Welcome!

Who we all are:

• The project team

• The Advisor-Ambassador panel

Our plan for today
What the project aims to do ....

- Produce the first comprehensive account of Shakespeare’s language using methods derived from corpus linguistics – an approach that uses computers in large-scale language analysis.
ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS)

CASS is a Centre designed to bring a new method in the study of language – the corpus approach – to a range of social sciences. In doing so it provides an insight into the use and manipulation of language in society in a host of areas of pressing concern, including climate change, hate crime and education. By providing fresh perspectives on such problems, we are helping to develop new approaches to challenging practices such as hate speech both in terms of raising awareness and of informing policy makers and other stakeholders of how such language may be used to wound and offend.
What are the project’s research objectives?

To reveal in unprecedented detail:

- Shakespeare's actual use of language in context;
- The patterns of language that constitute 'varieties' or ‘themes’ in Shakespeare's works;
- Detailed similarities and differences between Shakespeare's linguistic usage and that of his contemporaries; and
- The understandings that contemporary audiences had of Shakespeare's language.
What will the project produce?

The encyclopedia

• An encyclopedia of two volumes, to be published by Bloomsbury in paper and electronically.
• An app delivering a “lite” version of volume 1.

Electronic “editions”

• Shakespeare's work uniquely enriched with multiple annotation schemes;
• A matching corpus of contemporary playwrights enriched with multiple annotation schemes;
• 321 million words, drawn from Early English Books Online (TCP version), which we will enhance and use for comparisons with Shakespeare's language.
What will the project produce?

Other academic outputs
• At least six major conference presentations, and at least six academic papers.

Engagement and impact activities
• See later presentation
What will be in the encyclopedia?

**Volume 1** (a kind of dictionary)
Focuses on the use and meanings of each of Shakespeare's words, both in the context of what he wrote and in the context in which he wrote. Every word is, for example, compared with a 321 million word corpus comprising the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries. The volume establishes both what is unique about Shakespeare's language and what Shakespeare's language meant to his contemporaries.
What will be in the encyclopedia?

**Volume 2** (a kind of compendium of semantic patterns)
Focuses on patterns of words in Shakespeare's writings. It describes how these patterns create the 'linguistic thumbprints' of characters, different genders, themes, plays and dramatic genres. It also considers concepts such as love and death.

**Volume 3** (a kind of grammar)
Focuses on grammatical words and patterns.
What do you mean by “Shakespeare’s language”?  

Constraints

• We need one stable body of data at the heart of our project (partly for methodological reasons).
• We do not have the resources to engage in author attribution work or textual editing (though the project may have spin-offs for these areas).

So use an edited edition of repute ... the Arden?

• Modern editions are a mish-mash of writings attributed to Shakespeare, and contain various modernizations.
What do you mean by “Shakespeare’s language”? 

Our solution?

• Take as core data the plays generally agreed to be part of the Shakespeare canon.
• Use the largest near-contemporary body of work attributed to Shakespeare, i.e. the First Folio (1623), plus *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.
• But don’t ignore the Quartos. They constitute a secondary dataset.
Lexical items: *Scottish, Irish and Welsh*

Jonathan Culpeper and Alison Findlay
Lexical items: Scottish, Irish and Welsh

Henry V: Fluellen, Macmorris and Jamy

- How did contemporaries of Shakespeare view the Scots, Welsh and Irish?
- How did people write about them at the time?
Focus: words that frequently co-occur with Scottish, Irish or Welsh, i.e. collocates

- **Data**: *Early English Books Online* – approx. 1.2 billion words (?)

- **Period**: 1580-1599 – 82,180,304 words (around *Henry V*)

- **Tool**: cqpweb (Andrew Hardie)
Lexical items: Scots/Scottish

Thematic groups (amongst the top 50 collocates)

Associated groups (confederates, ioine): Picts, Irish, Britains, Frenchmen, Danes, etc.

Scottish kings/queens and nobles: Malcolm, Ferguse, Kenneth, Donald, Bruce, Galled, etc.

Hostile: iuadeth, discomfited, borders, invaded, chased

Scottish histories: chronicles, writers, yere

Political power: nation, nobility, ambassadors, etc.

