SHAKESPEARE'S ERRANT TEXTS

If more than half of Shakespeare's texts survive in more than one version, and an increasing number of his texts appear to have been co-authored with other playwrights, how do we define what constitutes a 'Shakespearean text'? Recent studies have proposed answers to these crucial questions by investigating 'memorial reconstruction' and co-authorship, yet significantly they have not yet considered properly the many formal and stylistic synergies, interchanges and reciprocities between oral/memorial and authorial composition, and the extent to which these factors are traceable in the surviving play-texts of the period. It is precisely these synergies that this book investigates, making this site of interaction between actorly and authorial input its primary focus. Petersen proposes new quantitative methodologies for approaching form and style in Shakespearean texts. The book's main case studies are *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Titus Andronicus* – plays drawn from the middle of Shakespeare's working career.

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Textual Form and Linguistic Style in Shakespearean 'Bad' Quartos and Co-authored Plays

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'When the legend becomes fact, print the legend'

For my mother, Karen

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Where do Shakespeare's texts come from, what are their origins, and what are the factors surrounding their creation? If more than half of Shakespeare's texts survive in more than one version, and an increasing number of his texts appear to have been co-authored with other playwrights, how indeed do we define what constitutes a 'Shakespearean text'?

Studies such as Laurie Maguire's *Shakespearean Suspect Texts: The 'Bad' Quartos and Their Contexts* (1996) and Brian Vickers' *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (2002), have proposed answers to these crucial questions by investigating memorial reconstruction and co-authorship, yet significantly no studies have adequately considered the many formal and stylistic synergies, interchanges and reciprocities between oral/memorial and authorial composition, and the extent to which these factors are traceable in the surviving playtexts of the period. It is precisely these synergies that this study will investigate, making the site of interaction between actorly and authorial input its primary focus of quantitative and discursive investigation.

The first part of the book offers a reconsideration of what are commonly called Shakespeare's 'bad' quartos. The most plausible theory accounting for these unauthorised publications is that they were put together by actors who had either participated in the original productions or seen them. Until now, all studies of these quartos have been based on purely written evidence, treating them in the same way as conventionally authored texts. However, this exclusive focus on the static written word neglects what are in fact the key agents in the production of the quartos as we know them: the actors' memories and the role of the predominantly oral culture surrounding the texts' production. By critically revisiting Maguire's parameters for identifying memorial transmission in playtexts a new account is given of the stylistic phenomena common to

the performative genres of the popular play and popular ballads and folktales. Besides this quantitative reappraisal of various oral style-markers, the analysis of the multiple-text plays will take into consideration theoretical notions from the study of folklore, particularly the work by Murray McGillivray, along with Axel Olrik's 'Laws of Epic Folklore' and Max Lüthi's theory of the *Zielform* ('goal form'): that is, Lüthi's proposition that a text submitted to oral-memorial transmission will eventually and inevitably move towards a stylistically predictable reduced form.

The second part of *Shakespeare's Errant Texts* addresses authorial style, particularly in early modern collaborative playtexts. In recent research, such texts have been scrutinised for textual idiosyncrasies, with the aim of attributing authorship of discrete units of text to specific playwrights, but little attention has so far been paid to the fact that the textual instabilities encountered in these texts have stylistic features in common with the so-called 'bad' quartos. This study is the first to point out the importance of assessing the effects of a complex, communal and time-dependent transmission process when trying to understand the nature of the renaissance playtext, including ascribing such texts to distinct authors. Using a newly devised series of stylo-statistical tests Part II explores how accurately dramatic authorship can be attributed on a basis of linguistic habit, and to what degree an authorial 'fingerprint' lingers in each playtext as a whole, or in various parts of a text.

In combination, the two parts of the book introduce a new agenda of integrated textual analysis, intended to invigorate the study of early modern playtexts, where the gathering of formal and stylistic evidence for authorial and oral-memorial composition is by no means mutually exclusive, but rather seen as mutually informing. From this approach new lessons can be learnt that may crucially apply to the bulk of playtexts surviving from the period, not just the textual 'problem cases'. With *Shakespeare's Errant Texts* the reader thus obtains both practical methodologies for exploring and explaining some of the many remaining problems of classifying early modern playtexts of complex origin and a conceptual framework for integrating and relating the formal and stylistic layers of the composite Shakespearean text, in order to better understand it.

