

# SHAKESPEARE SURVEY

AN ANNUAL SURVEY OF  
SHAKESPEARIAN STUDY AND PRODUCTION

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23

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# SHAKESPEARE AND THE TUNE OF THE TIME

BRIDGET CUSACK

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Linguistic changes do not occur overnight. At any point along the development of English, old and new usages coexist, sometimes as sheer alternatives, sometimes with overtones on the one side or on the other of obsolescence, up-to-dateness, formality or colloquialism fitting them to one register or variety of English rather than to another. Exploitation of the possibilities created by this situation in its late sixteenth and early seventeenth century form is an essential part of Shakespeare's dramatic and poetic technique, and to recognize that in a particular scene, speech or line, or in one character, he is making use of the shifting linguistic conditions of his time is to see more of his skill as a manipulator of language, as well as to understand better the particular incident involved.

In *Romeo and Juliet* for example, just before the Balcony scene, Mercutio has a longish speech in which he mocks Romeo's infatuation with Rosaline by calling after him:

*Romeo*, Humours, Madman, Passion, Louer,  
Appeare thou in the likenesse of a sigh,  
Speake but one rime, and I am satisfied:  
Cry me but ay me, Pro[nounce] but Loue and d[oue],  
Speake to my goship *Venus* one faire word,  
One Nickname for her purblind Sonne and her,  
Young *Abraham Cupid* he that shot so true,  
When King *Cophetua* lou'd the begger Maid,  
He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moueth not,  
The Ape is dead, I must coniure him,  
I coniure thee by *Rosalines* bright eyes,  
By her High forehead, and her Scarlet lip,  
By her Fine foote, Straight leg, and Quiuering thigh,

And the Demeanes, that there Adiacent lie,  
That in thy likenesse thou appeare to vs.

(657a, 1-15; 11, i, 7-21)<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that there are two parts to this pseudo-conjuration, the first extending as far as 'the begger Maid', and the second beginning at 'I coniure thee', and in presentation the actor would no doubt assume a special delivery to suit the nature of the burlesque in each part. The problem is, however, the two intervening lines:

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moueth not,  
The Ape is dead, I must coniure him.

Are these also part of the mock-ritual summons?  
Or are they spoken by Mercutio as an interjected comment in his own normal voice and tone? Are both lines even alike in this?

There is a possible clue for the second line in the use of 'Ape'. As a kind of affectionate-abuse term it is properly suited to Mercutio's normal style. Comparison with other Shakespearian instances confirms that it has no special ranting status. Lady Hotspur, for instance, uses it to her husband:

Out you mad-headed Ape,  
(357b, 11; 2 *Hen. IV*, 11, iii, 80)

<sup>1</sup> In the line-references (except for the poems and *Pericles*) the first entry in each case gives the 1623 Folio reference, with page-numbering as in the 1955 Yale/Oxford and the 1864 Lionel Booth facsimiles, followed by the column and line-number, and the second entry is by act, scene, and line as in the Globe edition of Shakespeare's *Works*.

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and Doll Tearsheet addresses Falstaff by it:

Ah, you sweet little Rogue, you: alas, poore Ape,  
how thou sweat'st?

(385 b, 64-5; 2 *Hen. IV*, II, iv, 233-4)

But the evidence on this line can only be rated as non-committal, although it seems likely that it is introductory comment to the section in high-style, rather than part of it.

In the line that precedes it, on the other hand, the grammar is the key; that is, that all three verbs are given an *-eth* inflexion, and that the three negatives follow the pattern verb+*not*. Both syntax and morphology here are according to perfectly acceptable Elizabethan usage, but in each case Shakespeare is employing one of two alternative modes of expression.

The *-eth* inflection for 3rd singular present indicative exists in Shakespeare's time alongside the *-s* inflection we now use. Historically, it is the obsolescent form, the ending prevalent in earlier Southern English, but being replaced by the originally Northern *-s*. That this take-over is only partially complete is indicated by the two verbs *do* and *haue* retaining *doth* and *hath* almost exclusively; the use of the form *has*, in fact, is one of the comic characteristics of the Welshman, Fluellen, in *Henry V*.