Religion: communion, supper, etc.
Lexical items: *Irish*

**Strongest collocate: Irish rug**

“Show me a fair scarlet, a vvelch frise, a good Irish rug” (Eliot, 1595)
Lexical items: \textit{Irish}

Thematic groups (top 50 collocates)

\textbf{Negative connotations} (items below are relatively frequent and well dispersed)

\textbf{Uncivilised:} \textit{savage, wild}

\textbf{Hostile:} \textit{wars, enemies, against}

\textbf{Ungovernable:} \textit{rebels}

\textbf{Associated groups:} \textit{Scottish, Scots, (English)}

\textbf{Insignificant??:} \textit{mere}

\textbf{Political power:} \textit{nation, lords}

\textbf{Language:} \textit{tongue, language, speak}
Low frequency means that a number of strong patterns emerging is unlikely.

Thematic groups (top 50 collocates)

**Welsh language:** *English, tongue, called*

William Allen, *A Conference About the Next Succession* (1595)

“... in the **welsh** also towards the English, who are a different people and of different language, and yet are they governed peaceably by the English, & the English again do account them for their country men ...”
Grammatical items: *Yes, yea and ay*

Jonathan Culpeper
Ways of saying “yes”: Affirmatives

Affirmatives

• Yes
• Yea
• Ay(e)

• Use an auxiliary or modal expression, e.g. “I do”, “I will”

• Important ways of responding to particular types of question
And earlier this year…

Emily: Didn’t you take my costume out of the washing machine? (=negative question)

Jonathan: Yes.

Emily: What?

Interpretation 1: Yes, I confirm what you say that I did not take your costume out of the washing machine (=negative response)

Interpretation 2: Yes, I confirm what you suspect that I did take your costume out of the washing machine (=positive response)
In late Old and Middle English ...

Emily: Didn’t you take my costume out of the washing machine? (=negative question)

Jonathan: Yes.

Emily: Ok.

Interpretation 2: Yes, I confirm what you suspect that I did take your costume out of the washing machine (=positive response)

The Germanic pattern:

• Use yes for a positive response to a negative question
• Use yea for a positive response to a positive question, “Did you take my costume ....? Yea, ...”
The situation in Shakespeare’s time

What scholars think:

• The Germanic pattern can be detected in Early Modern English (Salmon 1965: 133)
• (1) Pattern was breaking down around 1600, with *yes* taking over all functions, and (2) *yea* being relegated to emphatic usage and regional dialect (Crystal and Crystal 2002: 373)
### Comedies: Use of *Yes* and *Yea*

100 randomized instances of *Yes*
All 45 instances of *Yea*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preceding Negative questions</td>
<td>13% (13)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceding Questions</td>
<td>51% (51)</td>
<td>53% (24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Distribution over time in the Corpus of English Dialogues: Yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1560-1599</th>
<th>1600-1639</th>
<th>1640-1679</th>
<th>1680-1719</th>
<th>1720-1760</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>487</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>164.26</td>
<td>276.06</td>
<td>871.79</td>
<td>1017.5</td>
<td>1783.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Distribution over time in the Corpus of English Dialogues: *Yea*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1560-1599</th>
<th>1600-1639</th>
<th>1640-1679</th>
<th>1680-1719</th>
<th>1720-1760</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Count</td>
<td>550.26</td>
<td>152.03</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Was yea relegated to emphatic uses?

Yes, there is a tendency:

Mess. Why then bid me be free: will you?
Men. Yea surelie, be free, for my part.

Warner, Menaecmi, 1595
Was *yea* relegated to regional dialect?

Difficult to say:

- It is not confined to middling or low status speakers;
- It appears in high-prestige genres;
- One contemporary English language teaching book for French refugees has it as the default form.
What about ay(e)?

What scholars think:

- Oxford English Dictionary: *Aye* “appears suddenly about 1575, and is exceedingly common about 1600”
- *Aye* follows *yea* (Salmon 1965: 133)
### Distribution over time in the CED: Ay(e)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1560-1599</th>
<th>1600-1639</th>
<th>1640-1679</th>
<th>1680-1719</th>
<th>1720-1760</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportions</td>
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<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>76.64</td>
<td>293.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportions</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Distribution over time in the CED: $l (=Ay)$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1560-1599</th>
<th>1600-1639</th>
<th>1640-1679</th>
<th>1680-1719</th>
<th>1720-1760</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221.63</td>
<td>371.26</td>
<td>114.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aye follows yea?

