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Contents

Letter from the Editors

Hello again, we hope you are all either enjoying your summer and/or getting on with all those things you've had to postpone during the past term.

VIEWS is in its fourth year now, and putting on a little weight - thanks to the rich diet our contributors keep feeding us, and thanks to the Senate of the University of Vienna for funding this issue.

This issue is a bit on the historical side once again - with the notable exception of Andrea Bonazza's contribution. Also, once more one of the contributions has been prompted by Roger Lass, who is on the best way of becoming our Patron Saint, it seems.

Finally, we are proud to inform you that VIEWS is intending to become even more interactive than it already is. If things work as we hope, VIEWS should be accessible on the World Wide Web by the end of this year, so that you'll be able to VIEW, read and print us at the command of your fingertips, as a certain rich person would put it. Until that actually comes to pass, though, we invite you cordially to contact us via the well-trodden paths of snail mail, fax or e-mail, and to let us have your VIEWS on the issues that bother you in this issue. Here are our addresses once again:

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The Editors

Note to contibutors:

Your contributions should reach us on computer disks (or via e-mail) in any standard IBM compatible word processing format (MS Word, Word for Windows, Wordperfect [for Windows], Word Star, R.T.F., ASCII ...) together with a printout showing character format, special symbols, formulae, tables etc.

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Saussurean Traces In Cognitive Semantics

Andrea Bonazza, Trieste

0. Introduction

An observation and a conviction have been motivating the present work: (i) the difficulty of tracing a concise theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics[1] which should be coherent and sufficiently representative of the various contributions, and (ii) the idea that a comparison with the main linguistic schools which developed in the twentieth century could help shed some light on the contemporary situation.

Contradictory judgements have emerged from the few studies which have adopted such a historical point of view (cf. Rastier 1991, Geeraerts 1988a, 1988b, 1992). In spite of this, they seem to be unanimous in stating an unbridgeable gap between cognitivism and structuralism as regards the main methodological and philosophical assumptions.

However, going deeper into such notions as linguistic autonomy (cf. 5.2.) and conceptualism (cf. 4.2.), which have often been too vaguely conceived, a different standpoint can be taken, from which diametrically opposed conclusions can be drawn: cognitive semantics and linguistics of Saussurean tradition can be shown to be substantially compatible when confronted to such crucial themes as objectivism (cf. 2.) or linguistic Aristotelism (cf. 3.).

1. Difficulties of cognitive linguistics: the 'modernist amnesia'

Cognitive linguists (Langacker 1987: 2; Taylor 1989: viii) have repeatedly denounced the precarious state of this approach as far as its theoretical foundations are concerned. This situation is well described by Radden (1992):

> The interdisciplinary field subsumed under the label cognitive linguistics is as wide as aspects of cognition determine, underlie or reflect aspects of language. There is not just one valid approach to the study of language and cognition, but a diversity of legitimate and rewarding approaches each enlightening a different aspect of their interplay. [...] What is needed now are both deeper research into the cognitive make-up of natural language and an understanding of the goals of cognitive linguistics. (Radden 1992: 534-5)

[1]For instance, Lakoff (1987), Johnson (1987), Langacker (1987, 1991), Rudzka-Ostyn (1988), Taylor (1989), Tsohatzidis (1990), Sweetser (1990).

The seemingly generic invitation of the German linguist betrays in fact a diffuse feeling: owing to the interdisciplinary character of the research[2], and to the heterogeneity of the matter, the *goals* of the discipline - '*l'objet*', in Saussurean terms[3] - seems to have been lost sight of.

This may be partly due to the fact that cognitive literature lacks a well-grounded, if not a thorough, setting of its semantic approach within the background of twentieth-century, or even previous, linguistic theories. According to Lakoff (1987), for instance, modern cognitive science has inherited a semantic model from a two-thousand-year tradition of thought, dating back as far as Aristotle: this *traditional* vision, actually reduced to a theory of categorization according to the doctrine of necessary and sufficient conditions, is called 'objectivist paradigm'.

However, Lakoff is not alone in this attitude: he is only renewing a widespread phenomenon in linguistic studies, which Rastier summarizes in the formula of 'la théorie de la table rase', or 'de l'ignorance délibérée'. Being mostly concerned with assessing the novelty of their theories, linguists thus tend to look back at older theories in a rather superficial way:

> Dans le domaine de la linguistique, où les théories ne sont pas proprement «falsifiables», on déclare volontiers périmées des théories simplement démodées, au risque de candidement réinventer l'eau chaude. (Rastier 1991: 25n)

Dirk Geeraerts tries to compensate for this lack of historical perspective in cognitive linguistics. In a series of articles (1988a, 1988b, 1992) he sketches the theoretical and methodological outline from which the achievement of cognitive semantics seems to originate almost by a kind of ineluctable historical necessity.

Geeraerts draws two main conclusions from his study. Firstly, because of the methodological affinities shared by the two schools (psychological orientation, flexible conception of lexical meaning, renewed interest in *diachrony*), modern cognitive semantics can profitably resort to the historical-philological tradition as regards empirical observations, classificatory mechanisms, explanatory hypotheses. Secondly, with further generalization, he maintains that the history of semantic methodology is basically characterized by an alternative between, on the one hand, an *objectivist*, autonomistic or structural conception of meaning, which makes a 'natural science' of linguistics, and, on the other hand, an *experiential*, conceptualistic approach, represented by pre- and post-structural schools, aiming to include linguistics among the 'human sciences'.

Within the limits of both the adopted point of observation - the methodology of lexical semantics - and the authors I have chosen as representative, the

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[2]For an understanding of the meaning of interdisciplinarity in cognitive linguistics, see Langacker's specifications.

[3]Cf. Saussure (1922: chap. II), De Mauro (1967: note 40).

first conclusion drawn by Geeraerts is perfectly acceptable and worthy of deeper consideration. The second conclusion, however, seems less convincing, because it tends to go beyond the adopted perspective to assert a generalized equation objectivism = structuralism:

> by abstracting away from subjective, psychological factors, structuralism and logical semantics alike tend to be objectivist approaches. In both cases, meaning is primarily defined as an objective entity that is independent of the individual mind: the supra-individual structure of language, or possible-world truth conditions. (Geeraerts 1988a: 672)

The sense of 'objectivism' as usually referred to in semantic theory should now be defined.

2. Objectivism in semantic theory

The definition is indirect and rather vague in Geeraerts (1988a: 652): structural semantics is objectivist because it tends to borrow methodological models from 'natural' sciences, which aim to account for the nature of the material world by means of rigid laws, while 'human' sciences, on which cognitive semantics is based, have recourse to a process of interpretation in order to try to explain the cultural and historical forms in which men have "laid down their experience of the world".

A more precise formulation of objectivism can be found in Lakoff:

> COGNITIVIST OBJECTIVIST SEMANTICS: Linguistic expressions (e.g., words) get their meaning indirectly via a correspondence with concepts which are taken to be symbols used in thought. Those symbols, in turn, get their meaning via their capacity to correspond to entities and categories in the world. (Lakoff 1987: 168)

Mark Johnson insists on the notion of correspondence:

> Meaning is an abstract relation between symbolic representations (either words or mental representations) and objective (i.e., mind-independent) reality. These symbols get their meaning solely by virtue of their capacity to correspond to things, properties, and relations existing objectively "in the world." (Johnson 1987: xxii)

This vision of language is strictly - if not necessarily - linked to a philosophical perspective that Hilary Putnam, the American philosopher who spread, and then rejected, the idea of *functionalism* in cognitive science[4], calls *metaphysical realism*:

> On this perspective, the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects. There is exactly one true and complete description of 'the way the world is'.

[4]Functionalism (Putnam 1988: chap. 5) maintains that it is possible to study the activity of thought independently from its biological or artificial *material substratum*. Therefore, it represents the theoretical foundations of cognitive science interpreted as the study of natural and artificial intelligent systems, or as the study of the former (the human mind) through models built upon the latter (the computer).

> Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things. (Putnam 1981: 49)

A specific study would be needed to ascertain to what extent this general view of language falls into line with the methodology of the authors quoted by Geeraerts as representatives of the structural school (Trier, Weisgerber, Lounsbury, Goodenough, Pottier, Coseriu, Lyons, Katz, Fodor).

What I would like to show here is that the equation between structural semantics and objectivism certainly does not apply in relation to an important tradition in structural semantic research, based on the ideas of an author whom Geeraerts does not quote, but who was often seen as the very founder of structural semantics as characterized by Geeraerts himself (1988a: 664-7), namely, Ferdinand de Saussure.

> Not only is the study of sense relations "one of the cardinal principles of 'structuralism', as developed by de Saussure and his followers" (Lyons 1968: 443), but the centrality of the Saussurean notion of *valeur* in the analysis of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations is also reckoned (Palmer 1981[2]: 67), and the influence of the *Cours* is generally deemed unquestionable also in the study of semantic fields (Berruto 1976: 21, Lyons 1977: 231).

It is precisely the systematic absence of Saussure - and of the linguists who drew on his ideas such as Hjelmslev, Martinet, Benveniste - which makes Geeraerts' observations seriously lacking. It is not a simple question of completeness. An account - a non fragmentary account, according to a still prevailing habit - of Saussure's role in the history of semantic thought would presumably have led Geeraerts to overturn his own conclusions about the relationship between structuralism and objectivism.

3. Linguistic Aristotelism

Historians of language who considered Saussure's contribution to be crucial in the evolution of twentieth-century semantic thought[5] seem to agree in contrasting it with a conception of language and meaning which is well summed up in the following statement:

> Words spoken are symbols or signs of affections or impressions of the soul: written words are signs of words spoken. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies. (Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, I, quoted in Harris 1988: 27)[6]

It is the famous and influential Aristotelian theory of meaning, that is "the first organic formulation of language as an inventory of elements exactly re-

[5]Cf. Harris (1988), Rastier (1991), De Mauro (1993[8]).

[6]See also Rastier (1991: 75) and De Mauro (1993[8]: 42-3).

flecting the elements that constitute a unique and universal reality" (De Mauro 1993[8]: 42).

Let us compare it with the above quoted definitions of *objectivism*: clearly enough, it is the same view of language opposed by cognitive linguists' *experientialism*, and this is all the more evident from the following, less cryptic version of the *Aristotelian triad* given by Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologica*, I, quoted in Rastier 1991: 75):

> Les paroles sont les signes des pensées et les pensées des similitudes (*similitudines*) des choses. D'où il suit que les paroles se réfèrent aux choses désignées moyennant les concepts.

The limits of a generic interpretation of structural semantics as an objectivist approach have now become clear: the scholars who have not been content with simplistic conventional readings of Saussure's work have not failed to see that the very crux of his theory can be precisely summarized in a reaction against this way of conceiving language, which dominated Western philosophical thought - with a few (though meaningful) exceptions[7] - for two millennia.

So, in different historical periods, and for different critical reasons, Saussure - along with the 'linguistique de tradition saussurienne'[8] - and cognitive semantics have opposed the same linguistic view, variously called linguistic Aristotelism, nomenclaturism, or objectivism, which aims at a *surrogationalist*[9] reduction of human languages to simple *véhicules du sens*, mere phonic dress of universal and transcendent conceptual substances. According to Aristotle language is

> a script of the soul. It consists in rewriting sequences of psychical data which are then faithfully transmitted to the outside, without being altered. Its theoretical importance lies in its nature of faithful messenger, since in any way of manifesting itself it testifies the possibility of non-controvertible relations between two entities: the word and the psychical or ontological datum. (De Mauro 1993[8]: 49)

The epistemological assumptions of this conception, rejected by Putnam as an expression of *metaphysical realism*, or 'God's Eye view' (1981: 49), are the same that Saussure saw materialized in that "superficial notion of the general public: people see nothing more than a name-giving system in language" (1922: 34), while "there are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (1922: 155). Otherwise, "If words stood for

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[7]Cf. De Mauro (1993[8]: 51-72).

[8]De Mauro includes Benveniste, Martinet, Hjelmslev, Whorf, Mounin, Lyons, Prieto among the followers of Saussurean semantics while Rastier's 'differential semantics' is defended, among others, by Greimas, Pottier, Coseriu.

[9]"Surrogationalism accepts as axiomatic the principle that words have meaning for us because words 'stand for'- are surrogate for - something else" (Harris 1988: 10).

pre-existing concepts, they would all have the same exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next; but this is not true" (1922: 161).

The philosophical origin of this "conception fort naïve, mais assez répandue" is also clear to, among others, Martinet:

> Cette notion de langue-répertoire se fonde sur l'idée simpliste que le monde tout entier s'ordonne, antérieurement à la vision qu'en ont les hommes, en catégories d'objets parfaitement distinctes, chacune recevant nécessairement une désignation dans chaque langue [...]. (Martinet 1960: 15)

and to Whorf:

> We cut up and organize the spread and flow of events as we do, largely because, through our mother tongue, we are parties to an agreement to do so, *not because nature itself is segmented in exactly that way for all us to see*. (Whorf 1956: 240, emphasis added)

In conclusion, the generalized inclusion of structuralism in the domain of objectivist methodologies seems unacceptable in several aspects: besides overstating the novelty of cognitive semantics, it fails to do justice to the diversity of the structural school and, although it can apply to some of its outcomes (Katz & Fodor's universalist componential analysis, for instance), it culpably ignores the crucial reasons of its very conceptual origins.

4. The presence of Saussure in cognitive linguistics

Other implications of Saussurean semantics can emerge from the evaluation of Saussure's presence in the cognitive literature on meaning. If it is correct to maintain that both Saussurean and cognitive semantics can find a common definition in their refusal of semantic objectivism, then it will not be surprising to find in the latter (more or less explicit) traces of the thought of the former.

4.1. Misreading Langacker and Saussure

In this context it seems surprising that in a wide and highly critical survey of linguistic theories developed within modern cognitive science, François Rastier (1991: 109), insisting upon the notion of *autonomy* (cf. 5.2), concludes that cognitivism is basically incompatible with any linguistic semantics which claims to be independent of logic or psychology, and, as a result, incompatible with Saussure:

> [...] le seul linguiste à mentionner Saussure est, que je sache, Langacker (1987: p.11), qui présente un schéma d'inspiration saussurienne. Il superpose à une suite phonique (*tree*) le dessin d'un arbre. Outre qu'il s'accorde avec l'iconisme bien connu des grammaires californiennes, ce dessin suggère classiquement que le sens est la représentation mentale d'un objet. Ce modèle du signe s'accorde avec la triade: il en reflète la première étape. (Rastier 1991: 109)

This passage illustrates the perspective from which Rastier views cognitive linguistics as considered in this paper (see footnote 1). He admits that such lin-

guists as Talmy, Lakoff and Langacker gained some merit in the construction of non-formalist theories, but this is considered not sufficient to ensure them a well-defined place in the general context of cognitive research. Rastier seems to neglect the rich differentiation of the theories gathered under the label of 'cognitivism', and this is confirmed by the fact that he does not quote many of the authors and works generally considered as representative of the paradigm of cognitive linguistics, such as M. Johnson, D. Geeraerts, E. Sweetser, J. R. Taylor, S. Tsohatzidis (1990), B. Rudzka-Ostyn (1988).

To ignore the specificity of this trend means to exclude from the cognitive world an important movement which strongly opposes the 'official' philosophy of the program. It means as well to fail to see that in precisely some of these works the name of Saussure is present, and sometimes with great emphasis.

However, Langacker's pages quoted by Rastier will be the starting point for a global evaluation of Saussure's presence in the cognitive linguistics school:

> Language is symbolic in nature. It makes available to the speaker - for either personal or communicative use - an open-ended set of linguistic **signs** or **expressions**, each of which associates a semantic representation of some kind with a phonological representation.

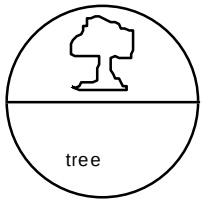

Fig. I.I

> I therefore embrace the spirit of classic Saussurean diagrams like Fig. I.I, with the understanding that explicit, substantive characterization is required for the elements they depict. (Langacker 1987: 11)

After this brief tribute to the Swiss linguist, Langacker hastens to specify in the following paragraph that he wants to keep his distance from this "classic conception" in some fundamental points.