In other verbs the old and new inflexions appear together in parallel constructions, and even in the same line, where the alternatives can be of use for purposes of metre, emphasis or mere variety, as in:

With her, that hateth thee and hates vs all,  
(465 b, 52; 2 *Hen. VI*, II, iv, 52)

and:

He rowseth vp himselfe, and makes a pause.  
(1594 ed. E2<sup>r</sup>, 2; *Lucrece*, 541)

And yet this apparent interchangeability in usage is confined to verse, and not carried through into Shakespeare's prose, where *-s* is almost invariably used. So that the two inflexions are not equal options, but there is a

quality of ordinariness and colloquialism in *-s* which *-eth* does not share, and, conversely, to use *-eth*, as Mercutio does here, is to select the form marked for formality.

The evidence is even clearer in the syntactic characteristics of Mercutio's line, for in writing

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moueth not,

Shakespeare is using one of two possible negative constructions, the alternative being the *do+not+verb* constructions we use today, and which Shakespeare has in lines such as:

To her, that is not heere, nor doth not heare.

(205 a, 41; *A.Y.L.I.*, v, ii, 117)

The verb+*not* method is the older way of expressing negation; the construction with *do* is the newcomer in the process of ousting its predecessor. The stage which this had reached at this period is apparent from a comparison of various Shakespearian instances of the two structures. There are complexities of motivation: selection of verb, for example, can influence the choice of construction, for certain verbs, such as *care*, *doubt* and *fear* appear in the negative without *do* far more often than with it. The selection of accompanying grammatical features can also determine this one, as when *know* used intransitively gives *I know not*, but, with an object:

I doe not know the French for fer, and ferret, and firke.  
(423 b, 52-3; *Hen. V*, IV, iv, 32-3)

However, where co-textual considerations such as these do not apply, the relationship between the two negative constructions seems to be the one which subsequent development confirms—that the use of *do* characterizes colloquialism and informality, whereas verb+*not* is a feature of more conservative and formal English. The same can be seen in regard to negative commands, and questions both negative and positive. At the same time, the converse applies to non-negative statements, for there the use of *do* marks formality, except in certain circum-

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stances, such as the very few instances where it is the emphatic *do* of present-day English:

It is no matter, if I do halt, I haue the warres for my colour, and my Pension shall seeme the more reasonable

(380a, 15-16; 2 *Hen. IV*, I, ii, 274-6)

or where it is associated, perhaps for emphasis, with verbs such as *confess*, *think* or *believe*:

I doe beleeeue the swearer.

(45 b, 16; *Merry Wives*, II, ii, 40)

Moreover, there is a close enough association of formality and verse, for verse, if we examine pieces of Shakespearian prose and verse of equal length, almost always to yield higher proportions of those structures which in prose are associated only with special non-colloquial speeches. Thus a very few lines of verse, taken, admittedly, from a royal speech, can provide four examples of the verb + *not* negative, to a single *do not* structure:

I doubt not that, since we are well perswaded  
We carry not a heart with vs from hence,  
That growes not in a faire consent with ours:  
Nor leaue not one behinde, that doth not wish  
Successe and Conquest to attend on vs.

(410a, 39-43; *Hen. V*, II, ii, 20-4)

Nevertheless, the difference between the constructions, like the morphological alternatives *-eth* and *-s* is so poised that neither structure is out of place in verse of any type. Thus the lines above include the one *doth not wish*, and in *Romeo and Juliet* Juliet can within a few lines say both:

O sweare not by the Moone,  
(658a, 19; *Rom. & Jul.*, II, ii, 109)

and:

Do not sweare at all.  
(658a, 23; *Rom. & Jul.*, II, ii, 112)

But again the situation in Shakespearian prose reveals the difference in usage, for outside verse, negatives and questions without *do* are very rare, and non-emphatic statements with *do* are virtually absent.