- Ay occurs twice a densely in comedy plays compared with yea; it’s more colloquial.
- Ay and yea tend to co-occur with different words.
- But there is one thing they have in common: both are quite often followed but (which is not the case with yes)
- No evidence that it is dialectal.
Character profiles: *Romeo and Juliet*

Jonathan Culpeper
Character profiles: *Romeo and Juliet*

- What language characterizes Romeo and what language, Juliet? What are their linguistic styles, their idiolects?

Lily James and Richard Madden.

(Photo: Johan Perrson)
Studies of linguistic style normally involve the analyst spotting linguistic features that might be diagnostic of that style, and then offering analysis/discussion of those.

- Limited to human spotting abilities. As John F. Burrows (1987: 1) put it, ‘It is a truth not generally acknowledged that, in most discussions of works of English fiction, we proceed as if a third, two-fifths, a half of our material were not really there.’
- The solution is to identify statistically key words, i.e. get a computer to compare the frequencies of words in one body of data against another and identify which are unusual relative to the other. And then analyze/discuss those.
Character profiles: *Romeo and Juliet*

Rank-ordered keywords for Romeo and Juliet (raw frequencies in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romeo</th>
<th>Juliet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beauty (10), love (46), blessed (5), eyes (14), more (26), mine (14), dear (13), rich (7), me (73), yonder (5), farewell (11), sick (6), lips (9), stars (5), fair (15), hand (11), thine (7), banished (9), goose (5), that (84)</td>
<td>if (31), be (59), or (25), I (138), sweet (16), my (92), news (9), thou (71), night (27), would (20), yet (18), that (82), nurse (20), name (11), words (5), Tybalt’s (6), send (7), husband (7), swear (5), where (16), again (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Character profiles: *Romeo and Juliet*

**Romeo:**

- She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste; For **beauty**, starv’d with her severity, Cuts **beauty** off from all posterity. She is too **fair**, too wise, wisely too **fair**, To merit bliss by making **me** despair: She hath forsworn to **love**, and in that vow Do I live dead that live to tell it now. (I.i)

- If I profane with our unworthiest **hand** This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this; Our **lips**, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss. (I.v)
Character profiles: *Romeo and Juliet*

**Juliet:**

- **If he be** married, / Our grave is like to be our wedding-bed (I.v.)
- **If** they do see thee, they will murder thee (II.ii.)
- **But if** thou meanest not well (II.ii.)
- Is thy news good, **or** bad? answer to that; Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance: Let me be satisfied, is 't good **or** bad? (II.ii)
- Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone; And **yet** no further than a wanton’s bird [...] (II.ii.)
Play genre: Tragedy vs. comedy

Dawn Archer
Love is a common theme in Shakespeare’s works

In Archer et al (2009), we explored the love theme within:

- 3 “love” tragedies (*Othello, Anthony & Cleopatra, Romeo & Juliet*)
- 3 “love” comedies (*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Two Gentlemen of Verona, As You Like It*)

... to determine how the 3-Cs/3-Ts compare in their usage
LOVE OVERUSED IN “LOVE” COMEDIES
(relative to the three “love” tragedies)

**PARTICIPANTS ...**

Twosomes – ‘couples’, ‘lovers’
Males – ‘lover’, ‘suitor’
Females – ‘virgin’, ‘wanton’

A DIFFERENT GENDER BIAS: PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO AGENCY ...?

“intimate/sexual relationship” material divides into ...

Female patients – ‘seduced’, ‘deflowered’
Both ‘fall in love’, ‘falling in love’, ‘fell in love’

... PROCESSES
Collocate information (at the domain level)

**EYES** and **HEART** most frequent items ... but **TEARS** also worthy of investigation ...

Connection seems to be:
- Relationship between physical beauty and love (e.g. EYES, LIPS)
- Metaphorical expressions relating to love (e.g. HEART)
- (Lack of) reaction to love (e.g. TEARS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THE COMEDIES ... “intimate relationship” collocates with ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I kiss the instrument of their pleasures”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Think true love acted simple modesty”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anatomy &amp; physiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“… a fire sparkling in lovers eyes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“if thou Can cuckold him, thou do thyself a pleasure, me a sport”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EYES tend to occur in *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Puck putting love potion in Titania’s eyes).