As a first thing, although he admits the substantial validity of the principle of *l'arbitraire du signe*, he adds that its importance should not be overrated, because (i) polymorphemic linguistic signs are non-arbitrary to the extent that they are *analysable*, and (ii) monomorphemic lexemes as well are subject to pervasive motivating phenomena such as analogy, onomatopoeia, sound-symbolism, iconicity. Secondly, the conception of the symbolic nature of language is not limited, in Langacker, to the lexicon, but should be extended to grammar in general: morphological and syntactic structures are also inherently symbolic.

Yet, far from alienating him from Saussure, Langacker's objections draw him very close to the author of the *Cours*, and ironically confirm the basic as-

sumption lying behind this historical parallel, which makes Langacker 'Saussurean in spite of himself'.

Saussure (1922: 182-4) is well aware that the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign should not overshadow the interest for any aspect of language that can be relatively motivated. He explains the phenomenon of the *relatively arbitrary* by the same principles which determine the acquisition of the *value* of a linguistic unit within a system, that is the set of syntagmatic and associative relations. Thus, a lexeme is motivated by the possibility of analysing it, but also - which Langacker seems to forget - by its being part of a paradigm[10].

In Saussure's *Cours* the phenomenon of analogy is dealt with in no less than 4 chapters[11], in which it is specified that "the role of analogy is immense" (1922: 237), precisely as a manifestation of what Simone (1990: 178) calls "a pressure by the user on the language system aiming at a REDUCTION OF MORPHOLOGICAL ARBITRARINESS".

Saussure appeared less convincing to many in his treatment of onomatopoeia and sound-symbolism. However, his criticism against nomenclaturism required that no doubt be left about any arguing over the natural inherence of the noun to the thing. Now that it is completely assimilated that the 'primordial' character of the linguistic sign is its arbitrariness, such approaches as cognitive semantics will be free to put in the foreground long-neglected iconic and functional aspects of language[12], without violating Saussure's main principles. The whole point is correctly presented by Eve Sweetser, who exactly singles out the historical polemic reasons lying behind the *Cours*:

> it was necessary to firmly establish the arbitrary nature of linguistic convention, in order to liberate linguistics from futile attempts to see onomatopoeia at the root of all linguistic usage. We should now be ready to go back to the examination of iconicity and other motivating factors in the choice of linguistic forms, without any danger of losing our understanding of conventionality. (Sweetser 1990: 5)

Going back to the comparison between the *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar* and the *Cours de linguistique générale*, it is Taylor (1990: 523) who shows that the second point of the presumed disagreement is ill-founded. In dealing with the linguistic value, Saussure (1922: 161) maintains that "ce qui est dit des mots s'applique à n'importe quel terme de la langue, par exemple aux entités grammaticales"; for "Langacker, too, the 'symbolic units' of a lan-

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[10]In Saussure's example: *dix-neuf* is motivated by the fact that it can be analysable into the parts composing it (*dix* and *neuf*), and that it can evoke such associated terms as *vingt-neuf*, etc.

[11]Cf. chapters IV- VII, part 3.

[12]"Large areas of language structure turn out to be motivated as part of our cognitive system and can be reasonably explained. The notions of *motivation* and functional *explanation* have become the key concepts of the cognitive approach" (Radden 1992: 513).

guage comprise not only lexical and morphemic items, but also word classes and grammatical constructions." (Taylor 1990: 523).

Let us now focus on the discussion of Rastier's controversial passage quoted at the beginning of this subchapter:

He thinks the reproduction of the 'typical' Saussurean diagram proposed by Langacker an unequivocal sign of Langacker's acceptance of *nomenclaturist* semantic models. The coupling of the tree's picture with the phonic sequence *tree* allegedly represents the first part of the traditional triad *word - thing - concept*, where the meaning is reduced to a mental representation of an object.

Thus, it seems legitimate to reproach Langacker with the use of vague terminology where great accuracy would be required, and a misuse of the Saussurean sources in his quotation.

First of all, Langacker is vague in talking of the linguistic sign as an association of a 'semantic representation' with a 'phonetic representation': *representation* is a term that Rastier associates with the *mirroring* function of language typically presupposed by Aristotelian semantics. Moreover, he shows little familiarity with Saussurean questions of the linguistic sign, talking alternatively of 'signs' and 'expressions', when in Hjelmslev (1953: chap. 13), one of the best known developments of Saussure's semiology, the term *expression* refers to only a single part of the sign, viz. its *signifiant* pole.

Secondly, Langacker is unlucky in his choice of a diagram: of the three figures on page 99 of the *Cours*, he precisely reproduces the one which is absent in the manuscript sources, and which exemplarily testifies "the rather serious consequences stemming from apparently modest interventions by the editors" (De Mauro 1967: note 132). This figure, inopportunely added by the editors, suggests in effect that the relationship *signifiant - signifié* can be equated with the union of a word and the image of a thing. That this was not the author's intent is undisputed. That it is not Langacker's intention to appeal to Saussure as an alleged nomenclaturist is what I will try to show in the following paragraph.

4.2. Meaning and conceptualization

According to Rastier (1991: 88 ff.), a basic incompatibility should be asserted between, on the one hand, any *differential* and structural semantic theory, to be included in a linguistic discipline as a social science, and, on the other hand, any *cognitive* semantic approach, positing the relevance of a mental level of meaning. In so far as it keeps identifying meaning with the *concept*, rather than with the Saussurean *signifié*, cognitive semantics is unable to escape the Aristotelian triad.

Undeniably, Langacker (1987: 12) maintains that language is an aspect of human cognition, and accordingly any description of language structure should

be articulated with "what is known about cognitive processing in general". More than that, meaning itself is equated with *conceptualization,* to be broadly interpreted as mental experience (1987: 99; 1988b: 50).

Yet, Langacker's conceptualism is not sufficient *per se* to justify the inclusion of Cognitive Grammar within the framework of universalist and objectivist semantic theories on which the 'orthodox' cognitivist research is generally founded.

In the first place, any interdisciplinary reference by Langacker, on his own admission, is subordinate to chiefly linguistic interests (1987: 6, 99, 115). But, most importantly, it is the semiotic dimension of language, in which Langacker coherently sets his treatment of meaning, that invalidates Rastier's criticism and confirms the parallel between cognitive semantics and (Saussurean) structuralism.

Semantic structure, the product of conceptualization, it is explicitly characterized as:

> a conceptual structure that functions as the semantic pole of a linguistic expression. Hence semantic structures are regarded as conceptualizations shaped for symbolic purposes according to the dictates of linguistic convention. (Langacker 1987: 98)

In other words, Langacker's conceptualistic approach does not prevent him from asserting that it is possible to deal with meaning only to the extent that it is structured in a *linguistic convention*, as the 'pole' of a linguistic sign. Through a detailed description of the 'cognitive abilities' of the speaker as a conceptualizing subject, Langacker (1987: chap. 3) provides his theory with valid arguments in order to defend a 'subjectivist' (that is, non-objectivist) conception of meaning:

> the meaning of an expression is not determined in any unique or mechanical way from the nature of the objective situation it describes. The same situation can be described by a variety of semantically distinct expressions that embody different ways of construing or structuring it. (Langacker 1987: 107)

The semantic value of an expression does not reside in the inherent properties of the entity or situation it describes, but crucially involves as well the way we choose to think about this entity or situation and mentally portray it. (Langacker 1988a: 6-7)

It is our conception of reality (not the real world per se) that is relevant to linguistic semantics. (Langacker 1987: 114)

Shift in attention, level of schematicity or elaboration, selection, figure/ground organization, viewpoint, orientation and directionality[13] are among the resources made available to each speaker by the *conventional imagery* so that he may contextually assign a meaning to his experience, because "the full conceptual value or semantic value of a conceived situation is a function of not

[13]See Langacker (1988b) for a brief account.

only its content (to the extent that one can speak of content apart from construal), but also of how we structure this content with respect to such matters as attention, [...]" (Langacker 1987: 138). Through these cognitive-linguistic mechanisms, the speaker does not limit himself to passively record objective meanings given in advance of language, but he himself is responsible for what Grace (1987) calls the "linguistic construction of reality".

5. Saussurean semantics

It still remains to be explained how linguistic and philosophical ideas already unsteady at the beginning of the century, and seriously undermined by Saussure's and Wittgenstein's criticisms[14], could have resisted, in various shapes, the erosion of time, and even recovered a dominant position in the semantic research carried out within the program of 'MIT style' cognitive science (cf. Putnam 1988).

5.1. A historical puzzle

Two reasons at least have paved the way - in Rastier's account (1991: 49-71) - for the predominance of formal, objectivist semantic theories in cognitive science: (i) the influence of the *desiderata* of computer scientists, naturally inclined towards formal programs such as generativism; (ii) Chomsky's recovery of the *dogmatic* conception of science which characterized the rationalist tradition of Port-Royal's General Grammar.

However, if a non-Aristotelian and non-universalist conception of meaning - such as Saussure's - had great difficulty in asserting itself in twentieth-century linguistics, and easily gave way to logical and truth-conditional semantic theories, that is so also because the scholars who adhered to it had meagre following, especially among American linguists.

In particular, Saussure's reception in the linguistics of this century could hardly be more controversial. Because of the very reading the editors of the *Cours* gave of him, and since the important exegesis of his work started in the 60's was mostly ignored, Saussure is still seen as the linguist who had many loose, unsystematic ideas, generally deemed influential, but needing rectification: the famous dichotomies *langue* and *parole*, synchrony and diachrony, paradigmatic and syntagmatic, the *valeur* in the system, linguistic autonomy, the arbitrariness of the sign.

Two further aspects should be taken into account if we wish to understand why the name of Saussure is mostly forgotten in much contemporary research on meaning (even, as shown by Geeraerts, in a historical perspective): (i) the misunderstanding caused by the editors themselves (Saussure 1922: 10, 34n;

[14]Cf. Harris (1988).

De Mauro 1967: note 14), whereby it has long been believed that "Saussure, as is well known, was not interested in semantics" (Berruto 1976: 21), and (ii) the semantic scepticism which conditioned not only Anglo-Saxon linguistic theory until the mid 70's.

Along with Saussure, his attack on nomenclaturism was forgotten as well. Consequently, the ingenuous conception 'of the general public' seems nowadays to be the common denominator, beyond the contrasts due to differences in method, shared by cognitive-science semantics:

> Logicians have only related language to models in various ways; psychologists have only related it to itself. The real task, however, is to show how language relates to the world through the agency of the mind. (Johnson-Laird 1988: 115)

innatist theories:

> The speed and the precision of vocabulary acquisition leaves no real alternative to the conclusion that the child somehow has the concepts prior to experience with language, and is basically *learning labels for concepts that are already part of his or her conceptual apparatus*. (Chomsky 1988: 28, emphasis added)

the search for semantic and lexical primitives:

> [...] Chomsky's thoughts on the subject of lexical universals are based on speculative reflection rather than on any empirical investigations.
> On the other hand, there are good reasons to believe that every language has words available for the basic human concepts, and that everything that can be expressed at all can be expressed by combining those basic concepts in the right way. (Wierzbicka 1992: 6, 20)

universalist approaches:

> Wierzbicka argues that the universal "alphabet of human thought" (the 'primitive', basic conceptual elements from which all the meanings in all the languages of the world are formed) postulated by her is the "common measure" which allows communication and understanding between (the speakers of) all languages in the world, whereas I think that this "common measure" must be looked for elsewhere: in the last instance *in the real world outside of us, which surrounds us and which is the object of our thinking, and which is common to all of us*. (Immler 1991: 46, emphasis added)

Upholders of componential analysis maintain that a difference should be drawn between 'strong' and 'weak' versions of universalism (cf. Berruto 1976: 55-6; Kempson 1977: par. 2.5.; Immler 1991: 55). The former states that the lexical items of natural languages are only different labels for the same universal meanings, while the latter posits the existence of a universal inventory of semantic features, by whose combinations in different ways the human languages structure their own semantic systems. Because of this distinction, only the strong version - it is said - is subject to a nomenclaturist reduction of language, "absolutely indefensible after Saussure" (Berruto 1976: 55).

However, if we adhere to the implications of the Saussurean theory of the linguistic sign, which is the core of his semantic theory[15], the 'weak' solution cannot escape the criticism of nomenclaturism either, since it still admits that meaning exists *independently* of the natural languages which express it, and that it belongs, *objectively*, to properties of the referent, to categories of the logic, or to the genetic endowment of humans.

On the contrary, stating that the linguistic sign is the relationship between, or the inseparable union of a *signifiant* and a *signifié* implies that meaning exists only as codified in a historical language which thought it necessary to make it the object of verbal communication. Now, since the semantic dimension of the sign cannot be linked to *things* or *ideas*, the solution of the identity of the linguistic sign[16] must be sought in the complex network of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations linking the sign to the other elements of the linguistic system to which it belongs and in which it finds its *value*.

5.2. Linguistic Autonomy

Saussure comes to this conclusion by virtue of the semiotic perspective which he adopted, but a persistent misleading interpretation of Saussure's thought made him, because of his theory of the *valeur*, the champion of a *linguistic autonomy* to be read as (i) closedness and short-sightedness of the discipline, and (ii) study of an unmoving, unchanging and synchronically homogeneous system.

Consequently, a more correct evaluation of the reasons of the Saussurean conception of language as a system of relations is needed. To this end, it would not be irrelevant to know - as has been known for a few decades - that the famous conclusion of the *Cours* about the study of language 'in and for itself' was a simple and rash manipulation of Saussurean original notes by the editors (cf. De Mauro 1967: 454). The sense in which Saussure talked of autonomy should be contextualized from a historical point of view: he wanted linguistics to be a science able to give itself *une matière*, *un objet*, and a general theory which could *explain*, thus opposing the mere phonological and morphological descriptivism that had been absorbing linguists' efforts for half a century.

On the contrary, clues of the deep awareness of the social and historical character - 'experiential', cognitive linguists would say - of language can be found in several pages of the text:

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[15]The difficulty in seeing any semantic theory in Saussure's thought is thus exemplified in Palmer's specification (1981^2: 5-6) that "He, unfortunately, used the term SIGN to refer to the associations of these two [*signifiant and signifié*], but some of his more recent followers have, more reasonably, used it for the signifier alone".

[16]Cf. Saussure (1922^2: 150-4, 249-50), De Mauro (1993^8: 140-6).

> language never exists apart from the social fact, for it is a semiological phenomenon. Its social nature is one of its inner characteristics. [...] the thing which keeps language from being a social convention that can be modified at the whim of interested parties […] is the action of time combined with the social force. (Saussure 1922: 112-3)

Separating the study of language from any social, historical and cultural consideration was not Saussure's intention, as is clearly stated by Roy Harris:

> according to Saussure a linguistic sign, as far as the individual language-user is concerned, is a mental association between a concept and a sound pattern. But this is by no means the whole story. For, as Saussure insists repeatedly throughout the *Cours*, one cannot explain the linguistic sign as a mere fact of individual psychology. Every individual, *qua* language user, is a social being, and language is above all a social phenomenon. (Harris 1988: 12)

The arbitrariness itself of the linguistic sign, conceived as the absence of a *necessary* link between the *word* and the *thing* or the *idea* representing the thing, implies in its turn the necessity of the consent of the speakers on the organization of the *signifiés* and *signifiants* in linguistic signs as set by *use*:

> The arbitrary nature of the sign explains in turn why the social fact alone can create a linguistic system. The community is necessary if values that owe their existence solely to usage and general acceptance are to be set up; by himself the individual is incapable of fixing a single value. (Saussure 1922: 157)

However, the later exegesis would state more firmly that the relationship between the notion of *system* and the society was the very end towards which Saussure's theory was bound to move, as a solution to the problem of *incommunicability* that was implicit in the theory of value[17].

In effect, if the extreme implications of the notion of value as presented in the *Cours* are accepted, it should be inferred that a balancing process is put into action, causing the whole structure to be readjusted, whenever a single lexical item is added to or eliminated from any language system. If we consider the enormous disparity among the lexical memories of the speakers within the same speech community, it remains unexplained how it comes that a language could keep its own identity through time (i.e. how culture can be transmitted through generations), and how two persons can find an agreement about the content associated with each expression (i.e. how people can communicate).

The answer was not neat enough to Saussure, and this stopped him from bringing his semantic thought to a final shape, which accordingly needs reconstructing (cf. De Mauro 1994: 119-26).

