrical 'physics', and very different human possibilities, from anything envisaged by Leibniz.

Mireille Ravassat

The oxymoric turn in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*

This paper aims at showing that, in the Sonnets, wherein Shakespeare makes a lavish use of both antithesis and paradox, oxymoron, although far less obtrusive, is at once the touchstone of some of the poet-speaker's fundamental concerns and the hallmark of a renewed approach to an almost extinct literary genre. Far from the rhetorical excesses and showy combinations of opposites of the Petrarchan tradition and away from a Sidney's openly metastylistic self-distanciation with the figure, Shakespeare most skillfully exploits language change and variation within his own corpus, thereby 'dressing old words new' (Sonnet 76) while simultaneously asserting, very much in an antiphrastic way, his impossibility to coin new *formulae* and *exempla*.

In a contextualised perspective, the point is further to demonstrate that in the Sonnets, which are at the intersection of the baroque vein of ontological vacillation and of a modernised vision of cleft selfhood, oxymoron violates its ethos of reconciliation in favour of unresolved division. I therefore argue that Shakespeare engages with the evolving linguistic terrain of early modern English through the very figure of 'cross-coupling' making it, by means of a striking form of metaphoric miscegenation, to spawn 'compounds strange' (76.4) as well as incongruous, at times subversive, lexical and semantic renewed alliances.

Conflation and conflagration of opposites in Shakespeare's Sonnets thereby highlight the consequences of unprecedented changes in Shakespeare's stylistic climate under the sign of the early modern arguing in *utramque partem*, but at the same time heralding our own *Weltanschauung*.

Maura Michelle Tarnoff

So full of shapes is fancy: Exploring Shakespeare through American Sign Language

This paper will consider approaches to teaching Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* using ASL translation and performance art. ASL translation highlights the oppressive limits of phonocentric approaches to understanding the "music" of Shakespeare's language. Just as the opening lines of *Twelfth Night* point to the complex ways that sensory experience is processed across multiple registers, the ASL Shakespeare Project's translation of the play into American Sign Language invites us to encounter the rhythms of poetry visually, as a form of kinetic art. Signed performances of Shakespeare's plays also call attention to the visual properties of language, properties that were fundamental to language as Shakespeare's audience understood and experienced it. Like the early modern rebus (where words are symbolized through pictures), ASL foregrounds the iconicity as well as the spatial dimensions of language. Moreover, by focusing

attention on the body and its discursive possibilities, these performances force us to think about how bodies (including those of "silent" characters) invest space and produce meaning.

Andrea Trocha-Van Nort

1599-1600: The Language of Fortune and Virtue from *Julius Caesar* to *Hamlet*

This paper will explore the shift in the semantic underpinnings of the notions of fortune and virtue in two of Shakespeare's revenge plays written in 1599-1600. Whereas the classical subject matter of the earlier play seemingly would lend itself more readily to rich references to this Latin theme which guided Latin historicists for the entirety of the period, it is in *Hamlet* that the topic is more carefully integrated into plot and character development. In both cases, however, fortune and virtue compose the standard by which we judge the tragic heroes of both plays; what lies beneath the surface of the language, nonetheless, suggests a difference from an ontological perspective.

Emma Annette Wilson

'Books in the running brooks' (*As You Like It*): The role played by early modern logic in Shakespeare's forest of Arden

I propose to discuss the ways in which Shakespeare uses early modern logic to instigate dramatic action within his comedies, specifically focusing on Duke Senior's speech structures in *As You Like It*. Logic formed the core of the discursive arts in the early modern intellectual culture, furnishing the subject matter and structure for all written expression, including the dramatic, and in this paper I will use precepts from sixteenth-century logic textbooks to explore how these worked to initiate and drive action on Shakespeare's comedic stage. Logic is seldom alluded to in critical discussions of early modern drama: in part this lies to a dichotomy between modern and early modern understandings of the functions of logic as a discipline, as its discursive remit is at least overtly more closely akin to what we understand as rhetoric. In fact, early modern logic operated at its most basic level in a binary way, first drawing on a process of *inventio* or the "finding" or "discovering" of arguments or subject matter, and secondly *dispositio* or "disposition", whereby that subject matter could be constructed into verbal discourse. Wolfgang Müller's article on syllogism and enthymeme in Shakespeare is important in opening up this discussion, and this paper builds on his work by adopting a Geertzian approach to early modern logic, exploring texts such as the *Dialectica* of John Seton and the vernacular manuals of Dudley Fenner and Abraham Fraunce, together with manuscript evidence from early readers, to establish a *verstehen* understanding of how this discipline was conceived of and used in this period. The paper culminates in a Bourdieu-esque pragmatic application of the principles of early modern logic, using these as a means of reading the dramatic structures and styles at work in *As You Like It* in the context of the intellectual discursive culture that in which they originated, to investigate how Shakespeare made use of an overtly abstract art to motivate action and create performative spectacle on stage.

Sylvia Adamson

Questions of Identity in Renaissance Drama: New Historicism meets Old Philology