Worth relating to idea that a woman’s eyes = an aspect of her beauty that could capture men?

TEARS – closely tied to unrequited love:

Phebe   God shepherd, tell this youth what it is to love  
Silvius  It is to be all made of sighs and tears; And so am I for Phebe *(As You Like It)*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THE COMEDIES … “intimate relationship” collocates with …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>objects</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>anatomy &amp; physiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronouns (male)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other “overused” categories in 3 comedies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living creatures</th>
<th>Negative – bears, serpent, snail, monster, adder, snake, claws, chameleon, worm, monkey, ape, weasel, toad, rat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral – cattle, horse, goats, creature, capon, nest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive – deer, dove, nightingale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Not) sensible</th>
<th>V. interesting connection with love …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We that are true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly” … AYLI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory: taste</th>
<th>Sweet/-er/-est – representative of “sweet talk” used in courtship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bitter/-ness, sour/-est, taste/-s – often relate to the troubles of love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. unrequited love)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Love “underused” in tragedies (relative to 3 comedies)


– Also a difference in their representation of love: Much *darker* in the “love” tragedies (according to our analysis ...)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual relationship</th>
<th>Comedies</th>
<th>Tragedies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Intimate relationship | adoration (1), adore (2), adored (1), affection (7), affections (1), amorous (1), applaud (2), applause (1), apple of his eye (1), beloved (8), chastity (3), cherish (1), cherished (2), copulation (1), couples (4), dear (3), devoted (4), devotedly (1), devotedness (1), fa
doration (1), adores (1), affection (8), affections (7), affinity (1), amorous (6), applauding (1), applause (1), beloved (5), loving (1), beloved (1), bewhored (1), carnal (1), chastity (3), cherish (1), cherished (1), cherishing (1), courts (1), cuckold (6), doting (1), dotes (2), doting (5), enamoured (2), enjoy (3), enjoyed (1), fall in love (1), fancy (2), fancy (4), fond (8), impressed (1), in love (8), kiss (25), kissed (6), kisses (13), kissing (6), like (117), liked (2), liking (2), love (354), loved (21), lover (6), lovers (26), loves (26), loving (10), paramour (2), precious (5), prized (1), relish (2), revelling (1), revells (5), savours (3), seduced (1), sensual (1), suitor (2), take to (1), that way (1), virgin (4), wanton (5) | adore (1), adores (1), affection (8), affections (7), affinity (1), amorous (6), applauding (1), applause (1), beloved (5), beloved (1), bewhored (1), carnal (1), chastity (3), cherish (1), cherished (1), cherishing (1), courts (1), cuckold (6), doting (1), dotes (2), doting (5), enamoured (2), enjoy (3), enjoyed (1), fall in love (1), fancy (2), fancy (4), fond (8), impressed (1), in love (8), kiss (25), kissed (6), kisses (13), kissing (6), like (117), liked (2), liking (2), love (259), loved (21), lover (6), lovers (26), loves (26), loving (10), paramour (1), precious (6), prized (1), rate (3), rated (1), relish (1), revel (3), revells (4), sluttish (1), suitor (2), suitors (2), take to (1), that way (1), wantons (1), wooer (1) |
| Liking | apple of his eye, copulation, couples, gone for, seduced, sensual, virgin | affinity, bewhored, carnal, cuckold, darling(s), devotion, lust(s), sluttish, wooer |
“Overused” categories in the three tragedies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War</th>
<th>Lack of life</th>
<th>Religion / supernatural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not calm / angry</td>
<td>Lack of power</td>
<td>Movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Captures violent conflicts characterising tragedies ... esp. in *R&J* and *Othello*. **Rage, fury** - fairly evenly distributed in our 3 “love” plays but ... **revenge** > all but one from *Othello* ... **abused, abuse** > Othello reflecting on Desdemona’s treatment of him ... **whipped** > all but one from *A&C*  
**slew** > all but one relating to deaths of Tybalt or Mercutio in *R&J*

Hierarchies differ in terms of freq. and type: more ‘domestic’ in comedies – more ‘military’ here. **Knave, sirrah, minion**, etc. – tend to be used abusively

Military activity in *A&C* and *Othello* ... but also metaphorical usages:

*Othello*  
Are not you a strumpet?  