The way in which this operates can be seen most strikingly where the formal syntactic options rare in prose are used at those points where the situation demands a deliberately assumed mock-heroic style. Thus in 1 *Henry IV* the normal question form in prose is exemplified by:

Doest thou heare me, *Hal*?  
(359a, 59; II, iv, 233)

But in Falstaff and Hal's play-acting rehearsal of the royal interview, where the medium is still prose, this gives place to the type:

Swearest thou, vngracious Boy?  
(361 a, 33; II, iv, 490)

Similarly, colloquial negative imperatives in the same play are of the form:

Doe not thou when thou art a King, hang a Theefe.  
(351 b, 20-1; I, ii, 69-70)

But in Falstaff's burlesque 'King Cambysse's vaine':

Weepe not, sweet Queene, for trickling teares are vaine.  
(360b, 44-5; II, iv, 431)

Returning to Mercutio's line, we thus have two definite clues, even disregarding the rhetorical triple repetition of pattern, and both morphology and syntax stamp

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moueth not  
as part of Mercutio's mock-formal, mock-conjuration style.

Shakespearian examples of these same features exploited to similar ends are numerous. There are characters whose speech constantly operates in direct contrast to surrounding colloquialism, particularly Pistol, introduced in *Henry V* by the entrance line:

Base Tyke, cal'st thou mee Hoste?  
(409 a, 55; II, i, 31)

and assigned this kind of distinctive language throughout, as in:

the Duke of Exeter doth loue thee well  
(416b, 15-16; III, vi, 23)

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and:

Trayl'st thou the puissant Pyke?  
(419b, 48; IV, i, 40)

Several of the linguistic features characterizing Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost* are of similar kind.

Shakespeare also uses the non-colloquial flavour of certain structures in writing plays-within-plays such as *Pyramus and Thisbe* and *The Murder of Gonzago*, where he achieves much of his effect by putting increased emphasis on those features in the language associated with verse, creating a sort of hyper-poetry as a result:

This man, with Lanthorne, dog, and bush of thorne,  
Presenteth moone-shine. For if you will know,  
By moone-shine did these Louers thinke no scorne  
To meet at *Ninus* toombe, there, there to wooe:  
This grizy beast (which Lyon hight by name)  
The trusty *Thisby*, comming first by night,  
Did scarre away, or rather did affright:  
And as she fled, her mantle she did fall;  
Which Lyon vile with bloody mouth did staine.  
(160a, 61-b, 5; *M.N.D.*, v, i, 136-44)

The resources of Early Modern English grammar are not the only linguistic opportunity exploited here. Just as Shakespeare was able to catch English morphology and syntax as they changed, so too the changing vocabulary of English at this period provided him with equally fruitful material.

Vocabulary alters in various ways: words drop out of use, new words are introduced, certain terms become fashionable 'in' words, and shifts of meaning take place. As with grammatical changes, old and new possibilities often exist side by side, but are rarely completely interchangeable.

Where a word goes out of use, for instance, it does so by a process of gradual withdrawal from up-to-date usage, from colloquial varieties, and from spoken English. It goes through the stages of old-fashioned—archaic—understood but not used—obsolete—incomprehen-

sible. Similarly a new word will at first be used in certain registers only, such as up-to-date slang or some technical variety of English, before it is completely assimilated. Thus very many words as part of their total 'meaning' will have a particular status, which will type the user. Often there will be a number of different ways of saying the same thing, all with different overtones of this sort.

Thus, when a Shakespearian character needs to say '(be) called', this can be expressed in terms we still use:

Know sir, that I am cal'd *Hortensio*,  
(222b, 19; *T. Shrew*, IV, ii, 21)  
a daughter, cal'd *Katerina*,  
(215a, 26-7; *T. Shrew*, II, i, 42-3)  
my name is *Broome*.  
(46a, 62; *Merry Wives*, II, ii, 167)

And there is also the expression, less current nowadays:

a Seruant nam'd *Lucilius*.  
(677a, 47; *Timon*, I, i, 111)

These formulae are apparently interchangeable in Early Modern English.

