Afterword

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O brave new world, to have such corpora in it! I suppose that allusion is something of a cliche these days, having been used so often, but I can think of no better way of summing up the impact on me of this collection of papers. It is indeed a new world, and one which - thanks to the way the authors have presented their research - anyone can enter without needing to be too brave (in the modern sense). All of us are invited, as Murphy, Archer and Demmen affirm: 'we would encourage readers to create their own subcorpora and conduct investigations according to their particular interests.'

As Culpeper puts it in his introduction: 'taken as a whole, the six papers are designed to represent some of the broad array of the opportunities afforded by the new corpus resources created as part of the *Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's Language* (*ESL*) project.' That is the beauty of this collection, whose value extends well beyond the specific insights that the authors present. They make you think about all kinds of possible analogous studies, and show how their methodology can be used to carry them out. And by making their criteria explicit, they not only provide models for further research, they make you think about the strengths and limitations of the models themselves.

The most significant function of the comparative dimension of ESL, to my mind, is the corrective it introduces to the over-ambitious claims about Shakespeare's language that have been a feature of traditional accounts. It shows that many words once thought to be unique to Shakespeare, or to have been coined by him, were in use by his contemporaries, and often earlier. We do not yet know the correct value of N for the statement 'Shakespeare coined N words in the English language', but the ESL Project will certainly give us a better approximation then we have had hitherto, and it will be only a fraction of the 'thousands' once confidently asserted. But correctives are always dissatisfying. We know there is something unique about Shakespeare's creativity, notwithstanding the evident similarities with other writers. Why else would the world be so interested in him (as the paper by Murphy, Culpeper, Gillings and Pace-Sigge makes clear)? And if this uniqueness is not to be found in first recorded usages, where does it lie?

The papers in this collection point us in several possible directions. We see a core principle addressed: departure from a norm, as illustrated by Murphy, Archer and Demmen's paper, in which a sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspective brings together two domains - structure and use - that are usually taken separately in Shakespearean language study.

> We are interested in instances when the playwright's language usage coincided with societal expectations about women and men for his contemporaries, and when it served to flout audiences' assumptions for dramatic effect (because it challenged norms).

Here and elsewhere in this collection, ESL makes us see more clearly than ever before what counts as a norm, whether this be for a particular formal feature (such as a collocation or grammatical construction), a sociolinguistic variable (such as gender or status), or a literary variable (such as character or genre); so it should now be possible to obtain fresh insights into the way Shakespeare departs from those norms in any of the areas of language included in the ESL corpora.

My opening sentence is an illustration. If you know the quotation from *The Tempest*, then you will recognize a stylistic effect here. Explaining the effect is simple: an expectation has been broken - *people* has been replaced by *corpora*. A quick search on Google brings to light many

articles in which the writer has replaced *people - *by *machines*, *plays*, *critics*, *fishes*, *diseases*, *robots*, *clones*, and dozens more. That is why I say it is perhaps a stylistic cliche. It is an enormously productive pattern, and presumably any noun in the language could in principle be used within it, from *aardvark* to *zygote*. However, not all of these will be considered to be effective. For the stylistician, the interesting question is how to evaluate the creativity lying behind the choices. Prompted by the methodology of ESL, one way would be to rate them in terms of their frequency of use. A BNW ('brave new world') subcorpus in modern English would show that some of these broken expectations are more frequent and thus less indicative of individual creativity than others. A technical substitution (*machines*, *robots*, *clones*) is very common, and seems to require little imagination; *fishes* perhaps more so; and *critics* and *plays* add a second level of ludicity, given that the source text itself comes from a play. Temporal context is also a relevant variable: *diseases* would have been a striking choice BC (before Covid); less so now. And other factors will influence our judgement, such as the age, gender, and profession of the user.

Transfer this direction of thinking to Shakespeare and the ESL corpora. There are nine instances of *auspicious* in the canon (as presented at www.shakespeareswords.com), and the content-word collocations can be analysed as follows:

auspicious *adj*

+ *following coordinate adjective*
  dropping an auspicious and a dropping eye (*Ham 1.2.11*)
+ *following noun*
  eye an auspicious ... eye (*Ham 1.2.11*)
  gale auspicious gales (*Tem 5.1.315*)
  mistress thy auspicious mistress (*AW 3.3.8*)
   stand auspicious mistress (*KL 2.1.39*)
  star a most auspicious star (*Tem 1.2.182*)
 + *preceding verb*
 stand stand auspicious mistress (*KL 2.1.39*)
  stand auspicious to the hour (*Luc 347*)
  stand you auspicious (*WT 4.4.52*)

auspiciously *adv*
+ *preceding noun*
 sign take / Thy signs auspiciously (*TNK 5.1.67*)

inauspicious *adj*
+ *following noun*
 star shake the yoke of inauspicious stars (*RJ 5.3.111*)

unauspicious adj
+ *preceding adjective*
 ingrate ingrate and unauspicious (*TN 5.1.111*)
+ *following noun*
 altar unauspicious altars (*TN 5.1.111*)

Then, as now, the sense of 'giving promise of a favourable issue' (*OED*) is the dominant one, and doubtless an ESL corpus exploration would bring to light many examples of the collocation with *stars*, *planets*, *hours*, *signs*, and other symbols. If this proves to be the case, then what is noticeable about Shakespeare's usage is his limited use of the expected collocations, and the use of some that strike us as out of the ordinary. On an intuitive scale of collocational unexpectedness for a following noun, in the early 17th century, I would place *mistress* at the top, then *eye*, then *gales*, then *altars*, and finally the predictable *stars*. The ESL

corpus would enable us to provide quantitative evidence to support or reject this scale. If other writers use *auspicious mistress*, and the others, then we may need to look elsewhere for instances of Shakespearean uniqueness. (I say 'may' because there could still be something in the context of these particular usages that makes them unique - some sociolinguistic or pragmatic factor, perhaps.)