Finally, the book is of course intended to stimulate further debate in the growing field of authorship and attribution studies. With the development of resources such as Chadwyck-Healey Literature Online, known as LION, the grammatically annotated KEMPE: Korpus of Early Modern

Playtexts in English, an exclusively Shakespearean parts-of-speech-tagged corpus planned by scholars at the University of London and yet another proposed corpus project, instigated by Ward Elliott of the Claremont McKenna Shakespeare Clinic,[1] it will in the future be much easier to quantitatively analyse linguistic style in Shakespeare's texts. It is, however, crucial to link this field of research to the study of other kinds of playtext where provenance is likewise doubtful, albeit in different ways. By combining the research areas of early modern attribution studies with textual studies, *Shakespeare's Errant Texts* helps to facilitate a much needed merger of scholarly approaches.

I am especially grateful to Professor Sir Brian Vickers for his continuing interest and warm support, and for being such a tremendous source of inspiration. Similarly, I would like to thank Jonathan Hope, MacDonald Jackson, Richard Proudfoot and Marina Tarlinskaja. Your generous commentary has been and remains invaluable and ever motivating, and the progress which you have championed in the field of early modern text and authorship studies, independently and under the auspices of the London Forum for Authorship Studies, continues to enable a deeper understanding of the special nature of the early modern playtext. Marcus Dahl deserves a very special thank you – for the countless things you have taught me, for your academic generosity and persistence, and for joining efforts with me to begin constructing the KEMPE Corpus. In so many ways, this book has benefited from your keen scrutiny, insight and ingenuity. My book has also profited from the responses which I have had over the years from various people who attended conference presentations and seminar papers of extracts drawn from its chapters. I am particularly indebted to Brian Vickers and Richard Proudfoot for making it possible to discuss sections of the book and its methodologies under the always congenial auspices of LFAS; and to Jonathan Hope for inviting me to participate in decisive seminars on authorship attribution and Shakespeare's language at the International Shakespeare Association's Conference in Valencia in 2001 and at the ESSE-8 Conference in 2006 at the University of London. Thanks also for reading through early stages of the book's sections on the quality of test types, and for championing the KEMPE corpus, despite its teething problems. To the late Scott McMillin I owe thanks for his enthusiastic response to the applicability of Olrik's 'law of two-to-a-scene' to the short quartos and the German derivatives – the

[1] This project is in its nascent stages, as I write, in the summer of 2009.

approval by such an eminent scholar strengthened my belief in both the applicability of folk studies to early modern playtexts and the relevance of including the German derivatives in my work. I am likewise grateful to John Miles Foley for resolutely supporting the bridging exercise of publishing Shakespearean textual studies in the journal *Oral Tradition*. Thank you all for making it possible to share ideas and to receive valuable feedback. To Tom Pettitt, who first introduced me to the Elizabethan theatre and its roots, thanks are due for the many ideas we have generated – and continue to generate – in each other's company. Thanks also to Tom Mason and John Lee, who offered wonderful support and stimulating intellectual company during my years as a PhD student at the University of Bristol, and to Eckhard Bick and everyone in the VISL team at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, for making the tagging of the KEMPE corpus possible in the first place, and for hosting the current version of the searchable resource. I am also indebted to other colleagues, who in one way or another have a stake in this book. Many of you I am fortunate enough to also call friends: Melanie Ord, Amanda Penlington, Scott Fraser, Pamela Karantonis, Andrew Wyllie and Rebecca D'Monte, and colleagues from the South-West Early Modernist Network; in particular Tracey Hill, Ian Gadd and Simon Barker. Besides, a number of my students have been wonderful sources of inspiration, and deserve a very special thank you. Amanda Bull, Barbara McConaghie, Holly Rose and Ross Pollard: it has been an absolute pleasure to teach you about the vagaries of early modern text culture.

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Finally, I would like to voice my personal gratitude to a number of people in Denmark and the UK for very precious friendships: thanks to Judith, Susanne, Camilla, Helle and Solveig, and to Marcus, Mel, Stine and Karen. Kevin: thank you for finding me, and for bringing me to Elsinore … To my family in Denmark: *tak*. This book is dedicated to my father, and to Lisbeth and Mitchell, and is to a large extent written in memory of my mother, Karen (1939–99).