In addition a more complex form was available:

My name is call'd *Vincenio*,  
(226a, 51; *T. Shrew*, IV, v, 55)  
Is not your name sir call'd *Antipholus*?  
(99a, 6; *Com. Errors*, v, i, 286)

Although at first sight this seems a further mere alternative, its occurrence is comparatively rare, and the characters who use it are usually old men: the two instances quoted above are spoken by Lucentio's father in *The Taming of the Shrew*, who is

a man old, wrinkled, faded, withered,  
(226a, 39; IV, v, 43)

and whose venerability is his essential characteristic when at Petruchio's instigation Katherine greets him as a 'faire louely Maide', and by the old father of the two Antipholus



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twins in *The Comedy of Errors*. So when in *Henry V* Pistol announces himself by saying

My name is *Pistol* call'd  
(420a, 5; IV, i, 62)

he is using the phraseology of a generation back, and his linguistic alienation from other characters is brought about by the selection of the vocabulary as well as the inversion in the syntax.

A different sort of lexical point arises with further possibilities for '(be) called', in that Shakespeare can in addition employ two terms with yet a more extreme departure from the norm. First, there is the word *hight*. It became outmoded in the standard language in the late medieval period, but was still sufficiently understood, as part of people's passive vocabulary, for Shakespeare to use it. But where he does, it is specifically *because* it is archaic. Thus in *Pericles* the medieval poet, Gower, is given a pseudo 'olde' English in his capacity as Chorus, saying

this Maid  
Hight *Philoten*.  
(1609 ed., FI', 13-14; IV, Prol. 17-18)

The Mechanicals' play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is, in the lines already quoted above, marked by the same item as linguistically outmoded and rustic:

This grizy beast (which Lyon hight by name).

The second archaic term which the Early Modern English linguistic situation provided Shakespeare with is the verb *clepe*. That this was not so very old-fashioned is apparent from its straightforward use by both Hamlet and Macbeth, but other instances in the plays show that it did carry overtones of a quaint out-of-dateness. In *Love's Labour's Lost* it is put into the mouth of Holofernes, the schoolmaster, as he inveighs against modern advanced pronunciation:

he clepeth a Calf, Caufe: halfe, haufe  
(136a, 8-9; v, i, 24-5)

And in past-participle form, prefixed by an archaic *y-* prefix, it serves a double purpose in *The Pageant of the Nine Worthies* in *Love's Labour's Lost*: it not only types the language, but also acts as starting point for a series of puns from the more sophisticated spectators:

*Pedant*. *Iudas I am, ycliped Machabeus*.  
*Dumaine*. *Iudas Machabeus* clipt, is plaine *Iudas*.  
*Berowne*. A kissing traitor. (142a, 22-4; v, ii, 602-4)

Moreover, just as some words can be said to have as part of their meaning the fact that they have the implication [+archaic], others are of note because they are marked as [+new]. Sir Nathaniel, the word-hunting curate in *Love's Labour's Lost*, is not content with *called*, but extends it:

I did conuerse this *quondam* day with a companion of the Kings, who is intituled, nominated, or called, *Don Adriano de Armatho*. (135b, 52-4; v, i, 6-9)

His additional synonyms are recorded in other mid- and late-sixteenth-century works, but they are still new enough and polysyllabic enough to stand out as neologisms.

Further frequent similar instances of Shakespeare using [+archaic] or [+new] words in his plays can often fail to strike us now. Words distinctly novel then may now be commonplace, and terms already obsolescent in Early Modern English are all too easily classed with words which are obsolete now, but perfectly normal then. Items obsolescent in Shakespeare's time include *eke* 'also', *targe*, *gore*, *dole* 'sorrow', *perdy* and *wight*, whose occurrence chiefly in plays-within-plays and in the speech of characters such as Pistol is noteworthy. New vocabulary is also associated most closely with particular characters, such as Armado,

A man of fire, new words, fashions owne Knight  
(123b, 24; *L. L. Lost*, 1, i, 179)

and the various characters who in attempting scholarship achieve only malapropism.

Certain other items of Early Modern English vocabulary may be described as [+fashionable];

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*humour* is one such, used by Nym in practically every speech he utters in *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and making Page comment:

The humour of it (quoth'a?) heere's a fellow frights English out of his wits . . . I neuer heard such a drawling-affecting rogue.

(44b, 9-12; *Merry Wives*, II, i, 142-6)

It is the over-working of the term which arouses adverse comment, and this applies even more to fashionable adjectives, where items freely used elsewhere are ridiculed when employed indiscriminately and too often. Over-worked *sweet* is of this type, mocked by other characters when used by the romantic lover or the courtier, especially where associated with an inanimate noun, or in reference to a person, but without the underlying close relationship which normal speakers use it to indicate:

*Berowne*. White handed Mistris, one sweet word with thee.