Human memory, as cognitive linguists perfectly know, puts at the disposal of the speaker a quantity of words which is certainly disproportional to the rich and ever changing cultural experience he should communicate. To overcome this difficulty, the speaker makes use of the mechanisms of semantic extension which allow him to dilate in an unpredictable and creative way the known uses

[17]Cf. De Mauro (1993[8]: chap. 5).

of the words towards new senses. The concrete reality of communication is consequently a world characterized by a subjective, original, idiosyncratic use of language and of meaning.

In spite of this, people communicate and understand each other: to find an explanation, it is necessary to move from this individual level of language, the level of the *parole*, towards a necessarily more abstract level, which posits the ability of the recipient to schematize or categorize the diversity of the concrete senses in *signifiés* on which collective agreement is reached.

Therefore, the incongruous *substance* of the individual language uses takes a *form* in the *langue* because of the action of the social forces of communication. In the *langue* the *signifiants* and the *signifiés* are set in the network of mutual relations called 'system', which is necessarily abstract in nature and supra-individual, since it must be the warrant of communication. But it is far from being static or 'objective', because it is constantly subject to the need of the *masse parlante* to bend it to new communicative needs.

Conclusion

The characterizations of structuralism and of cognitive linguistics which have been presented in this paper obviously do not mean to be exhaustive, nor should the parallels drawn be extended beyond the limits of specified theoretical contexts. Lakoff's and Langacker's theories would otherwise be reduced to mere repetitions of older structuralists' thought. The fact remains that the potential modernity of Saussurean semantics should be acknowledged, especially if we compare it to the latest trends in cognitive linguistic research. Moreover, I have tried to underline the need for a more coherent use of the 'cognitive' qualification, because any misunderstanding tends to obscure the originality of those cognitive linguists who still place the language spoken by men/women at the centre of their concerns.

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Pronouns and terms of address in Shakespearean English: a socio-affective marking system in transition

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0. Background and aims of the study

In this paper, pronouns and, marginally, terms of address used between characters in some Shakespearean plays will be analysed in their role as markers of socio-affective relationships. Our choice fell on three plays: *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*[1], since they depict a range of relationships and conflicts between characters of various social standings and thus yield many interesting examples. Occurrences of second person pronouns were recorded[2], as well as pronoun switches operated when addressing the same interlocutor. Taking into account terms of address as well as contextual and situational variables, it was possible to venture hypotheses about "normal" or unmarked uses, and to motivate switches as deviations triggered by changes in style, emotional state or social attitude.

The sample has already been the object of (socio)-linguistic investigation as Shakespeare's works are considered precious sources of information about the period of transition in which English started to get closer to what it is now. Also, the application of modern theoretical notions to such samples can further our understanding of the encoding of social relationships in a crucial moment for English society, since theatrical works such as Shakespeare's (and also Marlowe's or Ben Jonson's) are assumed to depict spoken interaction more faithfully than other types of literary works, supplying additional evidence besides that from the still partly unexplored non-literary sources.

Recent developments of sociolinguistics and pragmatics have made it clear that language is by no means only a system used to transmit information, but

[1]The same sample was used in a previous, more limited, study (Mazzon 1992). Popular versions of the texts were used, such as those in the New Clarendon Shakespeare Series, since a detailed comparison of all text variants did not seem necessary at this stage.

[2]An "occurrence" of second person pronoun is, for our purposes, each utterance in which one character addresses another using a pronoun or other deictic item; utterances in which pronominal forms addressed to the same character are several were counted as one, since we were not interested in the actual number of forms.

that it is a highly elaborate code used by speakers to relate to each other. Any utterance we produce "stands for" our position with respect to our interlocutors, our ideas about our own and their status, our state of mind etc., besides "betraying" our education, social status, provenance etc. In order for such a subtle marking system to work, the degree of its codification has to be rather high, so that it is immediately evident to all members of the community just who the speaker is and what values s/he supports.

When a community's social structure is in a state of flux, as it was in Elizabethan England, there is serious danger of breakdown in this type of communication: new values and categories have emerged, but one does not know how to relate to them or how to mark one's own inclusion/exclusion from certain groups. The danger goes rather beyond the occasional misunderstanding or social blunder: observance of, or detachment from, certain in-group language norms can result in marginalisation or even open conflict (Brown - Gilman 1960: 269-270).

The use of personal pronouns and terms of address is of course directly relevant to the encoding of new social relationships. "Vertical" and "horizontal" social relationships are expressed in many languages by the use of different second person pronouns, and quite often the titles and other terms we use to address our interlocutors qualify them immediately as belonging to a certain social level, and/or contain reference to their occupation, educational level, marital status etc. In the Elizabethan period these sociolinguistic markers appear to have undergone systemic changes, which can be fruitfully explored through the analysis of a theatrical sample.

Before discussing our findings, we will review previous work on this and contiguous topics: previous studies do not seem to give, for one reason or another, a satisfactory account of the data. In particular, we propose to show that there is nothing "casual" in pronoun choice and switching, and that many occurrences, "stretched" by other scholars to fit general categories, conveniently "swept under the carpet" or hastily dismissed as "exceptions", actually prove to be subtle examples of social and stylistic marking.

1. The story of the shrinking subsystem

After the initial stage in which second person pronoun usage was differentiated into a singular *þu - þe* (later *thou - thee*) and a plural *ye - you* , the system underwent a first change during the 15th century, when *thou* came to be used only to signal intimacy (sometimes, in the 16th century, with *thee* as a nominative form: McLaughlin 1970:239), and uses of *you* extended to the singular to address a superordinate interlocutor. This evolution is rather common in European languages, where it is often the second person plural pronoun which takes over the role of polite form (as in the case of French *tu* and *vous*, which is so

well documented that linguists have chosen the initials of these pronouns to refer in an abbreviated form to this contrast: T/V). Occurrences of *you* used to address a single interlocutor can be found as early as in the 13th century, but it is only two hundred years later that the system can be said to have become stable. This was not to last, in any case, since the balance soon favoured exclusive use of *you,* thus leading to the second important systemic change: the contrast between a polite and an intimate form is excluded from the standard (although it still lives in the dialects: see Wright 1905:§104; Strang 1970:140; Lass 1987:229-31; Leith 1983:104; O'Donnell-Todd [1991]:24; Trudgill-Chambers 1991:7-10) and the marking of social relationships is again entrusted to other linguistic means: the system is in fact even more levelled than in Old English, since there is no singular-plural difference left either[3].

2. Summary of previous research

Shakespeare's works yield interesting evidence concerning the stage at which, allegedly, *you* (and its related forms, henceforth Y) is used to signal social distance or respect and *thou* (henceforth T) can be found at the extreme points of the social relationship scale: it is used to address distant superiors (e.g. the divinity, a use which has survived much longer) or distant inferiors (in which case it often signals contempt); at the same time, the choice between pronouns also conveys emotional distance or proximity (Mausch 1993:143-4), and again T covers both extremes of a scale, signalling love or hate, affection or anger.

The main variables taken into consideration by most studies are in fact social distance (the type of relationship entertained by the interlocutors, together with their respective social ranks) and affective elements. Studies carried out on different Shakespearean works yield different results according to the type of relations portrayed in the sample, but most scholars tend to agree that, generally speaking, the "normal" pronoun is, more and more, Y. This conclusion, far from being supported by unequivocal evidence, is often formulated in terms of the marked/unmarked polarity (Eagleson [1987]:142; Quirk [1987]:7-8; Salmon [1987]:58-9; Mulholland [1987]). Quirk ([1987] :7) also attempts to explain such uses in terms of appropriateness or politeness: "*You* is usually the stylistically unmarked form: it is not so much 'polite' as 'not impolite': it is not

[3]According to Mausch (1993), the system collapsed for morphologic rather than for sociolinguistic reasons; formal similarity encouraged mergers between different forms already in Middle English, accelerated by the fact that verb morphology did not show sensitivity to person distinctions any longer. Salmon ([1987]:47, 70) notes that T is often deleted in questions, i.e. in post-verbal position, possibly because of assimilation between its initial consonant and the final *-t* of the verb ending. This in turn could have encouraged the loss of a distinctive second person verb ending through lack of pronominal "reinforcement" in the surface structure.

so much 'formal' as 'not informal'. It is for this reason that *thou* can operate in such a wide variety of contrasts with *you*''. The same type of explanation is given, for terms of address and salutations, by Replogle ([1987]:102-112), who underlines the shocking effect that can be obtained through deliberate violation of address rules.

After outlining this general situation, most authors explain specific uses on the basis of social and/or affective variables: for instance, Barber ([1987]:173) notes that Y is spreading down the social scale, since it is used not only among upper classes, a use also reported by Mulholland ([1987]:159), but also among "citizens", considered middle class characters. On the contrary, both Barber and Mulholland state that lower class characters regularly address one another with T: as we will see, our data confirm these claims only partially. Other general statements of this type have been made as regards use within the family (e.g. noting the asymmetric relation between fathers and children, who are supposed to give Y and receive T (McIntosh - Williamson 1963:54; Abbott 1925:154; Mulholland [1987]:160): also in this case, our results partly disconfirm this observation), with servants, with strangers. The greatest issue that scholars have had to face is however that of variation or alternation of use with the same interlocutor: the explanation most frequently given is that switches signal variation in affective attitude, and particularly "moments of strong emotion, pleasant or otherwise" (Salmon [1987]:59): anger, contempt, irony, affection, intimacy. Some authors, however, have mentioned other reasons for this kind of variation: euphony or metre (also keeping in mind the specific verb forms that accompany T; Abbott 1925:158), constraints posed by the specific verbs or constructions the pronouns co-occur with (Mulholland [1987]:156-158; Barber [1987]:175-6)[4], or co-variation with terms of address, a point that is of interest here.

The problem with most of these analyses is that they are either extremely specific, discussing pronoun choices in single plays or single scenes and overlooking the rest, or disappointingly vague, as when it is maintained that it is "possible", though not frequent, to address inferiors with Y, and that in these cases switches are neutral (Barber [1987]:165), or when it is reported, without further comment, that T and Y are both "possible" between lower class characters, although the former prevails (Mulholland [1987]:160). The vagueness of these statements and the fact that considering Y "the norm" and T "deviation, exception" contrast with Barber's ([1987]:177) remark that Shakespeare's plays show more T than Y uses (keeping in mind that Y has often plural reference), led us to take into consideration a more recent and theoretically struc-

[4]Note that these constraints do not stand confirmed by more recent studies; cp. Kielkewicz-Janowiak 1994:52.

tured approach. We looked at studies that analyse Shakespeare's works in the light of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, but we found that this approach is, in its turn, not exempt from flaws. In Brown - Gilman (1989), single linguistic acts in a Shakespearean sample that largely overlaps with ours are analysed and scored for politeness, and comments on pronouns and terms of address are included. Terms of address, in particular, are scored for deference, also in view of their importance in Elizabethan England, where the collocation of each interlocutor on the social scale and with respect to Self is very important[5].

As regards pronouns, the authors claim that "normal" usage is governed by social status alone and that deviation is mainly due to "emotional arousal" that causes "expressive" pronoun shift; in these remarks, a lot sounds exactly like what we found in previous studies, although for instance Brown - Gilman (1989:178) highlight the fact that, in Shakespearean English, pronoun usage has the property of retractability, which it does not possess in languages where a stable T/V contrast exists. In these contexts, a pronoun is used consistently with an interlocutor, and when a switch does occur (e.g. when an acquaintance becomes a friend) it is normally not reversible, and mostly in the direction of greater intimacy[6]. On the contrary, in Shakespeare pronoun usage with a single interlocutor, and even within a single utterance, is not consistent. The authors admit that a number of uses cannot easily be explained and conclude by stating that T and Y "are not very important in scoring speech for politeness. This is partly because there are quite a few shifts that we cannot confidently account for and it is partly because, in many of the clear cases that follow the status rule, the pronoun of address, an obligatory aspect of speech, is automatic and ever-present and so does not function to redress an FTA'' (Brown - Gilman 1989: 179)[7].

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[5]Notice however that their categorisation differs from the very accurate one presented by Salmon ([1987]:50-58), particularly in reference to Christian names and "unadorned titles". See also below, § 5.

[6]One could, of course, find counterexamples: family members of royalties or of the Pope have to adjust their uses to the officiality of the situation as secret lovers do. In these cases however the reason for the shift lies in the context of situation and not in the relationship itself, which is assumed to proceed unaltered "below the surface".

[7]The same dismissal can be found in Kopytko (1993), a work that also moves within the framework of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, even though it criticises some aspects of this approach. Although Kopytko argues for a non-modular and non-reductionist view of pragmatics, he shares with other scholars the over-simplified opinion that pronouns of address were used in a quite clear-cut way in Shakespeare's works, basically in a way that was sensitive to the parameter of social distance; he however admits that many uses are difficult to account for, and finally excludes this aspect altogether from his analysis (pp. 52-8).

In our opinion, this hasty dismissal of the issue is oversimplistic. There are a number of general problems in the Brown - Levinson model, which appears too rigid and too concentrated on very few parameters and variables. In their article, Brown and Gilman state that the problem of politeness arises only when the speech act to be performed could be intrinsically face-threatening (p. 162), but studies on languages with highly developed systems of honorifics have shown that since these systems have necessarily to be used in any speech act, they constitute in themselves a fundamental element of politeness marking: the same holds for Shakespearean pronouns and terms of address. Precisely because the pronoun is "an obligatory aspect of speech", its politeness value can never be overlooked; the choice of a pronoun rather than another could in itself constitute an FTA, as in the case of pronoun switches in asides, which could be accommodated in the model as "off record" FTAs (one of the macro-strategies of politeness usage), since in these cases the interlocutor is conventionally considered absent from the scene; the same holds, as we will see, for other cases of real or "social" absence of the addressee (cp. fn. 12). Another problem in Brown and Gilman's approach is that, while they do consider the variable of social distance, and particularly the affective element, as important for politeness, they fail to correlate this variable with pronoun alternation (perhaps because they consider the choice "automatic"). It is undoubtedly difficult to unequivocally accommodate in their model the use of T that can signal intimacy, contempt or distance at the same time, including in the account variation due to high/poetic/ over-formal style (see fn. 23). On the other hand, while trying to avoid the generalisations of past studies the authors seem to fall in similar pits: they tend to pigeonhole uses on the basis of their numerical force, explain away some "exceptions" rather generically and conclude by stating that these phenomena are, after all, not very relevant.

The use of Y as "universal unmarked choice" seems very far from being "the rule" in Shakespeare's plays (Kielkewicz-Janowiak 1994:51). Here we find some relationships and attitudes regularly encoded through use of T, and alternations which certainly appear "marked" or deviant, but which are far too frequent to be accounted for by any single factor. It is possible that the use of pronouns is not central to the performing of any single speech act, but pronouns certainly contribute, at least on the same level as terms of address and perhaps even more powerfully, to the "face-dynamics" of several exchanges, as we hope to show hereafter.

We will not try to formulate strong hypotheses on 16th - 17th century English on the basis of our results, but since they are found in theatrical works (the "mimetic" genre *par excellence,* although our sample certainly does not include equal representation of all social classes) and since pronoun alternation must have been charged with meaning for Shakespeare's audience in the first

place, perhaps much more than we can realise, we could safely say that such uses must belong to an established code that was recognisable to an Elizabethan audience, and was probably shared to a certain extent. The alleged "neutrality" of pronoun choice must be clearly rejected, since it is highly improbable that any speech community could tolerate "casual" alternation of forms in such a delicate pragma-linguistic area as direct address, particularly a speech community in which social codes were undergoing revolutionary changes and which was quickly getting used to interpreting reality (or theatrical scenes meant to represent it) through a maze of quotations, allusions and puns whose sources ranged from the classics to the underworld.

3. Analysis of the data 1: family relationships

The most frequently depicted family relationship is HUSBAND - WIFE. Here we find a numerical predominance of Y, especially from wife to husband, as a sign of respect from a "subordinate". T is however used to signal affection, or contempt and disillusion, as between Goneril and the tormented Duke of Albany: the husband switches five times (out of twelve pronouns directed to his wife), alternating between the coldness and distancing of horror and the intensity of hatred (an alternation which matches the range of terms of address he uses: *dame* vs. *devil*).