Abbreviations

BB	Der Bestrafte Brudermord
CI	confidence interval
Cpro	proportional chance criterion
CQP	corpus query processing
DA	discriminant analysis
IR	internal repetition
KEMPE	Korpus of Early Modern Playtexts in English
LION	Literature Online
MR	memorial reconstruction
PCA	principal component analysis
POS	parts of speech
ShFo	Shakespeare Folio
ShQu	Shakespeare Quarto
STEP	standard error proportion
TLN	through line numbering

Prologue

There is one essential question underlying *Shakespeare's Errant Texts*: how much do we know about the relationship between literary authorship and oral-memorial transmission in Shakespeare's surviving texts? This question is followed by another closely related one concerning methodologies: which methods and avenues of enquiry may we safely use to extend that knowledge, in order to generate dependable and reproducible results? In aiming to extend our knowledge of this crucial intersection, this book follows Paul Werstine, Scott McMillin, Leah Marcus, Laurie Maguire, Kathleen O. Irace and many other theatre historians and textual critics in reflecting the position that analytical studies of early modern playtexts must embrace more extensively the theatrical practices of the period and recognise the communal enterprise of the drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a creative joint venture. Lately, the work of Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern on the practices of part writing and cueing in Shakespeare's playtexts demonstrates with satisfying clarity that we are dealing not with integral literary material when reading Shakespearean playtexts, but very much with a composite product.

The book is also a response to the endeavours presented in recent linguistically orientated authorship and attribution studies, first and foremost by Brian Vickers, MacDonald Jackson, Jonathan Hope, David Lake and Marina Tarlinskaja, to discover the hallmarks of an author's particular style. Oddly enough, no scholarly analysis has yet attempted to merge the analysis of the playwright's stylistic imprint and those imprints derived from the 'live', memorial and mechanic aspects of dramatic transmission. At this critical juncture in Shakespearean text and attribution studies, the present study offers to combine the contexts of oral-memorial and authorial transmission in a philological study of the style, structure, behaviour and morphology of the early modern playtext at its most complex. Given

the interdisciplinary and interdependent nature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic industries, it is highly unprofitable to insist on a segregation (which is what we currently see in theory and practice in attribution and textual studies) of the literary and the oral dimension of composition, when each quality appears to have contributed significantly to the textual entities we now study as 'primary evidence'. The fact that primary sample material is available to study is of course an excellent starting-point, but within that evidence we still need to find out much more about the relationship between repetition and difference; between the general and the specific components of the early modern dramatic text.

Following a discussion of the oral-memorial and literary dimensions of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrighting, the origins, rationales and methodologies of a folklore/formalist approach to the multiple-text cases are explained, alongside those of computer-facilitated quantitative linguistics (sometimes referred to as stylometry, although this term appears to be falling out of use). Each quantitative approach will be applied to the texts of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, selected as having a usefully large number of textual variants, characterised by a wide range of textual variation.

The approach introduced in Part I of this book contributes to identifying the processes producing the verbal and structural difference between the extant versions of the multiple-text cases mentioned above. In assessing the claim that memorial retention in, and oral reproduction from, the minds of actors are significant factors in the morphology of the early modern playtext, recourse may be had to a number of diagnostic tools for detecting the impact of oral-memorial transmission on textual material developed in the study of folk narrative: folktales and songs. These tools are here applied systematically to a substantial set of Shakespearean texts, within a historical context for textual production and reproduction within and between the worlds of Elizabethan and Jacobean acting and textualisation.

Of course not all early modern popular plays lend themselves equally readily to the methodologies and approaches proposed and tested in this book. As chapter 3 makes clear, what the actors did to the texts only becomes apparent if a play enters tradition (i.e. if repeatedly acted and revived) and, moreover, is recorded. This did not happen to all early modern plays, even those written for the commercial stage. Consequently, the plays revised for the press by their authors (*à la* Ben Jonson), or by their publishers (as Richard Jones did with Marlowe's