*Princess*. Hony, and Milke, and Suger: there is three.  
(138b, 57-8; *L. L. Lost*, v, ii, 230-1)

*Armado*. Anointed, I implore so much expence of thy royall sweet breath, as will vtter a brace of words.

*Princess*. Doth this man serue God?

*Berowne*. Why aske you?

*Princess*. He speak's not like a man of God's making.  
(141a, 62-b4; *L. L. Lost*, v, ii, 523-9)

*Hector*. Goodnight sweet Lord *Menelaus*.

*Thersites*. Sweet draught: sweet quoth-a? sweet sinke, sweet sure.

(592b, 9-11; *Tr. & Cress.*, v, i, 82-4)

*Fair* has a similar status and reception. Pandarus (who also shows an addiction to *sweet*) adopts it as greeting to Helen and Paris, as part of a planned 'complementall assault':

*Pandarus*. Faire be to you my Lord, and to all this faire company: faire desires in all faire measure fairely guide them, especially to you faire Queene, faire thoughts be your faire pillow.

*Helen*. Deere L[ord] you are full of faire words.

(581b, 17-21; *Tr. & Cress.*, III, i, 46-50)

And presumably a similar standing underlies the vocabulary Mercutio finds fault with Tybalt for using as an all-purpose modifier:

The Pox of such antique lispng affecting phantacies, these new tuners of accent: Iesu a very good blade, a very tall man, a very good whore.

(659b, 50-2; *Rom. & Jul.*, II, iv, 29-32)

As well as coming in and out of use and of fashion, words are constantly changing in another way as they shift their meaning. Again, the alteration involves a period when both old and new senses are in circulation, and so material is provided for a special type of word-play in Shakespeare's plays. Most puns depend on the similarity in sound of two distinct words, but there are others which are based on two meanings of the same item, as in Peto's pun on an angry Falstaff:

he frets like a gum'd Veluet.

(356a, 4; *1 Hen. IV*, II, ii, 2)

Here the sense 'is worn away' is the older meaning, and 'is angry' is the newer figurative sense, which since Shakespeare's time has replaced the other. That *both* were available in Early Modern English produces the joke.

It is, moreover, not infrequent to have word-play where one speaker uses a term in one sense, and is taken up by a second who deliberately switches to another meaning for the same word. Of this type is an exchange in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* using the double 'argument' and 'condition' senses of *circumstance*:

*Proteus*. So, by your circumstance, you call me foole.

*Valentine*. So, by your circumstance, I feare you'll proue.

(20a, 39-40; I, i, 36-7)

The most striking instance, however, is in *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo, in love with Rosaline, is trying to stand out against Benvolio's probing to discover who the lady is.

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Benvolio attempts a 'now let's be serious about this' approach:

Tell me in sadnesse, who is that you loue?  
(652b, 45; 1, i, 205)

which Romeo parries by switching to the other, newer, sense of *sad*:

What shall I grone and tell thee?  
(652b, 46; 1, i, 206)

When Benvolio refuses to be fobbed off by a quibble, Romeo is driven to a different linguistic prevarication:

In sadnesse Cozin, I do loue a woman.  
(652b, 50; 1, i, 210)

Syntactic ambiguity of surface structure is similarly exploited elsewhere, even leading to explicit comment after an exchange in *Twelfth Night*:

*Viola.* Saue thee Friend and thy Musick: dost thou liue by thy Tabor?

*Clown.* No sir, I liue by the Church.

*Viola.* Art thou a Churchman?

*Clown.* No such matter sir, I do liue by the Church:  
For, I do liue at my house, and my house dooth stand by the Church.

*Viola.* So thou maist say the Kings lyes by a begger, if a begger dwell neer him: or the Church stands by thy Tabor, if thy Tabor stand by the Church.

*Clown.* You haue said sir: To see this age: A sentence is but a cheu'rill gloue to a good witte, how quickly the wrong side may be turn'd outward.