In *Othello*, the husband - wife relationship is central to the plot, and consequently pronoun usage is more complex, so as to mirror the range of sentiments portrayed and their evolution. In the exchanges between Iago and Emilia there is dominant use of Y, but the few switches to T are located at intensely dramatic points: when Emilia urges Iago to exculpate himself, i.e. before realising his guiltiness, she uses T, stressing her support for her husband and showing her anxiety. Soon she will herself bear witness against Iago, and he will condense hatred, threat and fear in "Filth, *thou* liest!" (5.2. 238)[8]. The main characters show an asymmetric behaviour: Desdemona consistently uses Y, except when she pleads for Cassio using the form *prithee* (see fn. 8): this is a clear case in which the act of requesting is reinforced by the pronoun switch (in Brown - Gilman terms, there should be higher politeness through the stressing of intimacy (= [distance]) shown by the use of familiar forms), and by the parallel change in terms of address from formal *my lord* to *sweet love*. These occasional uses contrast with the tormented and passionate feelings shown by Othello towards his spouse, an intensity that emerges both in pronoun use and

[8]It is debatable whether lago's use of *prithee* in another part of the final act can be counted as a switch; for the status of this form see Brown-Gilman (1989:183), Mulholland ([1987]:156), Barber ([1981]:164). See also below, § 4.1. On the whole, there seems to be more to say in favour of considering the variation between *pray you* and *prithee* significant, with *prithee* counting as an occurrence of T.

in terms of address. Othello uses T and Y a nearly equal number of times in addressing Desdemona, and his vocatives range from the polite *my (good/sweet) lady* to *devil, strumpet, minion* on the one side and to *sweeting, honey, chuck, my soul's joy* on the other. This is not surprising, since the whole tragedy is centred on the ambivalence of jealous love, and yet it is interesting to follow the dramatic progression through the various changes in forms of address and the recurring pronoun switches, as was attempted elsewhere (Mazzon 1992:131 - 132).

The PARENT - CHILD relationship is usually more asymmetric, since it involves the variables of power-solidarity (also depending on status, e.g. with royalties) and of intimacy to a higher degree. Sex was also considered to be an important variable, on the basis of the (often different) social positions occupied by men and women and of modern evidence pointing to consistent reflections of these differences in linguistic behaviour (Abbott 1925:154; Mulholland [1987]:160). Our sample presents only one case of MOTHER - SON interaction, that between Hamlet and Queen Gertrude. These two characters are involved in extremely intense as well as more "social" exchanges; Gertrude's addressing of Hamlet, with a predominance of T but with no less than six switches over twenty pronoun uses, closely mirrors the development of these exchanges and the mixture of affection and fear she expresses: Hamlet invariably uses formal Y with her, which also suggests his "taking his distance" from her betrayal.[9]

FATHER - SON relationships appear in *Hamlet* (Laertes - Polonius) and in *King Lear* (Edgar - Edmund - Gloucester), but instances of direct address are rather rare: the only substantial sample concerns interaction between Edmund and Gloucester, with predominance of Y[10]; note however: "Find out this villain, Edmund: it shall lose *thee* nothing" (1.2.118), where Gloucester switches his pronoun in a request; he uses the same strategy in a promise to Edmund to trust him with his inheritance: "Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means to make *thee* capable" (2.1.84-5).

The FATHER - DAUGHTER relationship also presents interesting variation. Daughters are bound to show high respect to fathers, but in most cases fathers' uses are mixed to convey the tenderness (or condescension) in the relationship. Expected pronoun use should thus be Y from daughters, T/Y from fathers, with terms of address as Ophelia's *my lord* and Brabantio's *jewel*; the

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[9]The difference between the two characters is also reflected by the contrast between the abundance of terms of endearment used by Gertrude, and the variation of Hamlet's forms of address, from cold *lady* to familiar *mother* to outraged *O most pernicious woman.*

[10]Note that this agrees with Brown and Gilman's remarks (1989:177) though not with Abbott's (1925:154), who claims this type of exchange to be normally asymmetric, with sons using Y "of respect" and receiving T.

most notable exceptions to this "rule" are in *King Lear*: Goneril and Regan only use Y in addressing their father, while Cordelia, who represents truthfulness and sincerity, varies her use much more: when her father is asleep or absent she allows her tenderness to emerge through uses of T. Lear's addressing of his daughters is of course of extreme interest since these relationships are central to the play. As is to be expected, he switches his pronouns a great deal, but T predominates throughout. In the case of Cordelia there is a precise sequence, from T "of anger" at her disappointing behaviour to Y "of distance" to final T of high solidarity during their imprisonment: terms of address are mostly confined to use of the name, which in this case, following Brown - Gilman (1989:175) can be considered "neutral", and is anyway never abusing; the relationship with Regan, also mostly addressed by name, presents several switches, as does that with the even more cruel Goneril, who is in turn addressed as *my child* (with maximum intimacy, in this case associated to the act of pleading), *devil/degenerate bastard* (with maximum negative effect). The pretended "coldness", i.e. distancing, to protest against Goneril's desertion is expressed by the very effective, extra-polite "*Your* name, *fair gentlewoman* ?" (1.4.233). This utterance is significant precisely in virtue of its pragmatic incongruousness in terms of relevance: it can obviously not be taken literally in its context, and a good part of its poignancy is due to the choice of pronoun and term of address.

The sample yields scarce material concerning other family relationships, yet these data are not uninteresting. Among siblings, a sex-based difference seems to be revealed by the interaction between Ophelia and Laertes in *Hamlet*: Laertes is called *good my brother*[11] but invariably addressed with Y, Ophelia is granted a number of terms of endearment and pronoun switches[12]. The SISTER - SISTER relationship between Lear's daughters is not brought on the stage prominently, but it is mostly formal, with consistent use of Y; they use the term *sister* reciprocally for address, but in one case Regan calls Goneril *lady* (Goneril is the eldest, and is also in a position of greater power). The BROTHER - BROTHER relationship between Edgar and Edmund in *King Lear* shows a predominance of Y and the use of direct terms of address such as, plainly, *brother*, T is used once as insulting, and in the final scenes of revelation and reconciliation.

Other family relations are characterised by higher distancing and less affective involvement, so it can be hypothesised that the use of both pronouns

[11]Salmon ([1987]:49) notes that the use of kinship terms as vocatives was far more frequent in Elizabethan English than it is now, a fact that should be kept in mind throughout this section of the paper.

[12]Some of these, however, qualify as cases of the "social absence" associated with particular states such as absence from the stage, madness or death of the addressee.

and terms of address will tend towards more formal patterns, unless the situation or the relationship itself is charged with particular emotional overtones. This is more or less what we find, although evidence of this kind is rather scant in the sample. In *Othello,* the figures of Lodovico and Gratiano stand in this relationship with Desdemona: Lodovico is called *good cousin* but also, since he is a nobleman, *Your honour,* and is only addressed with Y; he reciprocates, and in turn calls Desdemona *Your ladyship.* Gratiano is older but basically on a par with Lodovico (who just calls him by his name): he is never addressed by Desdemona, and he himself only addresses her once, using T and calling her *poor Desdemona,* but this is at the very end of the play, when Desdemona is already dead. This instance does not count, strictly, as a case of normal social interaction, but more closely resembles the kind of address *in absentia* referred to in fn. 12.

The tormented relationship between Hamlet and Claudius is very difficult to assess in terms of distance or intimacy: it is atypical, and its very essence is constantly challenged by Hamlet. Both characters use both pronouns to address each other, although the value of these uses clearly varies: after initial, reciprocal use of Y and of kin terms such as *cousin, uncle, my son,* Hamlet's feelings are revealed more clearly in an aside (cp. § 2), where he refers to Claudius using T. Claudius uses T when he affects to show sympathetic concern for Hamlet while plotting to send him away from the country: their exchange is asymmetric in that Claudius only uses T, Hamlet employs Y. In the final scene, Claudius uses Y to establish formally the terms of the duel with Laertes, and then T again, when Hamlet seems to be winning the duel: his use is again a pretence of affection, since at the same time he is trying to persuade Hamlet to drink from the poisoned cup. Hamlet only reveals himself linguistically after he has stabbed the king and found the courage to address him as " *thou* incestuous, murderous, damned Dane" (5.2.317) as he had done before in his dreams.

The last group of examples belonging to the family domain is formed by those concerning relationships between acquired relatives and in-laws, who can be said to occupy the far end of the distance scale within family relationships. We would expect this type of relationship to be particularly formal, and this is indeed what happens, but with some notable exceptions. The relations between in-laws in *King Lear,* for instance, are mostly characterised by reciprocal use of Y and neutral or respectful terms of address: *sir* or *lord* to Lear from sons-in-law, *(dear) sister* to Regan or Goneril from brothers-in-law, *our son* or *sir* to Albany and Cornwall from Lear, who does use T, however, when showing rage. The real "deviant" behaviour occurs in *Othello:* Brabantio receives respectful Y by the Moor, who on the contrary is always addressed with T by him, both when Brabantio is outraged at Othello's conquest of Desdemona's heart, and when he forgives him, grants his daughter's hand and

takes leave of him. The use of T could be due, in these cases, to the emotional state prevailing in Brabantio, whose only daughter is "stolen" from him by a foreigner; we cannot be sure, however, that there is no hint at Othello's "inferiority" in Brabantio's behaviour[13]. Gratiano and Lodovico also basically employ Y (and the respectful terms *sir, my lord* etc.) till the last scene (5.2), where both older relatives address Othello with T (Gratiano in response to a threat, Lodovico in pity), but not consistently, since after the discovery of Iago's treachery Othello is granted the respectful form again; Lodovico passes the final "sentence" on him (5.2.340-1) in formal terms, with maximum distancing: "*You* must forsake this room and go with us. *Your* power and *your* command is taken off".

4. Analysis of the data 2: "official" relationships

The term "official relationships" is used here very generally, as a cover term, in contrast with "family relationships", but actually includes several subcategories. First of all we can distinguish between "peer" and "superordinate - subordinate" relationships: within the former we can trace different patterns according to the interlocutors' social class and degree of intimacy, while within the latter, age and sex differences also play a role, beside considerations of social distance and power.

A category apart was set for the servant - master relationship, and a "courting" relationship was also isolated in order to account for some exchanges where ordinary social relationships seem to be partly overridden. On the contrary, the possibility of isolating a category of "friendly relationships" was excluded, since all the relationships of this type that we encountered in the sample are strongly influenced by the distance variable, such as in the case of Hamlet - Horatio; the existence of friendship can thus be considered as implying [distance], and the relevant cases will be discussed within the major categories established.

4. 1. SUPERORDlNATE - SUBORDlNATE relationship

An analysis of this domain shows why Y is indicated by most scholars as the "normal" or unmarked alternative[14]; this pronoun is used in the majority of exchanges within such relationships. On the other hand, most exceptions can be

[13]The attitudes of racial discrimination portrayed in *Othello* are rather subtle: Othello is respected for his valour, but still treated as an alien, suspected of sorcery and still connected to his exotic roots. He is granted the titles of *lord, your lordship, general,* but when attacked he becomes a *Moor* again.

[14]Abbott (1925:157) says that T given to strangers not plainly inferior was taken as an insult. Brown and Gilman (1989:177) insist on the asymmetry in pronoun use between characters of widely different social status.

adequately motivated, and do not appear at all causal or neutral, as some maintain.

The addressing of a subordinate, in a male - male relationship, seems to depend strictly on status, although affective elements are also important. For example, Othello normally addresses Cassio with Y, and the humbler (but also affectively closer) Iago with T. Both uses present a single exception: Iago is addressed once with Y and with the rank title *ancient* (as opposed to *Iago, good Iago* etc.) within an official, formal context. This can hardly be reduced to an "expressive/affective" shift, since it depends on the formality of the situation where power and distance are both marked, and does not bear any relationship with the rapport between the two characters: it functions as a purely sociolinguistic indicator of formality. Cassio, by converse, "deserves" Y for his higher status, but receives T when "fired": "Cassio, I love *thee*, But nevermore be officer of mine. Look if my gentle love be not raised up. I'll make *thee* an example" (2.3.242-245): note that the first occurrence of the pronoun, more than showing anger, could concur to a redress strategy; in the last line, though, T is employed in a direct threat.

The few other uses of T that occur are determined by state of mind, as when Iago is accused and insulted for his treachery. Cassio employs twice the form *prithee* when addressing Iago: this choice, surrounded by uses of Y, could be a codified way of softening requests (see fn. 8). The negotiation of intimacy and the "angry" T are used by Brabantio both with Iago and with Roderigo: the latter is the object of contempt till the revelation of Desdemona's "elopement" grants him higher favour and respect, in this case conveyed by a switch to Y.

In *Hamlet*, the addressing of subordinates is also performed through Y, and the exceptions are mostly to be related to "affective" factors. This is the key to interpret Laertes' T to a priest, meant to be insulting, as well as the switches in Hamlet's addressing of Laertes himself. Hamlet also uses T in the affectionate greeting addressed to Guildenstern (2.2.225), followed by consistent use of Y: despite their different social standing, the two characters entertain a friendly relationship, which reduces social distance, as in the case of the Hamlet - Horatio relationship. Hamlet's addressing of Horatio is extremely interesting, since it shows that Horatio is for the Prince, in turn, a loyal subordinate, a friend, an accomplice. Here, uses of T prevail over those of Y (15 to 7), but there are eight switches, which mark this fluctuation of roles. Here again, the formality of a situation can trigger a switch to Y and to the address term *sir*, while intimacy is stressed by use of T and terms like *fellow-student*, which emphasise the reduction of distance.

Other "deviant" uses can be explained pragmatically: Claudius normally uses T to address Polonius, but compare the request for advice about sending

Hamlet to England, which will hopefully dispel his madness: "What think *you* on't?". Here Claudius, seeking advice, is in a way stepping down from his higher position, although metrical reasons for this switch cannot be excluded. In Claudius' exchanges with Laertes, the king switches from Y (used in the majority of cases) to T on several occasions, to offer solidarity for the younger man's mourning and his desire for revenge, but he also tries to soothe Laertes, to proffer friendship and avoid suspicions of any responsibility in Polonius' death and Ophelia's madness: "*Laertes:* O *thou* vile king! Give me my father. *Claudius:* Calmly, *good Laertes.* [...] What is the cause, Laertes, that *thy* rebellion looks so giant-like?" (4.5.114-120).

In *King Lear*, superordinate - subordinate exchanges are richer in occurrences of T and in switches, given the wide social gap between some of the characters (increased by the disguise of some high-status characters in lowly appearance). Edgar as "poor Tom", for example, is addressed with T by Edmund, by Gloucester (but see § 5 for socially determined exceptions), by Kent and by Lear. The same holds for Kent disguised as Caius, who nonetheless receives some Y especially when the speaker wants to convey a more tolerant or friendly attitude. In particular, when Lear is mad he changes most of his rules of address, e.g. he employs Y with Gloucester, who is normally treated with the same familiarity that Claudius employs with Polonius (on the pragmalinguistic implication of madness see also below and fn. 15*)*.

Gentlemen are always addressed with Y, even if inferiors, while Edmund's address of a Captain as T shows that social subordination can still be marked by pronoun choice. As regards phatic and conative utterances, which often trigger ceremonial or "well-disposing" use of T, an exception is to be registered in Edmund's *Pray you* to Curan (2.1.9): elsewhere the form *pray thee/prithee* is preserved even when the relationship is dominated by unmarked Y (confirming the redressing politeness value of this form), so this case can be considered "eccentric".

As regards address from a subordinate to a superordinate, use of Y is much more generalised and consistent. In *Othello*, the only two uses of T in this group are from Iago to Othello and to Cassio in asides, where the rules of face-to-face interaction are suspended. In *Hamlet*, anger is the reason for the few switches of this type except when another kind of suspension of politeness occurs, i.e. when the addressee is dead (Horatio's only T to Hamlet is of this type). *King Lear* is again different in this respect. There are cases of absence of the addressee (real or metaphorical) from the scene, as when Lear is addressed in his sleep, or when considered mad[15], or when low class characters

[15]It is not always true, as Mulholland ([1987] :160) maintains, that Lear is not addressed differently from the usual when mad. Brown and Gilman (1989:185-7) rightly point out that

reciprocate the T they receive, a T that is used also, as we will see, by the Fool. Gloucester also receives T by "poor Tom", to signal pity and solidarity.