This example illustrates the first point I made above, how the methodology of the ESL corpus can provide a model and a stimulus for further research; but it also illustrates the second point, making us think about the strengths and limitations of the models themselves. Several papers in this collection show the semantic illumination that can be provided by the study of collocations - a tool which has been little exploited (until now) in Shakespearean studies. It can provide great insight into the way Shakespeare's mind worked - I think of time ambling, trotting, galloping.... - and the approach well illustrates its applicability to the analysis of character, genre, metaphor, and other domains. A great deal can be discovered about meaning and use even within the ESL range of three words on either side of a node. As Culpeper says in his introduction, 'Being corpus-based implies both a particular method for revealing meanings, and a particular theoretical approach to meaning'.

The findings motivate us to take this approach further, but as we do so we encounter a number of challenges, which I illustrate from the opening lines of Sonnet 33:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy

I doubt whether any two people would agree about the number and nature of the collocations in these lines, apart from saying that 'everything seems to collocate with everything'! There is no problem with the straightforward adjective + noun combinations such as *glorious* and *morning*, or such phrases as *full* and *many*; adjacent sequences of this kind provide the focus of traditional collocational studies. But how do we handle the fact that *morning* collocates with *flatter* (the fourth word away), *kissing* (10+ words away), and *gilding* (17+ words away)? (I use + because it is unclear whether *mountain-tops* is one word, as in this modern edition, or two, as in F1's *mountaine tops*.) Widely separated collocations are not a major problem when studying such varieties as conversation, as we do not speak in carefully crafted extended sentences; but they are a major problem in poetry, where such factors as word order variation, interpolated constructions, subordination, and pro-forms interfere with any simple notion of nearness to a node. This example (*Ham* I.i.36) illustrates the kind of issue we encounter:

> When yond same star that's westward from the pole
> Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven
> Where now it burns...

The restrictive relative clause separates *star* from *course*, and we have to allow for the pronoun *it* to maintain the collocation of *star + burn*.

Premodifications present a particular difficulty. What actually is being kissed in *Kissing with golden face the meadows green*? The primary collocation is *kiss + meadow*, as would be clearer if he had written *Kissing the meadows green with golden face* (and as he does in the next line, where the adverbial is left to the end). Presumably also we accept *kiss + face* as a collocation, as well as *golden + face* and *meadow + green*. But is it sensible or useful to assert that *kiss* collocates with *green* or *golden*? Or that *green* collocates with *golden*? There are certainly cases where sense relations such as antonymy or hyponymy bring items together - a good example is 'by day my limbs, by night my mind' (Sonnet 27), where we would want to link not only *day* and *night* - a

common enough collocation - but also *limbs* and *mind* (much less common). Does this kind of reasoning apply to *green* and *golden*? We need some semantic theory here, as Culpeper suggests, such as - for this example - a structural semantics of the type developed by John Lyons.

A grammatical (one might say, colligational) perspective is also essential. What is the collocational relationship between a verb and its following object noun phrase or adverbial phrase? Are all the words after *gilding* collocates of this verb? Or equally so? Or should we impose some sort of grammatical hierarchy? First-order collocations in this line would be *gild + stream, gild + alchemy, pale + stream, heavenly+ alchemy*. Second-order collocations would be *pale + heavenly* - or perhaps we would want to say that, despite their nearness to each other, the grammar tells us that there is really no lexical relationship between these two words at all.

These examples suggest that we need to develop a collocational discovery procedure, in which we identify those grammatical constructions that reinforce our sense that a collocation is present, and those which do not. Possessive constructions are especially awkward to handle. We do want to say that *kiss* collocates with *daughter* in Falstaff's riposte, 'But not kissed your keeper's daughter?' (*MW* 1.1.107), but we do not want to say that it collocates with *keeper*. And the genitive construction is a subtype of the much larger category of premodifications, in which all adjectives have to be appropriately construed. In 'can you carry your good will to the maid? (*MW* 1.1.214), *good* clearly collocates with *will* but not with *maid*, and any collocational study which suggested the opposite would be seriously misleading.

I was not expecting to find myself exploring any of this when I agreed to write this Afterword. But, as I said at the outset, the papers in this collection inspire a reader to think in new ways and try out new techniques. They illustrate very well the aims of the project, to show what can be done, these days, using corpora to investigate grammatical and lexical choices, and to explore how these features can be related to a wide range of concerns. Anyone interested in this area of scholarship will want to take up Murphy *et a*l's invitation to 'create their own subcorpora', and explore further. The ESL project has certainly lived up to its aim to give a new direction to Shakespearean language studies, and, as Culpeper hopes in his introduction, to 'bring scholarship on Shakespeare's language fully into the 21st-century'. Each of the domains that corpus stylistics opens up - social, cultural, psychological, dramatic, literary, educational - introduces us to fresh perspectives and takes us in new directions. A new branch of linguistics might even emerge. It is just beginning to dawn on me - after reading the paper by Murphy, Culpeper, Gillings and Pace-Sigge - what a field of 'applied corpus stylistics' could look like. It is a brave new world indeed.