(264b, 40-52; III, i, 1-15)

Often, too, the ambiguities involved are not available today, such as that dependent on the ethic dative pronoun in Petruccio's

knocke me heere soundly  
(212b, 22; *T. Shrew*, 1, ii, 8)

which Grumio deliberately misinterprets as direct object, and the ambiguous interrogative pronoun in

*Longaville.* . . . what is she in the white?

*Boyet.* A woman somtimes, if you saw her in the light.  
(127b, 19-20; *L. L. Lost*, 11, i, 197-8)

The present-day form, *Who is she?*, in which the question would have to be framed, would give no chance for the punning reply and evasion.

Yet further features of English in the Early Modern period gave scope to a writer who was aware of what was written and spoken around him. In regard to morphology, Shakespeare's use of the *-eth/-s* alternative inflections in the verb has already been discussed above. There were also other instances of two forms being available for the same grammatical item. There was, for example, a choice of plural inflections in a few words which at an earlier stage had had weak forms, but were now taken into the majority strong class in normal use. Thus the plural of *eye* was *eyes*, but where Shakespeare wanted to mark old-fashionedness he could bring in the almost obsolete weak plural form *eyne*. With this status it appears in *Pyramus and Thisbe* (160b, 42; *M.N.D.*, v, i, 178), and, in combination with specially selected vocabulary, in the drinking song in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

*Plumpie Bacchus, with pinke eyne.*  
(841b, 7; 11, vii, 121)

Very much more frequently, however, where alternatives in form are available, Shakespeare, as poet rather than as dramatist, appears to select one instead of the other not in order to mark some special kind of English, but simply to achieve the metre or rhyme needed.

This applies also to options of syntax and vocabulary, but in these two, as has been discussed, much more than verse technique is involved. In other linguistic matters, however, versification provides almost the sole motivation for choice; yet in this, too, Shakespeare is using the fact that he happened to live when he did.

In morphology this most frequently involves

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the use of alternative forms of past tenses and past participles. For example, in certain verbs the poet can employ as past participles not only forms like *spoken, forgotten, chosen, arisen, fallen, mistaken*, but also forms made by analogy with the past tense, that is *spoke, forgot, chose, arose, fell, mistook*. As all these are shorter by a syllable than the forms to which they are options, they suit certain lines of verse better than the more usual participles, as in:

And thereupon these errors are arose.  
(99b, 55; *Com. Errors*, v, i, 388)

In other verbs, under the influence of borrowings from Latin past participles in *-ate*, a stem ending in a dental consonant can stand as past participle without the *-ed* it usually has, again providing an alternative shorter by one syllable. Thus alongside:

I was contracted to them both, all three  
Now marry in an instant,  
(798b, 21-2; *Lear*, v, iii, 228-9)

we have:

For first he was contract to Lady *Lucie*.  
(528b, 1; *Rich. III*, iii, vii, 179)

Arising from the coexistence of old and new as alternatives at this particular point of time are the double pronunciations available for many words, in regard to stress, number of syllables, and even sound-quality.

The stress-pattern in many English words has altered since Shakespeare's time. Today *extreme* is stressed on the second syllable whether it is adjective or noun, but in Early Modern English it had this pattern only when a noun, and carried stress on the first syllable when an adjective. Shakespeare thus assigned to it whichever stress-pattern its grammatical function demanded:

Temp'ring extremities with extreame sweete.  
(656b, 56; *Rom. & Jul.*, ii, Prol. 14)

Twixt my extreames and me, this bloody knife  
Shall play the vmpere.  
(669a, 33-4; *Rom. & Jul.*, iv, i, 62-3)

Alteration in stress, however, is not confined to the period between Shakespeare and ourselves, and in many cases stress was already shifting in Early Modern English. When this is happening in his own time Shakespeare can therefore employ whichever pattern he wants. Thus there occur in *Richard II* both:

The Reuennew whereof shall furnish vs,  
(332a, 15; I, iv, 46)

and:

My Manors, Rents, Reuenues, I forgoo;  
(344a, 12; IV, i, 212)

and in *Romeo and Juliet*:

For exile hath more terror in his looke,  
(665a, 12; III, iii, 13)

alongside:

And turn'd it to exile, there art thou happy.  
(666a, 21; III, iii, 140)

Our present-day stressing is there, but so also is the pattern that preceded it.