Turning now to superordinate - subordinate relationships where characters of different sex are involved, Y predominates, but again with some exceptions; the relationship between Iago and Desdemona is totally asymmetric: she gives T and receives Y, and the same obtains with Cordelia - Caius. Pronoun alternation is found where there is a sentimental or courting dimension, however vague, added to the relationship: this is the case of Hamlet - Ophelia (more about which will be said later) and of Cassio - Desdemona. Cassio's T to Desdemona occurs once in a formal salutation and once in the dubious case of the reported dream and its love language (3.3.441). Desdemona switches four times while addressing Cassio, and she uses T twice, when promising her help or offering her friendly protection. All other cases of male - female relationship of this type are dominated by the use of Y and of formal terms of address, especially when the woman is in a subordinate position or where distance is not wide. The only instance of female - female relationship of this kind is that between Gertrude and Ophelia, which is also dominated by Y except when Ophelia is dead and therefore "socially absent".

4.1.1. SERVANT - MASTER relationships

The category of servants was kept separate for counting purposes, and other characters clearly possessing low social status were included here : clowns, players, fools, stewards etc. The slight differences in their social standing however seem to be mirrored closely by pronoun use, which also shows a tendency to sex-based differences. The Clown in *Othello*, for instance, is addressed with Y by Desdemona, but with T by Cassio, and sex differences emerge again when we analyse Hamlet's behaviour towards the Players: the female player is addressed with Y, the male player mostly with T, although Hamlet switches to Y when he poses requests to his interlocutor: in these cases the act of requesting is accompanied by politeness, shown by the use of respectful forms.

The Clown in *Hamlet* is also addressed with T by the Prince, and so is a Sailor addressed by Horatio. In *Othello*, Emilia can be classified as a servant, at least for Desdemona: she addresses her mistress with Y (except once, when she is dead), and Desdemona, in turn, addresses Emilia with T (except once, possibly for euphony), as she does with Iago[16]. Emilia's relationship with Othello is more ambiguous, since she is the most vocal accuser of Desdemona's murderer: from 5.2. 137 onwards she abandons her previous re-

face needs are no longer considered when S is mad and, we should add, the more so when H is mad, i.e. when the addressee loses his social standing.

[16]It must be noted that Desdemona's choices of pronouns seem dictated more by "affectionate" or "benevolent" attitudes, never by "snobbery" (she employs Y with the Clown).

spectful tones (with Y and *my good lord*) and switches to T and *O... dull Moor!, O murderous coxcomb!* with all the power of her grief. In the same scene, Othello tries to avoid the confrontation and then to defend himself, and so also switches from "ordinary" Y to T, and from confidential *Emilia* to defiant *woman*; while he switches several times in this stretch of dialogue, highlighting the uncertainty of his attitude in the face of grounded accusation, Emilia switches only once: no mercy (not even verbal mercy) for the murderer of her beloved mistress.

Other low subordinates are granted Y by their masters: not only Reynaldo in *Hamlet* and Oswald in *King Lear* (who both enjoy the relatively higher status of household stewards), but also, in the latter play, the Fool and other Servants[17], are often called *sir*. The relationship between Lear and his Fool is dominated by use of T, with one exception in the Fool's speech and two in Lear's in mock-serious tone, with the address term *sirrah*[18]. Here we witness a total overturning of "normal" rules of address; it is normal for Lear to "thou" his Fool (and call him *knave/boy/lad),* but the fact that the Fool is at liberty to "thou" Lear and invariably address him as *nuncle* shows how "deviant" this character is. A Fool is not expected to behave "seriously" or responsibly or to "keep his place" in society; he is allowed to say things that others cannot say, because he is by definition outside the normal conventions that rule social life.

4.2. PEER relationships

In the present study, such characters are considered "peers" whose social standing, title or function can be put on the same or a very similar footing. In this category, a not irrelevant role is played by the existence or non-existence of a friendly relationship, since its existence reduces distance between "peers". Significant differences also emerged when the category was broken up into sub-categories according to social level, whether "high" (noblemen/ women), "middle" (mainly represented by military officers) or "low" (clowns, fools, servants etc.). In certain cases, some factors could increase the social distance between the characters, e.g. difference in age, but other factors were found to obliterate these asymmetries.

"HIGH" peers often interact with Y in *Hamlet* (Rosencrantz - Guildenstern) and *Othello* (Lodovico - Gratiano). Exchanges of this kind in *King Lear,* though, offer very different results. Gloucester, for instance, is addressed with

[17]Regan's behaviour represents a partial exception to this: she employs T with the Servant, in a context of emotional upheaval, and twice (out of seven times) to Oswald, when greeting him and when trying to coax him into revealing useful information; note that this deviant behaviour again emerges when a sex difference is involved.

[18]Though with some disagreement, most scholars admit that this term al ready had negative overtones, at least in addressing adults.

a T of abuse and disrespect on several occasions by Albany and Cornwall, and even by Regan, who should be doubly distanced from him, by age and by sex. In 3.7, the scene in which Gloucester is insulted and accused and finally blinded, he is granted Y when formally interrogated, but both Cornwall and Regan revert to T when pressing on him. Gloucester replies by insulting Regan and addressing her with T in turn. Other "high" characters address each other with Y most of the time, and the switches found often coincide with moments of emotional stress. In some cases T seems to be used as a marker of emphatic and "high" style: on being banished, Kent utters this parting speech: "Fare *thee* well, King. Sith thus *thou* wilt appear, Freedom lives hence and banishment is here. The gods to their dear shelters take *thee*, maid, that justly thinks and hast most rightly said! ... Thus Kent, O Princes, bids you all adieu. He'll shape his old course in a country new." (1.1.183-190). Here the use of T both to Lear and to Cordelia has clearly more rhetorical and stylistic than affective value. A pragmatic discourse-strategic value can be found in Albany's "Seest *thou* this object, Kent?" (5.3.242) where the "object" are Goneril's and Regan's bodies. Here we could hypothesise a function of the switch as discourse-boundary marker and emphasiser (Calvo 1992). A younger character, but an important one, such as Edmund, is addressed with Y in formal contexts, but with T "of solidarity" in praise or when he is encouraged to action by Cornwall, by Regan (when she is just being polite she uses Y), by Goneril (here there is also a "courting" dimension that will be dealt with later), while he receives T from Albany when arrested. On the contrary, he addresses most characters in this group with Y, except in anger.

The "MIDDLE" level of peer interaction is represented, in *Hamlet*, by military officers who occupy different hierarchical ranks but also stand in various degrees of intimacy and friendly relationships between each other; this probably explains the differences in pronoun use that were found: Horatio exchanges T with Marcellus but is given Y by Bernardo, who is in turn addressed with T by Marcellus. Francisco, who is a soldier, not an officer, mostly uses and receives Y (lack of intimacy and strictness of role relationship vs. comradeship), except by Bernardo at 1.1.10, when the speaker probably wants to show solicitude. Terms of address reproduce these differences, since the officers call each other by name, while Marcellus calls Francisco *honest soldier*.

*I*n *Othello* we note the asymmetry between Emilia and Bianca (who gives Y but receives T), representing the social stigma on the position of "courtesan", expressed (also through offensive terms of address) by another woman. Roderigo is "a Gentleman", but he often finds himself interacting on a par with Cassio (with whom he fights) and with Iago (with whom he conspires); the latter relationship is particularly interesting, since there is a lot of "face work" going on between the two characters. Roderigo addresses Iago both with Y

and T an equal number of times (namely seven), and switches only three times; his uses of T signal familiarity or anger. As elsewhere, Iago is far subtler in his language use: he addresses Roderigo 13 times with T and 18 times with Y, and performs no less than 15 switches. Initially the relationship is asymmetric and mirrors the difference in social status: Iago gives Y and receives T. When the conspiracy brings about a reduction in social distance, the relationship changes, and so do the relevant modes of address. Iago switches to T to convey solidarity, to flatter, to insinuate or to persuade, as well as to highlight their complicity, in phatic/greeting formulae and to "scold", but to Y when giving directions or otherwise trying to establish his authority. In some cases this triggers Roderigo's switch to the respectful form. Terms of address also reflect the relationship: Roderigo uses very few, calls Iago by his name and, finally, *O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!* (5.1.63) when he realises the treachery. Iago's vocatives are much more varied, from Christian name to *sir* to *noble heart,* to *my sick fool Roderigo* (2.3.48, *in absentia)* and *thou silly gentleman,* to finish with *O murderous slave! O villain!* at 5.1.62, which will elicit an equally heated response in the next line, as mentioned above.

Among "LOW" peers we find, as expected, a more extended (though not exclusive) use of T. In *Othello,* the Clown addresses the Musician with Y. In the dialogue between two Clowns in *Hamlet* (5.1.1-60) there seems to be a tendency to use T for agreement, Y (which in this case is employed for marked distancing) for contradiction of the interlocutor's previous statement. In *King Lear,* servants address each other with T[19], while Oswald, as a house steward, is entitled to give T and receive Y by "poor Tom" and on some occasions by "Caius". The latter exchanges reveal different types of address forms in quarrelling; Caius uses Y when duelling (which, as we have already seen, often seems to trigger the employment of a higher register) or when disputing with Oswald in Lear's presence, but chooses rather strong terms of address, not only the common *rogue/rascal/slave* but also *you base football player* (1.4.85) and the striking, often-quoted *Thou whoreson zed! Thou unnecessary letter!* (2.2.65). This is consistent with the fact that Caius is in fact Kent, i.e. he really belongs to the upper social level, and his "native" social code probably tends to override his disguise when he is angry or upset: this emotionally determined shift to native varieties or modes of expression is a phenomenon that has often been observed by sociolinguists.

[19]Caius and the Fool also mostly exchange T, with some exceptions that could be attributed to metrical problems.

4.3. A special case: the language of COURTING

The plays included in our sample do not present many cases of "love language" apart from those considered under the husband - wife relationship. This type of language should present a balance of "courteousness" and stressing of intimacy; we found that in our sample formality and "courteousness" tend to prevail, also given the high social status of the characters involved. Cassio and Bianca always address each other with Y: he calls her *my most fair Bianca* and *sweet love* but also *woman* when he gets impatient, she calls him *my sweet/dear Cassio.* The same type of formality can be found in *King Lear.* France and Burgundy address Cordelia with Y, but the former employs T when actually proposing, and calls her *(my) fair Cordelia.* Edmund only addresses Goneril once and employs Y, but she switches thrice, employing T for the first time at 4.2.23, just after they have kissed[20], and again later to express solidarity and intimacy. The relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia is complicated by the wide distance between them: they mostly use Y, but Hamlet frequently switches his pronouns and also employs T on four occasions: the first two switches are purely stylistic, since they occur in poems, the third marks a moment of anger and the fourth occurs when Hamlet *is* giving advice. She dutifully calls him *my lord,* he calls her *lady* or, poetically, *nymph.*

5. Further comments on forms of address

Pronoun choice, in our opinion, primarily marks a social attitude; in the following exchange in *King Lear,* the pronoun switch seems emblematic of this: "*Gloucester.* Methinks *thy* voice is altered, and *thou* speak'st in better phrase and matter than *thou* didst. *Edgar (disguised, but no longer as the "rustic" Tom):* You're much deceived. In nothing am I changed but in my garments. *Gloucester.* Methinks *you're* better spoken" (4.6.7-10). This is an example of sociolinguistic adjustment. Gloucester decides to switch to Y after remarking a series of characteristics which are basic for our assessment of interlocutors (voice, syntax, vocabulary and appearance: note that he cannot see, but can probably feel, the change of "garments" mentioned by Edgar: it is well known that outward appearance, included clothing, is a basic parameter for our sociolinguistic behaviour; cp. Barber [1987]:178): the switch operated by Gloucester here is thus purely social in nature[21]. It is very difficult to interpret this kind

[20]It is nowadays a well-established convention, e.g. in films, to use such switches in address forms after a kiss, to signal a turnpoint in a relationship. See Eagleson ([1987]). The significance of the distance dimension for the choice of address forms in courting relationships is stressed by Ervin-Tripp (1 972:237).

[21]In the light of these and other examples, it is difficult to agree with Mulholland ([1987]:160) who, also quoting from a *King* Lear sample, gives T as the unmarked choice

of data without recourse to some notion of "politeness", although the "affective" element can overcome such purely social rules.

The notion of politeness and the social implications of pronoun use are brought to the foreground particularly by those cases that we can consider "deviant". Among these, the most striking and most frequently found case is the addressing of characters who can be considered "socially absent" and therefore do not require to be treated according to normal face rules; apart from actual absence from the scene and the "aside" convention, this applies to cases in which the addressee is asleep, dead or otherwise not socially functioning, e.g. mad (as Lear). In all these cases T is used, independently of the degree of emotional involvement and of the type of relation existing before the *in-absentia* exchange.

The use of T as deviation from social rules can be seen in other, apparently not closely related phenomena. For instance, T is the only pronoun used in self-address, which is to be expected since this reflects the maximum degree of possible "intimacy". T is also used by Hamlet and Horatio to address the Ghost: in normal circumstances, i.e. if he were active, Hamlet's father would be addressed with Y, but his spirit is not[22], since he is perceived as an alien entity (cp. Barber [1987]:168; Brown-Gilman 1989:179). In fact, most abstract and non-human entities addressed, i.e. invoked, cursed etc. in the plays also receive T; this use ranges from the famous "Frailty, *thy* name is woman !" *(Hamlet* 1.2.146) to "*thou* strumpet Fortune" *(id.,* 2.2.488) to addresses to *heart, soul, sword, England, venom, death* in *Hamlet* (where anyway, Laertes addresses God with Y): from addresses to *love,* and *bosom* to those to *weed, breath, patience, heavens* [sic] in *Othello;* from addresses to *Nature, Fortune* to those to *ingratitude, sorrow, pomp, moon, thunder* and *insubstantial air* in *King Lear,* where we also find the trenchant "O *thou* side-piercing sight!" (4.6.85). Such exclamatory utterances could be said to possess the inherent property of conveying a "marked" state of mind or to be necessarily declama-

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when the speaker is in doubt with regard to the social status of the addressee. This statement is hardly plausible in the first place, given that such use would have been negatively marked for politeness: use of Y to strangers, not only nobles but of different classes, was now probably sufficiently widespread to make the use of T in this contexts felt as uncalled-for familiarity. Mulholland overlooks the fact that the characters which appear as strangers because disguised always have some mark of low status around them, which "allows" use of T. The Gloucester - Edgar exchange quoted confirms this: as soon as Gloucester is in doubt on the interlocutor's status, which seems to have risen since their last exchange, he immediately switches to Y.

[22]Cp. the use of T to address "a dead body and ... a disembodied spirit" registered by Barber ([1987]:168) in *Richard III.* Pronoun use of the T type to super- and non-human addressee is documented, for Russian, by Friedrich ([1986]:284).

tory in character[23]; on the other hand, the persistence of the use of T in these cases shows that the personification of the entities referred to is deeply felt by the speakers, who address them, typically, not socially but emotionally.

Terms of address also appear extremely sensitive to social interaction parameters, being not only capable of adjusting to individual relations but also of varying, mirroring the changes in the relations themselves and the speakers' attitudes conveyed through the linguistic acts they perform. Caution is necessary in assessing such evidence since the literary text does not consistently reflect the community's linguistic behaviour in any reliable way[24]; also, the changes undergone by the language in the time span that separates us from Shakespeare's works must be taken into account. To limit ourselves to well-known examples, the form of address *good + name/title* has now disappeared and its social value at Shakespeare's time is difficult to assess (not to speak of the various *noble, fair, worthy* etc., all instances of "adorned" names/titles in Brown and Gilman's (1989:175) terminology); *sir*, then a generic term that has already been noted to correlate consistently with Y, seems to have had a wider distribution than it has nowadays; *lad* is used only when addressing adults; *mistress* was an acceptable and indeed deferential form, and *masters* seems to alternate rather freely with *gentlemen.*

A systematic correlation between terms and pronouns of address has not really been attempted except by Barber ([1987]:175) who notes that deferential and kin terms trigger use of Y, while with terms like *fellow* and deprecatives T occurs more frequently. Our detailed analysis of some relationships between characters has revealed some of these correlations, confirming e.g. that T is common with insulting terms of address and that *sir* tends to trigger use of Y regardless of the relationship between the interlocutors and of the tone of the exchange.

Brown-Gilman (1989:175) maintain that the use of Christian names is neutral with regard to deference, while Salmon ([1987]) claims that this use denotes higher intimacy than it now does stating that the husband - wife relationship normally excludes it. This is not what we found; the use of the unadorned Christian name seems possible from superordinate to subordinate, between spouses and other relatives, as well as between peers. The same use in addressing a superior, however, is negatively marked for politeness and usually collocates with T (e.g., Kent addresses Lear by name and with T in anger). We found a high frequency of "adorned" names and titles, which of course score higher for politeness *(noble lord* is more polite than *lord* etc.), and we could

[23]The connection between "higher" style and the use of T is highlighted by Abbot (1925:154).