Tamburlaine),[2] or plays abandoned or arrested by censorship at manuscript stage, are less likely to preserve high ratios of the oral/memorial features accumulated in performance. What this book crucially highlights, however, is that the majority of early modern playtexts are likely to contain some stylistic features which are formulaic or general, regardless of whether they have reached the stage or not. These are traces of something akin to what Albert Lord called 'formulaic composition' – a linguistic middle-ground explored more fully in chapters 3 and 4. Such features can be lodged in texts *pre-* and *post-*dissemination, even at the earliest stages of transmission, and they are difficult to assign to individual sources because both players and playwrights will have availed themselves of such formulae. This, therefore, is not the place to seek for author-specific or 'oral' style-markers, unless one can prove from external evidence that a particular kind of repetitive structure, for example, is 'authorial' and not 'oral' or vice versa. What is becoming increasingly clear through the close analysis of the vocabularies of early modern playtexts is that oral and authorial composition are not watertight categories of language, bearing no relation to one another, but rather are two ends of a continuum.[3] For the purposes of assigning authorship and for isolating oral/memorial features, we must therefore be wary of assigning individual sources to the common, formulaic or mundane phraseology also contained in early modern playtexts. What we can do is isolate the incidents where innocuous features overlap with rhetorical figures, and evaluate these alongside agent-specific stylistic markers. And this sort of exercise is best achieved by using the stylo-structural features present in the much-transmitted, multiple-text cases to guide us.

The second part of the study addresses literary tradition; not as an aesthetic concept, but in terms of the linguistic building blocks at the very root of the literary dimension of authorial composition. Part II thus deals more minutely with the study of linguistic variation in grammar and syntax between texts, deploying computer-facilitated stylistic analysis for a series of the most frequent grammatical forms in vocabularies, namely function words, and functional syntactic units. This part of the book reflects the need for a replicable methodology for positioning the

[2] Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 139.

[3] See also Gill Philip, 'Habeas Corpus: Direct Access, Salience, and Delexicalisation in Corpus-Based Metaphor Studies'. Paper presented at the Mind, Language and Metaphor EuroConference on the Processing of Metaphor and Metonymy – From Computers to Neuropsychology, Granada, Spain, 24–29 April 2004. 1–17, at p. 10.

role of the early modern playwright in relation to text and transmission. The approach adopted here is new in two respects. Firstly, the quantitative stylistic tests developed encompass a large set of functional grammatical structures in the texts as well as single function words; secondly, they reverse the traditional focus of stylistic attribution studies on revising existing authorial canons. While computerised linguistic analysis has been developed as a tool of conventional authorship studies, it will here be used to determine to what extent a set of textual variants diverge from a given authorial style, and the level of authorial intervention, as opposed to oral intervention over time. While the computer can indeed recognise a core corpus of plays marked by a stylistic baseline, or 'fingerprint', which we may legitimately associate with, for example, Shakespeare, it can also identify text versions on which that fingerprint has potentially faded. These texts can now be distinguished as not merely corrupted, garbled or 'bad', but measurably less authorial, with individual gradients for individual scenes.

After the historical/contextual introduction in chapter 1, the main discussion and analyses in chapters 2 and 3 address the stylistic and structural make-up of the playtexts from an oral-memorial perspective. Following ideas of the Swiss folklorist Max Lüthi and his Danish precursor Axel Olrik, varying degrees of textual difference are used to display a change in the morphology of the text and in the behaviouristics of the dramatised story in response to transmission, composition and (re)composition. It is argued that the form achieved in some of the short quartos highly resembles that which Lüthi called a narrative 'goal form': a final, optimal form for narration.

In the light of the recent interest in authorship and collaboration, and the increasingly accepted use of stylo-statistical tests as a diagnostic tool in authorship studies, Part II introduces and evaluates theories, backgrounds and stylistic test types current in attribution scholarship today. It also takes into consideration recent advances in the cognitive sciences, including both theoretical and applied corpus-based approaches. Hereafter, in chapter 4, a series of function-word-based linguistic tests is applied to the multiple-text sets of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* independently, using multivariate statistical analysis to investigate the 'clustering' of Q1 scenes and acts relative to Q2 and F1 versions. The results of these and further tests for genre, chronology and 'bad quarto quality' are evaluated in chapter 5 in terms of their usefulness and their ability to provide new evidence or to confirm or refute orthodox theories of Shakespearean

multi-textuality. Chapters 5 and 6 furthermore address some of the possible disadvantages of applying a non-contextual approach to the polytextual heritage of the English renaissance stage – *Titus Andronicus* being a case in point. The book ends with reiterations of some crucial observations on the nature of early modern textuality, and with some perspectives for future research within the combined field of early modern text and attribution studies.