Exploited as often, but less relevant to the present study in that the same opportunities are in existence today to a large extent, are the possibilities of omitting weakly-stressed syllables in certain words, so as to reduce the overall number of syllables. This is a feature of normal spoken English, especially where colloquial varieties are concerned, but in verse there is the option between a full and a reduced form. Of this type is (*vn*)*natural*, appearing in the space of one play both with value given to the optional syllable:

And euery thing that seemes vnnatural,  
(428b, 51; *Hen. V*, v, ii, 62)

and with reduction:

How shall we then behold their naturall teares?  
(422a, 18; *Hen. V*, iv, ii, 13)

Sometimes such a choice has a basis in linguistic change of the Early Modern period, and the prime instance of this is where an earlier disyllabic ending was altering in Shakespeare's time to a monosyllabic one.

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Affected by this development were endings such as *-ial* and *-ion*, which changed at this period from a pronunciation [iəl] and [iən] to [jəl] and [jən]. Shakespeare's versification normally gives words containing these elements a pattern that demands monosyllabic pronunciation:

To our Pauillion shal I leade you first,  
(575 b, 53; *Tr. & Cress.*, I, iii, 305)  
And of it left his Sonne Imperiall Lord,  
(431 b, 21; *Hen. V*, v, Epil. 8)  
Most holie and Religious feare it is.  
(759 b, 46; *Hamlet*, III, iii, 8)

But although he is employing here what was the current form in his day, he can also use the earlier pronunciation which made two syllables of the ending:

Desire them all to my Pauillion,  
(419 b, 32; *Hen. V*, IV, i, 27)  
The Sword, the Mase, the Crowne Imperiall,  
(421 b, 12; *Hen. V*, IV, i, 278)  
Yet for I know thou art Religious.  
(646 a, 55; *Tit. And.*, v, i, 74)

It is noticeable that this is particularly associated with line-endings, as is the use of non-reduced forms of words such as (*vn*)*naturall* quoted above.

Into this category fall also the very many words ending in sequences such as *-cious*, *-sion* and *-tion*, where as well as the reduction of the ending to a monosyllable, palatalization of the preceding consonant was taking place, with the [jə] subsequently reduced further to [ə] to give our present-day [viʃəs] *vicious*, [viʒən] *vision*, and [kwɛstʃən] *question*. The endings of this group too have the possibility of disyllabic pronunciation in Shakespeare's verse, though the degree of palatalization in the consonant is debateable. So there are contrasts such as:

For now sits Expectation in the Ayre,  
(408 b, 56; *Hen. V*, II, Prol. 8)  
As were a Warre in expectation,  
(412 a, 34; *Hen. V*, II, iv, 20)

and:

For hee is gracious, if hee be obseru'd,  
(359 a, 22; 2 *Hen. IV*, IV, iv, 30)  
And neuer shall it more be gracious.  
(114 b, 56; *Much Ado*, IV, i, 109)

Development in pronunciation and development in morphology are linked in a further instance of this use of an older pronunciation. The *-ed* in the past forms of weak verbs was, by the Early Modern period, given no vowel except, as nowadays, after the dental stops [t] and [d]. Shakespeare therefore writes lines like:

the Duke  
Hath banisht moodie discontented fury.  
(442 b, 31-2; 1 *Hen. VI*, III, i, 122-3)

But when he wishes he can revert to the older pronunciation which gave the ending a weakly stressed vowel, and where the verb has a disyllabic stem with stress on the first syllable this can be used to give a pattern suited to the required metre:

That banished, that one word banished.  
(664 b, 28; *Rom. & Jul.*, III, ii, 113)

In many instances both alternatives are used within a single line:

Hence banished, is banisht from the world.  
(665 a, 18; *Rom. & Jul.*, III, iii, 19)

It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that the reason that the two forms are juxtaposed in lines such as this is more complex than simply the achievement of metrical regularity, and that what is involved is some kind of differentiated emphasis. Certainly, the recurrence of this same feature many times might suggest some sort of underlying motivation for the pattern, but the examples do not appear to share any common factor other than their surface pattern. What is of interest, though, is that in this matter Shakespeare utilizes almost every kind of linguistic alternative where choice lies between options that differ in length by a

<sup>1</sup> By Abbott, §474 (see note 1 on p. 11).