[24]Notwithstanding the contrary opinions reported by Salmon ([1987]:37).

endorse the view that this frequent addressing by title is a typical feature of Elizabethan English, as claimed by Replogle ([1987]): the state of flux of Elizabethan society brings about the need for continual reassurance about reciprocal standing, and thus encourages the use of multiple, varied and rather specific terms of address, including kin terms (whose use does not, however, necessarily signal intimacy, since they often collocate with Y, not T) and "occupational" terms: *lieutenant, ancient, soldier, priest, trumpet, herald* etc.

For "high" characters, *sir* and *my lord* (with their adorned variants) are by far the most common terms of address in "unmarked" exchanges, while for female characters *madam* is more common than *lady*. "Middle" characters receive *sir* or *mistress*, or are called by name or surname (e.g. Cassio is called *Michael* only by Othello, while Desdemona and even his lover Bianca call him by surname, even when they use T). "Low" characters receive *fellow, friend, sirrah* or abusive terms from superiors, while *sir* is used only for "higher level" servants such as Reynaldo or Oswald, which correlates with their more frequent address with Y in comparison with other low class characters.

A more systematic analysis of the correlation between pronouns and terms of address would require a separate article; even at this stage, though, it seems to us that it can safely be said that the system of terms of address responds to very subtle socio-pragmatic considerations, and is used as indicator of relationships and of affective factors in the same way as the subsystem of second person pronouns is used.

6. Conclusions

Although traditional analyses of the phenomena in question have certainly provided some insight, the application of some more recent notions and categories can indeed help us describe the relationships portrayed. For instance, the application, however loose, of the notion of "face" to pronoun use and the findings relative to the rhetorical and conversational significance of pronoun switches confirms the fact that pronoun use and switching are not only connected to the conveying of "mood", but are also related to politeness phenomena. They cannot thus be treated only in terms of anger/affection vs. coldness/neutrality, but must be seen as exquisitely social devices, closely reflecting the degree of distance vs. intimacy and the power vs. solidarity conveyed by any exchange; besides this, we must consider the variability allowed by the possibility of "strategic" switching, which often seems to mark features of the relationship on the whole and of the particular interactional event at hand at the same time, including discourse turnpoints and specific speech acts.

With this article, we hope to have contributed to this line of study, and also to have provided some counterevidence against the opinion of those who

would like to exclude pronoun use from the study of politeness and social interaction in Shakespearean drama.

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Language change as evolution: looking for linguistic 'genes'

Nikolaus Ritt

0.0. Prolegomena

This paper argues for the view that language change and acquisition represent evolutionary processes in a sense that we nowadays tend to associate with Darwinism. This view is not exactly new, but has never really established itself within the community of historical linguists. It goes back, at least, to August Schleicher, to whom we owe the notion of linguistic 'family trees' and who viewed languages as similar to organisms with life-cycles in the sense that they are first 'born', then grow into fully-developed, or maximally complex 'adults', and may finally degenerate, lose their complexity and possibly 'die'. His conception of 'evolution' was essentially pre-Darwinian, though, and his application of the concepts to linguistic study highly metaphorical. Since Saussure and the formalist linguistic tradition which he more or less established were opposed to the borrowing of metaphors from other sciences on grounds of principle, it is no big surprise that approaches like Schleicher's ceased to be taken seriously. Evolutionary concepts only sneaked back in disguise, so to speak, into linguistics via the functionalist approaches developed by Jakobson and the Prague School. There, language change was regarded as functional, 'goal directed' and, one could say, 'adaptive' in a sense similar to the one the term has in biology. However, the functionalists didn't explicitly base their explanations on a theoretical framework that could be called truly evolutionary in the Darwinian sense - probably because they were too cautious themselves to borrow metaphors which, they must have felt, belonged essentially to a different science and had no place in theirs. Retrospectively, I feel that by being so cautious, they made things unnecessarily difficult for themselves, as it may have been due to the very lack of an explicitly evolutionary framework, that their approaches to language change were vulnerable to attacks from structuralists (such as Lass, see for example 1980: 64ff.) for being teleological and unable to offer truly causal explanations. - Whatever the exact reasons for the development may have been, however, it is apt to say that nowadays, as April Macmahon puts it, „Evolution [...] has become a 'dirty word' in modern linguistic theory" (1994: 314).

It is little surprising, therefore, that more recent attempts at dealing with linguistic phenomena from an explicitly evolutionary point-of-view have originated at the margins, or even outside the linguistic community itself.[1] Here is a survey of books and articles that I have found particularly inspiring.

First, I would like to mention Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman's, and Lumsden and Wilson's volumes on cultural evolution. Both include linguistic evolution without giving the latter much space in their arguments or presenting any specifically linguistic cases, though. Similarly, Richard Dawkins' (1982 and 1989) proposal that cultural evolution might be based on the existence of 'mental replicators', which he calls 'memes', seems to be straightforwardly applicable to language evolution, while Dawkins himself does not develop his arguments in that direction. Interesting comments on Dawkins' proposal as well as on the frameworks developed by the other authors just mentioned can be found in Maynard-Smith (1989).

More recently, a group of scientists based at the Sta. Fe Institute have been developing an elaborate theory of 'Complex Adaptive Systems', which presents itself as a metatheory for the study of a large range of phenomena that display 'adaptive' behaviour and which are difficult to deal with on the basis of classical scientific approaches. These include national economies, immune systems, artificial intelligence, cognitive development and also, quite explicitly, language evolution. Due to the bad reputation which 'evolution' seems to have within the linguistic community, however, the workshop on the evolution of human languages, which the Institute organised in 1991, has not lead to the establishment of a permanent research group.

While the failure of the Sta. Fe initiative shows how alien evolutionary concepts might still be to the community of mainstream linguists, contemporary cognitive psychology seems to be adopting evolutionism more enthusiastically. This becomes particularly obvious in Henry Plotkin's recent volume 'Darwin Machines and the Nature of Knowledge', for example. Since the links between cognitive psychology and linguistics are getting continually stronger, however, it seems that before long the linguistic community will have to give up its established biases as well. In other words, I feel that there are quite good chances that evolutionary theory might, after a long period of neglect, find itself to become the majority paradigm in (historical) linguistics within the not so distant future. Evolutionism is in the air, so to speak, and will soon manifest itself strongly. And I don't seem to be the only one who thinks so. Thus, I have recently kept running into or hearing of colleagues who openly admit to working

[1] A notable exception is Bichakjian 1988. He deals with those aspects of language evolution that can be interpreted, according to him at least, as direct consequences of truly biological, i.e. genetically based, evolution. As will be evident in my paper, the type of evolution relevant for language is essentially non-genetic.

on possible applications of evolutionary theory to linguistics, although publications are still missing. Among these colleagues are April Macmahon from Cambridge, Guy Cook from London, or Steve McGill from Exeter. Also, Robert de Beaugrande's forthcoming volume on Discourse Analysis adopts many notions from the theories developed at the Sta. Fe Institute.

Finally, I would like to refer to two papers by myself, namely forthc. (a) and (b), in which I have thrown much caution overboard and been as explicitly evolutionary as I dared.

But back to this paper, then. It introduces some of my personal ideas about evolutionary theory and its relation to language change, acquisition and use. It does so in an informal, associative manner without giving much heed to potential advantages of the advocated approach over other, more conventional ones. It is intended to stimulate the search for such advantages, which I feel can easily be found. The main reason why I am not presenting them in any detail here is that they deserve, in my mind, an elaborate discussion that would necessarily go beyond the scope of this contribution. So, if this paper succeeds in arousing some interest and the desire to play around with some of the concepts and perspectives that it develops, I shall be happy enough. Otherwise, I hope that the reader will at least find the mental gymnastics my attempts at reasoning will force her to perform refreshing and worth the time spent on reading all this.

0. Introduction

> Since 'tis Nature's law to change.
> Constancy alone is strange.
>
> John Wilmot. Earl of Rochester
> *A dialogue between Strephon and Daphne*

This motto opens the first chapter of Jean Aitchison's classic volume on language change (1991). A weird choice, isn't it? After all, the book is about language *change*, so why are we told that it's *constancy* that we should really worry about? OK, I'm sorry. Of course, this is just a cheap move of mine, and, of course, Jean Aitchison was just trying to tell us that language *change* was less strange and unnatural than one might be tempted to think as a novice to the subject. - But still, if one takes the motto seriously, one cannot help but wonder. Why is it, quite generally, that historical linguists have always focused their attention on instances of linguistic change, and have not found it worth the trouble to deal with those elements in the world's languages that have maintained their identities and shapes over longer periods of time? Why is it, to mention a concrete case, that people in our field have mostly been trying to explain why Middle English long /i:/ shows up as /aɪ/ in Modern English, while the fact that Middle English short /ɪ/ is still short /ɪ/ in many Modern

English words has been taken more or less for granted? At least in the light of the Earl of Rochester's insightful remark, this is almost as strange as constancy itself. In this paper, I'll do what strikes me as the obvious, therefore, and approach language history via constancy rather than change.

So, why is it then that Middle English short /ɪ/ is still short /ɪ/ in many Modern English words? Good question. Or is it? In what sense can we say at all that the /ɪ/ in items such as ModE *middle, it, children* is the same as the - assumed - /ɪ/ in ME *middle, it, children*? Although it is typically assumed that the two are in some sense identical, even a little bit of reflection tells one that things are not so self-evident at all.

On the one hand, we could say of course that the two /ɪ/s are, in some sense, counterparts, because they fulfil similar communicative functions: *middle, it* and *children* mean pretty much the same in Modern and in Middle English, so there is good reason to assume that the purposes for and the situations in which Modern English speakers will use the words are at least roughly comparable to those which Middle English speakers had in mind when they employed them. If, by the same rationale, we then also say that both Middle and Modern English speakers used /ɪ/ to distinguish words such as *middle, it* or *children* from others, it follows that the role which Modern English /ɪ/ plays within Modern English speech communities is indeed similar to the one which Middle English /ɪ/ played within Middle English speech communities.

In order for the question why Middle English /ɪ/ is still /ɪ/ in Modern English to be meaningful, though, the mere observation that the two /ɪ/s are communicative counterparts is not enough.[2] What makes the relationship between Middle English and Modern English /ɪ/ special is that the two do not only play similar roles but that, in some sense, there also exists a kind of genetic relationship between them. In some way, Modern English /ɪ/ seems to be a distant offspring of Middle English /ɪ/, and we feel that Modern English /ɪ/ has not only inherited many of the jobs of Middle English /ɪ/ but is its direct descendant at the same time. It is both its communicative, or 'functional', and its genetic counterpart. When we want to know why Middle English /ɪ/ is still /ɪ/ in Modern English, we are therefore dealing with two questions rather than one. The first would be: how has Middle English /ɪ/ managed to produce offspring

[2] Or is it? Well, it depends on our purposes, of course. Thus, we could speculate why it is that similar communicative problems seem to call for similar solutions, and could maybe come to interesting conclusions that way - but we could ask the same question concerning the relationship between, let's say, Modern High German /ɪ/ and Modern English /ɪ/, or, indeed, between any two /ɪ/s in any two languages of the world. Obviously, communicative, or 'functional' equivalences would be much more difficult to establish and would probably only be identifiable in different and more general ways, but in principle the question would still be the same.

that have survived over the centuries? And the second question would be: why and how have the offspring of /ɪ/ managed to take over the communicative functions of their forebears? In the following I shall deal with each of these questions in turn.

Before I go on, however, I guess I owe you a little break to reflect on the course which my argument (or rather my loose associations) seems to have taken. Thus, you will have observed that at the beginning my paper seemed to be about a speech sound, a phoneme, something well defined, you may have remembered, as an element of 'langue' in the Saussurean sense, and now I have come to talk about /ɪ/'s offspring and about /ɪ/'s jobs - just as if I were talking about a person, a human being, or at least a living thing of some sort, capable of reproducing and of doing things. - Obviously, you will think, my discourse has become metaphorical, and whatever the rhetoric or didactic advantages of metaphors might be, you will be aware that one must not let oneself be carried away by them and that, in particular, one must not tacitly endow them with a technical sense, because that way one might wind up in a completely fictional world and solve merely fictional problems that have no bearing on the world out there and thus no truly scientific value.

1. Phonemes (and other constituents of natural languages, for that matter) as active replicators

So, what about /ɪ/ and its offspring then? Is there a technical sense in which such a statement can be read? In what way, if at all, can phonemes be assumed to increase and multiply? This question may sound weird to anybody whose mind has been framed to think in the categories established within the linguistic community - I agree -, but might it not still pay to take it seriously if only to see what happens? How can phonemes be assumed to 'propagate' then? I guess the first type of answer that will probably spring to the mind of most of us is: 'through language acquisition.' Children learn phonemes through listening to (more or less) grown-up speakers communicating. The general idea is that some part of the human brain works as a device for language acquisition, into which some of the more basic principles concerning the way human languages work are hard wired, so to speak, and which, when exposed to actual utterances will filter out and store in its more flexible components those pieces of information that a speaker needs to produce such linguistic utterances as are likely to serve her communicative needs in the community she grows up in. Those pieces of information will either be more like elements or more like rules/processes, but the distinction doesn't really matter here, because we are interested in /ɪ/, and /ɪ/ is most probably an element rather than a rule. In any case, when we think of /ɪ/ as being learned by humans and stored within some part of their brains, the picture seems to emerge of /ɪ/ as being transmitted pas-

sively, while the active agents in its replication seem to be the speakers. It would seem, therefore, that when trying to answer the question why Middle English /ɪ/ is still /ɪ/ in Modern English, we ought to focus our attention on speakers and rephrase our question as something like 'Why have English speakers over the generations successfully acquired /ɪ/?'

But is this necessarily so? In what way are speakers really more active than, say, phonemes in the replication of the latter? Obviously, speakers do not control language acquisition consciously and actively. This has been a home truth ever since Saussure. They are not normally in a position to decide whether they like to acquire a particular phoneme, for example, or not. In this sense 'langue' is beyond the control of individual speakers. So, if we wanted to investigate the speakers' role in language acquisition/replication we wouldn't be talking about speakers as autonomous subjects freely determining their own actions, but we would be looking inside them and disregard their personal integrities, so to speak. What we'd be interested in would be the ways their auditive apparatuses and their articulatory organs work, and also, of course, the way in which these interact with their brains and the way in which linguistic elements and processes are mentally stored. (It is assumed here that language ultimately does have - even though it may not be reducible to - physical reality.) The speakers we would be looking at then, would look like a system of muscles, membranes, teeth, assemblies of nerve cells and other such elements - not much like individuals at all, really.

And where would our phoneme /ɪ/ reside in this mass? Well, although there are as yet no ways of verifying this, there is in fact only one reasonably plausible possibility. It must be located within the central nervous system, i.e. the brain. Without knowing much about the way the brain handles information, most neurologists would subscribe to the notion that an element such as /ɪ/ might be located within an assembly of nerve cells[3] that are linked - however remotely or indirectly- to both articulatory and auditory organs. That assembly, which 'represents', or, actually, 'is' /ɪ/ will be excited when it receives input in the form of sounds that are 'recognised' as /ɪ/ or when other parts of the nervous system get excited in such a way that a realisation of /ɪ/ is pronounced. Another way of putting this would be to say that, depending on the actual state of other relevant parts of the brain, the excitement, or 'firing', of a nerve cell assembly '/ɪ/' will trigger either the firing of such other nerve cell assemblies as eventually amount to appropriate movement of the articulators, and/or the firing of such assemblies which 'encode' or 'are' word forms, morphemes, concepts or socially relevant information. A brain can thus be said to host an /ɪ/ assembly, if there exists a set of nerve cells within it that get indeed excited

[3] The concept goes back to Donald O. Hebb. See, for example, 1949.

more or less simultaneously when they receive electrochemical input under such conditions as specified above. The existence of /ɪ/ is thus established when the channels through which electrochemical energy flows during a brain's activity come to be set up in such a way that an assembly of them fires in quasi-unison. The acquisition of /ɪ/ can consequently be thought of as a process that results in the establishment of appropriate links among a set of relevant nerve cells.