*Desdemona*  
No, as I am a Christian; If to preserve this **vessel** for my lord From any other foul unlawful touch Be not to be a strumpet, I am non.
The language of soliloquy

Sean Murphy
SOLILOQUY

+ LOVE O FIE
+ YET, AND, THUS
+ I, MY, MYSELF

- SIR, LORD, LADY TELL, GO, SPEAK PEACE

DREAM, SLEEP, THOUGHT/S, MIND
BRAIN, EYES, BODY, BLOOD
NATURE, EARTH, LIGHT, WORLD COMES

Comedy - LOVE
History - KING
Tragedy - O
Ideas

O sleep! thou ape of death
*Cymbeline* II.ii

My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel
*Henry VI Part I* I.v

Within the book and volume of my brain
*Hamlet* I.v

Mine eyes are made the fools o'the other senses
*Macbeth* II.i

Thou, Nature, art my goddess
*King Lear* I.ii

O world, thy slippery turns!
*Coriolanus* IV.iv
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>R1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>HERE</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td><strong>COMES</strong></td>
<td>HERE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BUT</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SHE</td>
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<td>HERE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

O here comes my nurse  
But **who comes here**  

* Romeo and Juliet III.ii  
* Taming of the Shrew II.i
Emotion

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind
*Midsummer Night’s Dream* I.i

My only love sprung from my only hate
*Romeo and Juliet* I.v

O thou blessed moon
*Antony and Cleopatra* IV.ix

O! that I had my wish
*Love’s Labour’s Lost* IV.iii

Fie on ambition! fie on myself
*Henry VI Part 2* IV.x

Fie, fie, fie, fie!
*Timon of Athens* II.ii
Connecting words

I have thee not **and yet** I see thee still!

*Macbeth* II.i

For who would bear the **whips and scorns** of time

*Hamlet* III.i

**Thus** conscience does make cowards of us all,

**And thus** the native hue of resolution

*Hamlet* III.i
The self

I will proclaim myself
what I am

Merry Wives of Windsor III.v

O no! Alas, I rather hate myself

Richard III V.iii

my tongue to the roof of
my mouth, my heart in
my belly

Taming of the Shrew IV.i
Soliloquy by genre

+ love, I, she
- thy, thou

+ Henry, King, many
- love, her

+ ‘t, gods, O
- love, I
The language of Shakespeare and that of his contemporary playwrights: The weather

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Examples

from Shakespeare’s plays:

For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail In me at
world frowns, and Edward's sun is clouded. How
her beauty, You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the

from plays by some of his contemporaries:

may his body lie. Let stormy hail and thunder beat
a storm be raised against a storm, And tempest be with
no curtains, But the bleak Winds, could Clouds and
Where’s all the weather?

Shakespeare’s plays

Other contemporaneous plays
Multiple functions of weather words

• Help construct the environment of the play
• Reflect characters’ states of mind
• Cue special effects (stage directions)
• Cue the actors’ behaviour on stage (dialogue)

An example from Shakespeare’s *King Lear*
1. Weather in stage directions

A Heath.
A storm, with thunder and lightning.
Enter Kent and a Gentleman, meeting.

King Lear, III:i

2. Cue stage mechanics ...
Creating a storm

(Illustration by Ian Dickinson)

3. Weather in dialogue

KENT Who's here, beside foul weather?

GENTLEMAN One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

[...]

LEAR Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!

[...]

Photo: http://www.oxonianreview.org/wp/lear-and-othello/
Weather talk in other plays of the same era

Lightning and thunder.

PRESENT OF DUMB SHOW

Now throw the heavens forth their lightning flames,
And thunder over Afric’s fatal fields,

*The Battle of Alcazar*, IV:i (G. Peele, 1594)

DIDO

Kind clouds that sent forth such a courteous storm,

*Dido, Queen of Carthage*, III:i (C. Marlowe, 1594)
Summary

- Weather is a similarly recurrent theme in plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries.
- Weather language is multi-functional:
  - On-stage and off-stage cues
  - Literal and figurative
  - Helps communicate the play to the audience
- We can locate and investigate plays with the most weather talk, and compare its uses by Shakespeare and his peers.