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syllable. Thus it is a choice between mono-syllabic and disyllabic pronunciation that produces:

Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write,  
(1609 ed. F2<sup>v</sup>, 28; Sonnet 86)

and the omission or retention of the vowel in an ending which allows:

To this vnlook'd for vnprepared pompe,  
(312a, 8; *K. John*, II, i, 560)

and:

Which art my neer'st and dearest Enemie.  
(365b, 11; *Hen. IV*, III, ii, 123)

And the existence of *-eth* and *-s* is used in:

Panting he lies, and breatheth in her face.  
(1593 ed. B2<sup>r</sup>, 20; *Ven. & Adon.*, 62)

Not only metre, but rhyme too shows exploitation of the existence of alternative pronunciations. For where value was given to a normally omitted syllable, a scheme of stress + weak stress + stress was substituted for the scheme stress + (nothing) + weak stress; and in this case the final syllable on which increased stress was laid reverted to the vowel it had before reduction to [ə] or [i]. Thus already in Early Modern English the stress pattern and the vowel of the final syllable in adjectives such as *temperate* was different from those in verbs and nouns such as *celebrate* and *potentate*. *Temperate* consisted of only two syllables, the second being weakly stressed:

Shee is not hot, but temperate as the morne.  
(217a, 35; *T. Shrew*, II, i, 296)

There was also, however, an older pronunciation which Shakespeare could use, giving the adjective the stress pattern of *celebrate* in three syllables, and making a rhyme with words having stressed *-ate*:

Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?  
Thou art more louely and more temperate:  
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,  
And Sommers lease hath all too short a date.  
(1609 ed. B4<sup>v</sup>, 13-16; Sonnet 18)

Variation in the number of syllables brought about by omitting or pronouncing the vowel in the *-ed* verb ending has been discussed above. This also provided material for rhymes. For although most Shakespearian rhymes employ past tenses and past participles in their normal reduced form, giving rhymes such as *prest* (pressed) : *rest* (150b, 52-3; *M.N.D.*, II, ii, 64-5), *inclind* : *finde* : *mind* (1594 ed. L4<sup>v</sup>, 2-5; *Lucrece*, 1654-7), *Crown'd* : *round* (841b, 9-10; *Ant. & Cleo.*, II, vii, 123-4), and *beguil'd* : *childe* (147a, 34-5; *M.N.D.*, I, i, 238-9), yet there are also rhymes based on a fuller pronunciation of *-ed*, such as *murthered* : *dead* (349b, 34-5; *Rich. II*, v, vi, 39-40) and *widowed* : *bed* (664b, 49-50; *Rom. & Jul.*, III, ii, 134-5).

In other cases degree of stress and sound-quality are not both involved in the option, but a choice of sound only. Of this type is the *-y* ending; words with this as their final syllable, such as *misery* can be used at the end of a scene to provide a rhyming couplet not only of the variety:

Doe not draw backe, for we will mourne with thee:  
Oh could our mourning ease thy misery,  
(638a, 14-15; *Tit. And.*, II, iv, 56-7)

but also:

But Kings and mightiest Potentates must die,  
For that's the end of humane miserie.  
(444b, 24-5; *Hen. VI*, III, ii, 136-7)

Even more notable as a pronunciation-alternative peculiar to the Early Modern period is the varying quality of vowel in words showing two developments from Middle English  $\bar{e}$ , such as *sea*. Shakespeare normally rhymes such words with each other (*Seas* : *ease*, (1609 ed. C1<sup>v</sup>, 17-18; *Pericles*, II, Prol. 27-8)), but very occasionally etymology is set aside, and then he rhymes not only with Early Modern English [i:] (M.E.  $\bar{e}$ ), but with [ee] (M.E. *ai*) as well, writing both:

Man more diuine, the Master of all these,  
Lord of the wide world, and wilde watry seas,  
(87b, 6-7; *Com. Errors*, II, i, 20-1)