During its lifetime, then, an /ɪ/ assembly may be in either of two states: when it fires, it is 'on', when it doesn't, it's 'off'. Due to the fact that the /ɪ/ assembly is linked to articulators it may then happen that the firing of /ɪ/ causes the latter to perform a gesture 'expressing' /ɪ/, typically the allophone [ɪ]. During a lifetime, an /ɪ/ assembly can thus be assumed to give rise to a relatively large number of [ɪ]s, and the [ɪ]s that can be observed in actual utterances can thus be thought of as consequences, or expressions of /ɪ/ in a similar way as the phenotypic characteristics and some behaviour patterns of organisms can be regarded as consequences or 'expressions' of genes. It is exposition to such [ɪ]s in appropriate contexts, then, that allows children to acquire /ɪ/s, or that - to stay within the descriptive framework I have begun to sketch - causes such links between certain nerve cells to establish themselves within children's central nervous systems that may be looked at - from the linguist's point-of-view - as (a representation of) /ɪ/s. Through their inherent ability to produce [ɪ]s under appropriate conditions, /ɪ/s can thus place new copies of themselves within other nervous systems. - Looked at from this perspective, then, an /ɪ/ - or indeed any phoneme - can be thought of as an entity capable of its own reproduction - a true active replicator and perfect mental counterpart of a gene, which expresses itself through creating organisms capable of spreading copies of the gene through reproduction. In the same way as the story of gene reproduction can be told without invoking organisms as central agents (they can be referred to as the 'vehicles' or 'interactors' of genes[4]), the story of the life cycle of a phoneme such as /ɪ/ can be told without referring to 'speakers' as the primary agents in that process. For the life and reproduction of /ɪ/s 'speakers' constitute only the necessary environment and the necessary tools, they play no active role in it - and they cannot, normally, influence it.

The first part of our question can now be partly answered. Middle English /ɪ/ has managed to pass its offspring down to Modern times, because it was turned on often enough in the right way to produce [ɪ]s, which in turn placed new copies of /ɪ/ in the brains of new generations of speakers.

Obviously, this is only a rough approximation to an answer, and raises a lot of questions in itself. In particular, it is obvious that a variety of further condi-

[4] see, for example, Dawkins 1989, Hull 1988 or Plotkin 1994: 86-101.

tions must be met if the production of [ɪ]s is really to engender new /ɪ/s. Exposure to [ɪ]s will only lead to the acquisition of /ɪ/ if the [ɪ]s form part of communicatively effective linguistic messages. I will turn to the question how those additional conditions will look within the framework I'm just sketching presently. I would like to do this, however, by taking up the second part of our initial question, namely why it is that Modern English /ɪ/ still does many of the jobs that ME /ɪ/ did? As it seems to me, this question is more closely related to the problem of the conditions under which /ɪ/ will get acquired than might first be suspected.

What are those jobs I am talking about anyway? Let me give a few examples. Well, first of all, there is the primary function of /ɪ/ as a phoneme, which is to distinguish the morphemes in which it occurs from one another. Secondly, there are the functions of making pronunciation and perception possible, which /ɪ/ shares with all other elements and processes that 'inhabit' human phonologies, of course. Finally, then, there are other potential functions which a phoneme such as /ɪ/ may have, including morphological ones such as indicating a particular morphological environment, or social ones such as identifying the social adherence of a speaker, and probably many others as well. Now, how do these functions translate into the framework that I have been sketching so far? If phonemes are regarded as nerve cell assemblies, then - interestingly, but actually quite obviously - so can the so-called functions of a phoneme. If recognition of /ɪ/ is viewed as the firing of an assembly, it is equally plausible to assume that if /ɪ/ and /t/ fire one after the other, this event will in turn excite an assembly {/ɪt/} which will automatically excite assemblies for {3rd person} {neuter} and {singular}. Similarly, both articulation and perception crucially involve the excitement of nerve cells along certain 'pathways'. Thus, the perceptibility as well as the pronouncability of /ɪ/ result from /ɪ/'s association with the respective neuronal pathways. In other words and quite generally speaking, then, /ɪ/ fulfils its functions by virtue of its associations with other cell assemblies. In some cases, as in morpheme recognition or in articulation, the firing of /ɪ/ will cause a firing of associated assemblies, while in others the firing of appropriate 'function' assemblies will cause a firing of /ɪ/. The fact that /ɪ/ does certain jobs can thus be viewed, quite simply, as its occupying a certain designated place within a network of associated cell assemblies and standing in mutual triggering relationships with those. Viewed this way, however, the jobs which /ɪ/ does are at the same time the clue to its very existence as an assembly, since only through being triggered to fire in unison a set of nerve cells emerges as an identifiable assembly in its own right. A number of connected cells that never come to fire in unison is by definition no assembly in the sense that we have established above.

It seems to follow, then, that whether or not an /ɪ/ will emerge as a stably connected nerve cell assembly within a particular brain depends on whether it gets excited sufficiently often by the assemblies in its environment - and this, incidentally, represents an answer to the question concerning the conditions under which the production of [ɪ]s can be expected to create new copies of /ɪ/. As we observed, it cannot be enough for some sets of cells to be excited through input from the sensory pathway, because in order for /ɪ/ to be acquired, it is not enough to hear [ɪ] sufficiently often. Rather, [ɪ] must be received and 'interpreted' as part of a meaningful message. In terms of the model I am sketching here, then, this can only be done if there exist the relevant other 'linguistic' cell assemblies in the mental environment of /ɪ/.

Of course, if the acquisition of any linguistic element depends on the presence of other elements, the notorious chicken-egg question seems to raise itself. It can be solved relatively easily, though, on the assumption of repeated boot-strapping as well as of auto-catalytic self-organisation processes. One only needs to assume a very tiny set of linguistic 'universals' to be hard-wired (or 'inherited'), so that these then provide the environment in which further linguistic elements can establish themselves: an assumption that is perfectly compatible, if not equivalent, to the well established notion of a genetically provided 'language acquisition device'. Whatever the detailed mechanisms behind the emergence of fully functional language systems, though, I feel that the picture that emerges from what has been said so far offers a rather cute reinterpretation of Saussure's view of language as a system 'ou tout se tient'. At the same time, the dependence of /ɪ/ on the presence of certain other assemblies represents another beautiful analogy to DNA based evolution, where the evolutionary stability of genes also depends on the presence of other genes within the genome. In the same way - to give just one example - as an /ɪ/ assembly makes sense only within a more or less complete system of other 'language assemblies', there can also not exist a gene for eye colour without the system of genes that manufacture the rest of the eye and the organism around the eye.

Another important aspect of the acquisition of such linguistic elements as the /ɪ/ that this paper focuses on, is that they can be assumed to establish themselves within a new brain only if their establishment and the activity it causes in associated assemblies gets 'rewarded' and thus 'reinforced'. In other words, the effects of an emerging assembly on its environment must be such that they feed back on the assembly by making its future firing more likely, so that the assembly acquires the necessary stability. 'Reward' and 'reinforcement' must ultimately come from neuronal activities whose effect is that they make people feel good, or, in other words, cause psychosomatic states which represent positive emotions and which are probably hardwired (i.e. genetically deter-

mined) into the nervous systems of human beings.[5] This is just a technical way of saying that the acquisition of appropriate linguistic cell assemblies is probably rewarded through the positive emotions that go along with successful communicative acts, or - in yet simpler terms - that a brain will acquire such elements as help its bearer to get himself across to and understand other members of the speech community. The acquisition of an /ɪ/ phoneme can thus be viewed as just one series among the adaptive process that a brain goes through as it evolves towards a state in which it enables its owner to interact/communicate with her environment in a sufficiently harmonious manner. At first, an assembly which eventually turns out as an /ɪ/ will be just one of a larger set of many possible neuronal configurations a brain may assume. As its activity, that is its firing, turns out to have rewarding effects more often than the firing of other neuronal configurations, it will probably 'attract' more electrochemical energy and get fired more often than the latter. By virtue of that fact, then, it will establish itself as a stable assembly, while its competitors won't. The emergence of an /ɪ/ assembly within an individual brain can thus be viewed as a process that involves chance variation among brain states and selection of some states over others. The relative fitness of the competing states is determined by the degree to which they effect positive 'emotional' responses, while the general 'tastes' of emotions have probably been shaped through selectional processes acting on the genetic level.

For /ɪ/'s success as an active replicator, this means that its capacity of producing [ɪ]s is just one aspect determining the success of its replication. Producing [ɪ]s will probably increase the number of times an assembly corresponding to /ɪ/ gets excited within a new acquisitor's brain but it cannot guarantee that new /ɪ/'s stability. However, the very existence of 'adult' /ɪ/s in the speech community also increases the chances for the effects of a potential new /ɪ/ to be 'rewarded' and thus greatly increases the chances of a new /ɪ/'s stability. /ɪ/ is thus an active replicator in two ways: it generates new /ɪ/s through emitting [ɪ]s, and it breeds newly generated /ɪ/s by making its host (or: speaker) react to their effects in a way that gives the hosts of the new /ɪ/s the feeling of being 'understood' or having reached their communicative goals.

So much for my view as to why Middle English /ɪ/ is still /ɪ/ in Modern English. /ɪ/s are still around in abundance in Modern English in environments similar to those in which Middle English /ɪ/s throve, because the latter have

[5] Cf. Plotkin 1994 who defines emotions as 'mental and psychological states (resulting in sensations like a churning stomach or a bursting feeling in the chest) that signal the possible or actual presence of biologically significant events in the world [...]' and maintains that 'whatever the emotion being signalled, one of its functions is to tell us what to attend to, what to learn about [...]. Emotions are postcards from our genes telling us, in a direct and non-symbolic manner, about life and death'. (*ibid.*)

managed to replicate themselves successfully through multiple generations of host brains.

2. Some reasons why I find it so attractive to view linguistic elements as replicators.

What are the advantages, if any, of viewing phonemes as replicators? After all, it would have been equally possible to say that /ɪ/ and its functions have been successfully acquired by successive generations of English speakers and that's why it is still around. And this sounds more familiar as well, doesn't it? It's much more easily digestible, doesn't demand mental gymnastics and seems to capture, basically, the same facts. So why take the trouble?

Well, I can think of a number of good reasons. Here I will present just two.

First, a statement to the effect that speakers have successfully acquired /ɪ/s over successive generations forces one to change perspectives, because phonemes and speakers belong to different ontological domains. Such a change is intellectually unsatisfactory, particularly in lack of a theory that makes the links between the two domains or levels explicit. Thus, saying that a speaker acquires a phoneme begs the question of how she actually does that, and in structural historical accounts this question is typically never taken up seriously or even answered, because speakers are treated as black boxes at best or even regarded as outside the domain of linguistic science proper. - The view sketched here, on the other hand, is perfectly explicit about the way in which language acquisition is supposed to work, while at the same time describing it exclusively from the point of view of the linguistic elements themselves. No recourse to notions such as that of 'speakers' as agents in the story of linguistic evolution has to be taken. Speakers figure exclusively as the environments in which the replication of linguistic elements takes place, and the story can remain a consistently 'linguistic' one.

Second, viewing linguistic elements as replicators opens the possibility of transferring to the study of linguistics many theoretical insights gained in other sciences that have for a longer period and more explicitly concerned themselves with the study of replicating systems and their evolution. First and foremost these include evolutionary biology, of course, but also other sciences applying generalised Darwinian frameworks, such as evolutionary cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence and particularly the study of systems that are capable of 'learning' on the basis of genetic algorithms, and so on.

In particular, the view that linguistic elements are replicators affords interesting aspects on questions relating to language change. Remember that I argued that the success of /ɪ/s replication depends, among other things, on whether a new brain can integrate /ɪ/ meaningfully within the network of linguistic elements and processes that are emerging within it. One aspect of an

emerging linguistic system or competence, is therefore that it provides slots that need to be filled, and it is such a slot that an element /ɪ/ needs to fill if it is to replicate successfully. It seems to be a characteristic of such slots that there is not only one way of filling them. As the evidence of linguistic variation and change show, it is possible and happens quite frequently that within one and the same speech community corresponding slots happen to be occupied by different elements within different brains. Thus, as a very trivial example, take the variation between /U/ and /A/ in English, where either of the two may occupy the slot provided by the context of such words as *hut*, *but*, *butter*, and so on. It can be said, therefore, that within the pool of linguistic elements which occupy brains of speakers of English, there is a competition between /U/ and /A/ for a certain defined slot, or that - with regard to that slot /U/ and /A/ are *alleles*, to borrow a term from genetics (where it refers to different genes that can occupy the same slot on a DNA strand and are thus competitors). Typically, such a competition for slots - on which any linguistic element depends for its existence - will take place in all instances of linguistic variation, so that variation itself can in fact be regarded as competition. Whenever variation leads to actual change, the cause for such an event must be that for some reason a new competitor for a given slot manages to place more copies of it there than its established rival. In the case of phonological elements, ease of perception and production will obviously play a great role there, in the case of other elements semiotic parameters determining the ease with which links between associated elements are established will probably play similar roles. At the same time, however, the fact that existing elements will tend to reward the establishment of what they 'recognise' as new copies of themselves will be a powerful barrier against the spread of new variants, and if a new variant is to establish itself successfully then it must have sufficient selective advantages over the established competitor. Such selective pressures which favour the spread of a new variant at the expense of an established one may among other things be due to changes in the environment of the slot, where environment includes both a slot's immediate systemic environment and the wider environment comprising the whole set-up of the speech community in which linguistic elements 'live'.

Also, the view of linguistic evolution as a story of items attempting, with varying success, to replicate themselves affords interesting perspectives on the notorious problems concerning the actuation and the implementation of language change. Change is actuated under this view simply through undirected copying mistakes that occur in the replication process. It may have various reasons, some of them pretty straightforward, such as misarticulations and misunderstandings. More crucially, though, variation is already built into the copying process itself, since an item relies on an acquisitor's brain to produce 'random'

varieties of neuronal configurations among which the replicating item will reinforce those most similar to itself and thus make them stable. In other words, the processes by which linguistic elements get copied involves successive stages, during the first of which the average copying fidelity must necessarily be relatively low. The resulting variability of languages is thus a natural matter. - As far as the implementation of changes is concerned, then, it can be regarded as parallel to the implementation of mutational changes within the genepool of living species: it results from the relatively more successful replication of a new variant within the brains of a linguistic community.

Finally, this perspective makes one of the more puzzling aspects of language evolution easy to digest, namely the fact that - on the one hand - language changes often seem to be adaptive in the sense that they seem to make things easier for language users, while - on the other hand - the world's languages are full of elements and qualities that must count as clearly suboptimal with regard to those criteria that allow language change to be regarded as 'optimisation' in the first place. As the approach I have sketched here suggests, the items of which languages are made up do not primarily exist 'because of' the purposes they serve their speakers, but rather simply because they have managed to replicate sufficiently well. Language evolution takes place, in other words, primarily because the elements that constitute languages are replicators which strive to propagate. The needs of speakers only represent constraints on the propagation of linguistic replicators, determining which of them will survive more easily in an environment where resources (in this case electrochemical energy supplied within human brains) are as limited as they are anywhere within our world.

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Traditionalist Notes on Old English Palatal Diphthongization (contra Lass)

Manfred Voss

[N]othing historical is very simple[.][1]

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Doubts about the validity of Palatal Diphthongization (henceforth PD) as a concept or sound change are in themselves nothing really new or original. Detractors seeing only spelling conventions at work seem to have been around for a long time.[2] The nineteenth-century disputes are all but forgotten, although the monuments of the debate still, at least in part, make for instructive reading. The names of Sievers (1884: 205-209) and Bülbring (1900) immediately spring to mind in this connection. For a time it must have appeared that the defenders of PD had carried the day: handbooks such as Luick (1964), Campbell (1959) or Brunner (1965)[3] codify what may be termed the traditional positions with regard to PD. But history *does* seem to repeat itself, as the old battles apparently have to be fought again ever so often.

The recent appearance of a textbook by Roger Lass (1994) provides a most welcome opportunity to subject a number of revisionist claims to scrutiny. The relevant section in the book, an appendix with PD in 'scare-quotes' in its title,[4] is essentially a repeat performance of a similar appendix in Lass - Anderson (1975: 279-282). As Lass (1994: 79) states, nothing in the intervening period has given him reason to change his mind as regards PD. The 1975 appendix is in turn heavily indebted to the teachings of Stockwell and Barritt (1951; 1955), a by-product of their often ill-informed inquiries into the status and significance of Old English "short digraphs". PD is also regarded as spurious by Colman (1985: 12-17), and the names mentioned in this paragraph so far form what Lass (1994: 79) terms a "vociferous minority". One might ask whether a mi-

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[1] Lass (1994: 78).

[2] For references see, for instance, Luick (1964: §177).

[3] Brunner (1965: §90, 2 and n. 2) is to some extent equivocal as regards the status of PD of velar vowels. More on this below.

[4] It may appear somewhat halfhearted, considering the strength of his conviction that we are dealing with graphic phenomena, that Lass treats PD in an appendix to a phonology chapter, but his textbook lacks a systematic treatment of Old English graphemics.

nority view should receive extensive airing in a basic textbook that is intended by Lass (1994: xiii) to make access to the "Big Boys" (?viz., Luick, Brunner, Campbell) easier. The "Big Boys" certainly do not even receive a fair hearing in Lass's appendix on PD, although he might have profited from delving deeper into the literature on PD. What these notes set out to do is to point to some of the loose ends of Lass's discussion. For the sake of clarity this will be done in a somewhat polemic vein. No complete research history into PD is intended, nor will the presentation be exhaustive. If these notes trigger renewed discussion of these matters they have served their purpose.

1.

The common core of traditional positions on PD[5] in West Saxon dialects[6] is roughly as follows: after /č, š, j (< Germanic /j, g/)[7] the palatal vowels *æ, e* (long and short) were diphthongized, after /š, j (< Germanic /j/)/ velar vowels (again long and short), e.g., *ceaster* (< *cæster*), *gietan* (< *getan*), *geong* (< /jung/), *geoc* (< /jok/, /juk/), *sceacan* (< *scacan*). The ratio of diphthongized to undiphthongized forms in the extant manuscripts may vary, as may the regularity of the change in the various diphthongizing environments. The new diphthongs are usually said to be stressed on their first elements when from palatal vowels and stressed on their second elements when developed from velar vowels.

Lass (1994: 79-80), following Stockwell - Barritt (1951: 14), cannot accept the standard view that non-high front vowels are diphthongized after palatals, as he cannot see any phonetic motivation for this. Taking <ea> as an example he finds it peculiar that apparently identical diphthongs should be produced in palatal environments (PD) and in back ones by breaking (cp. *seah* 'he saw' < */sæx/) and velar umlaut (cp. *ealu* 'ale' < */ælu/). The problem is addressed by Hogg (1992a: §5.49) and will not be dealt with here any further.

Another argument against the reality of PD is, according to Lass (and Stockwell - Barritt), that digraph spellings occur in positions where diphthongs are not usually claimed to have existed and <i, e> are regarded as diacritics,

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[5] For detailed descriptions see Luick (1964: §§168-177, 253-256), Campbell (1959: §§170-189) and Brunner (1965: §§90-92).

[6] This paper will not deal with the situation in other dialects (such as Northumbrian, where evidence for the operation of PD is copious), as Lass does not include it in his treatment.

[7] At what exact stage of the phonological development of later /š, č/ (?[sc, c]) the diphthongization process set in is of no immediate concern here.

cp. *geong*[8] 'young' or the second (unstressed) syllable of *fisceas* 'fish' or the third syllable of *lufigean* 'love'.[9]

This in turn leads Lass, still following Stockwell - Barritt (1951), to suspect that all <i, e> after palatals are mere spelling devices. PD, in consequence, is not, by any means, a sound change and should be rechristened "Post-Palatal Digraphy". If this held up to scrutiny, the phonologies of Old English could drop pages of paragraphs filled with intricate descriptions and manifold exceptions. This, indeed, would be a most welcome simplification of the matter in hand and fully deserving of our gratitude. Lass (1994: 81) summarizes the graphic conditions thus:

(i) <ge>, <ce>, <sce> are writings of choice for palatals.
(ii) No trigraph spellings are allowed, and <æ> is a digraph.
(iii) <gea> [sic], <cea->, <scea->, then, because *<geæ->, *<ceæ->, *<sceæ-> are not allowed.
(iv) No digraph spelling $<V_iV_i>$ is allowed.
(v) <gie->, <cie->, <scie->, then, because *<gee->, *<cee->, *<scee> are not allowed.

A similar argument is said to apply to the spelling <geo> for /ju/: "the sequence <eu> was also not allowed by the orthographic rules. <gu>, which was allowed, would indicate a velar; hence <ge> to show a palatal before a back vowel, and <o> because <eu> is illegal."

Lass (1994: 81) finds this a "delicious argument",[10] as "everything follows from two premisses which are necessary in any case: there are no trigraphs or double-vowel graphs in WS [sc. West Saxon] (simple empirical fact), and <e> is often used to show that a preceding consonant-graph is palatal (low-level interference). Of such things," Lass proclaims, "is history often made." Delicious and simple as this line of argumentation may be, it unfortunately does not work, at least not in general.[11] Simple is not always best.

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[8] Luick (1964: §§169, 357) is one who supposes that at least occasionally there was a diphthong in *geong*.

[9] This argument is put into perspective by Hogg (1992a: §5.59).

[10] Apparently Mercian scribes among others were not much attracted by this kind of orthographic reasoning. Their West Saxon colleagues soon (by the 10th century) abandoned <ie> spellings after palatals in favor of monophthongal <i, y>, for instance; see below.

[11] I will not deny the possibility that vowel graphs after palatal consonants may indeed be mere spelling devices in specific texts. A Middle English example that readily comes to mind is the West Midland AB language where, as d'Ardenne (1961: 175) states, "orthographic *e* (derived from OE orthography) occasionally appears before *a, o, u*, though this was no longer necessary for the definition of the consonantal values;" see further Dobson (1972: lxxvi, fn. 2) and, on graphic *e* in various manuscripts of the *Ancrene Riwle*, Diensberg

The main classical arguments in favor of the view that PD of (original) front vowels did in fact take place are rehearsed by Hogg (1992a: §5.49).[12] He points to the fact that the later development of the diphthongs produced by PD is identical to that of diphthongs produced by breaking and velar umlaut. Secondly, in texts where the graphic phenomena connected with PD occur these are usually far too regular to be without phonological significance. Thirdly, the test-case word *cyse* 'cheese' (on which more below) presupposes the validity of PD. Fourthly, PD may be understood (*pace* Lass) as a natural phonological process, which increases the plausibility of its operation. These arguments in aggregate may still appear quite convincing to most, but of course not to Lass. The following four sections of my paper will address three areas where his treatment of PD or 'Post-Palatal Digraphy' is especially ill-considered and ill-informed:

a) the subsequent development of West Saxon words which contain <ie, y, i> by PD,
b) his claim that *cyse* is unique as far as its phonological development is concerned,[13]
c) his dismissal of PD of back vowels.[14]

2.

Lass (1994: 80) claims that the later development of lexemes which had <ie> after palatal consonants in Old English indicates that "nothing phonetic actually happened to the nuclear vowels." He gives Middle English *yeve*(n) 'give' and Modern English *yelp* (< *gielpan*) as examples to prove his point. Leaving aside that 'traditionalists' will invariably wince at the proposed derivation of *yelp*,[15] there appears to be another problem with Lass's statement: the brighter members of his intended student audience might point to the obvious fact that actually something phonetic must have happened to the nuclear vowel in Modern English *give*.[16] The illustration is certainly not well-chosen and apt to cause confusion. The muddle surrounding Modern English *give* in this context has a

(1975: 117-122). On the possible operation of certain types of PD in Mercian dialects in Old English times see, for instance, Ball - Stiles (1983: 21 and fn. 19).

[12] For further and more detailed arguments he refers to Bülbring (1900: 97-104).

[13] As will be seen, this view is shared by most researchers.

[14] Lass is certainly not alone in denying that PD of back vowels ever happened, see below.

[15] These would of course derive *yelp* from Old English dialects where 'Post-Palatal Digraphy' was not routinely employed. The ancestors of Modern Standard English, Anglian dialects of the South-East Midlands, are not usually considered to have had PD.

[16] There are indeed still textbooks around that claim derivation of *give* from diphthongized West Saxon *giefan*, see, for instance, Wełna (1978: §3.50), Faiß (1989: §1.3.2.2.) and Blake (1992: 11).

long tradition which has been well documented by Giffhorn (1974: 26-28) and is again linked with the names Stockwell and Barritt. Giffhorn's conclusion that Stockwell (1958: 22, fn. 5) is not at all or at least not sufficiently knowledgeable about the derivations of Modern English *give* and *yelp* and about Old English dialectology in general is only too true.[17]

A brief consultation of the relevant sections in one of the established phonologies of Middle English such as Jordan (1968: §79) might be helpful. Jordan has Southwestern and Essex forms with <i, u> spellings that go back to Old English (West and East Saxon) *gietan* 'get', *giellan* 'yell', *gielpan* 'yelp', *scield* 'shield', etc. Quite apparently something phonetic HAS happened here: the phonetic development mirrors that of regular Early West Saxon /ie/ and its Late West Saxon monophthongal sequels and not that of /e/.[18] Lass (1994: 78-82) does not mention such forms, and there is nothing in his treatment that might account for them. If PD never took place, as he contends, Lass should, at the very least, outline an alternative explanation for the dialectal forms under discussion. Just in case he should be tempted to opt for a simple raising process after palatal consonants, he might want to consider the conclusions reached by Dietz (1989: 319) which are based upon evidence provided by LALME. Dietz discusses the Late Middle English distribution of two items whose stem vowels ultimately derive from West Germanic short and long *e* respectively, i.e., West Saxon *gietan* 'get' and *giet(a)* 'yet'. He states that Southwestern Midldle English /jyt-/ in these words (with the stem vowel written <u>) confirms the traditional interpretation of the Old English evidence for this type of PD. The competing view, i.e., that *e* (long or short) was not diphthongized, will not work here, and Dietz spells out the alternatives: either one has to demonstrate that *e* could develop into rounded *y* in an environment that certainly does not facilitate rounding, or one must prove that Southwestern <u> is a graph for long or short *i*. The chances that such attempts may turn out successful are exceedingly slim.[19] Lass is, of course, also unable to account for West Saxon <i,

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[17] Stockwell (1958: 22, fn. 5) reads: "*ie* spellings here indicate palatals; in *giefan* the phoneme represented is /i/; in *gielpan* it is /e/. Since /i/ and /e/ are very stable nuclei in the history of English, their modern reflexes will generally reveal the Old English shape."

[18] It also mirrors the development of diphthongs after palatals that are either due to breaking and subsequent *i*-umlaut (and not to PD) or umlauted continuations of West Germanic diphthongs, cp. *giernan* 'yearn' and *ciest* '(he) chooses'.

[19] It should not go unmentioned that in the Middle English AB language of the Southwest Midlands rounding and raising of /e/ to /y/ is claimed to have taken place in *schuppen* 'create' (< Mercian Old English *sceppan*) "under the combined influence of sc [š] and p," see d'Ardenne (1961: 164), who considers dialect borrowing from West Saxon improbable. She refers to similar raising and rounding processes in West Midland *sullen* (< *sellan* 'give') and *suggen* (< *secgan* 'say'). *Shippennd* 'creator' in the *Ormulum* is said to be a sequel of a form with [y] in its stem, while Jordan (1968: §77, n.) sees it as a remnant of the former West

y> spellings in words which have *i*-umlaut of *ea* (< *æ* by PD), e.g., *scippend*, *scyppend* 'creator',[20] or in words traditionally said to have had PD of umlauted vowels, e.g., *sciendan*, *scindan* 'hurt'.[21]

3.

A rather notorious lexeme that is usually considered to have had, at one stage, /īe/ in its stem is West Saxon *cyse*, *cise* 'cheese'.[22] It ultimately goes back to Latin *caseus*. The development from input to output is usually outlined as follows: Latin long *a* gave Pre-West Saxon long *æ* which in turn was diphthongized to long *ea* after palatal *k*, the new diphthong was subject to *i*-umlaut and, like long *ea* from West Germanic *au* in comparable positions, developed into Early West Saxon /īe/. Positing this kind of development appears to be the only convincing way of explaining Late West Saxon <y, i> in the stem vocalism, as Pre-West Saxon long *æ* from West Germanic long *a* was not affected by *i*-umlaut (*<cease> with PD of long *æ* is not what is, as a rule, found in the manuscripts). This line of argument was first developed by Sievers (1884: 206) and has been much invoked ever since. It provides solutions to at least two problems: firstly, it establishes that a (front) vowel after a palatal consonant was modified in such a way so as to undergo *i*-umlaut where this would have been impossible without that modification having occurred; secondly, it furnishes a relative chronology for PD and i-umlaut.[23]

Again Lass (1994: 81-82) prefers to disagree,[24] again he does so under the not so benign influence of Stockwell and Barritt (1955: 382-383).[25] The gist of their argumentation is roughly as follows: firstly, if *cyse* had indeed stood for /čyse/ one would expect Modern English **chyse* or **chise* /čaiz/, but no such forms are attested; secondly, according to Lass (following Stockwell - Barritt), *cyse* is unique as far as its phonological development is concerned and, in consequence, all arguments building on it are circular. As regards the first point,

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Saxon ecclesiastical language. Either attempt at an explanation is somewhat doubtful, but see Diensberg (1978) who argues against the assumption of dialect borrowing from West Saxon. On *suggen* compare Jordan (1968: §34, n. 3).

[20] For Middle English attestations of this lexeme with <i, u> spellings see MED, s.v. *sheppende* n.

[21] See MED, s.v. *sh*ĕ*nden* v.

[22] As Kuhn - Quirk (1955: 397) remark, it is not surprising that the Early West Saxon spelling *<ciese> is not attested.

[23] On the relative chronology of PD and *i*-umlaut see further Luick (1964: §176), Hogg (1979: 97-100), Stiles (1988: 346-348), Hogg (1992a: §5.72) and Stiles (1995: 198-199).

[24] Compare Lass - Anderson (1975: 281-282).

[25] The relevant passages in the article by Stockwell - Barritt react to critical comments made by Kuhn - Quirk (1953: 146-147) with regard to their stance *vis-à-vis* PD. Kuhn and Quirk had patiently repeated Sievers's argumentation.

i.e., the non-existence of */čaiz/ 'cheese' in Modern Standard English, the less said the better. The descendants of West Saxon dialect forms are, as a rule, not to be expected in today's Standard. One might, however, point to somewhat embarrassingly scarce Middle English evidence[26] demonstrating the survival of West Saxon dialectal forms. MED, s.v. *chēse* n. 3. (a) and (d), for instance, offers *Chushache* 'cheese rack' and *Chis-*, *Chus(e)-* in compounded surnames. Kristensson (1987: 132-133) quotes an Oxfordshire surname *Chyseman*, the first element of which he expressly derives from West Saxon **ciese*; Rubin (1951: 209) has *Chus(e)man* from East Sussex; Pfeffer (1912: 26) has found *chyse* in Trevisa's *Polychronicon*.[27]

As regards the second argument advanced by Lass (1994: 82), i.e., the alleged singularity of the phonological development of *cyse*, *cise*, the following section of these notes will attempt to establish that this is by no means a clear case. In fairness it has to be said that Lass, following Lass -Anderson (1975: 222), at least refrains from formulating an *ad-hoc* sound law in the manner of Stockwell - Barritt (1955: 383) who posit a special raising of West Saxon long *æ* to long *i* for the word under discussion.[28] Lass points to descendants of Latin *caseus* in other Germanic languages, German *Käse* and Dutch *kaas*, the former with *i*-umlaut, the latter without, to demonstrate that divergent, even unique, developments from a single ancestor are possible. What exactly this is meant to prove remains unclear,[29] as both the German and Dutch forms do not violate any established set of sound laws (the Old High German reflex of West Germanic long *a* was subject to *i*-umlaut, while Dutch, as a rule, does not admit mutation of long vowels). Laudable though it may be that Lass, unlike Stockwell - Barritt, does not present us with a special new sound law, what we are left with is a gaping hole. If Lass (1994: 82) had his way, there would be nothing to do but leave the problem under discussion "hanging about until someone comes up with a good solution, i.e. to recognize [it] as [an 'anomaly'], and wait until (maybe) a general explanation comes up that can subsume [it] as [a] special case." It might be said that we have waited long enough for such an explanation to emerge or even that the general explanation or framework that

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[26] Indeed, *chaque mot a son histoire*.

[27] The items quoted date to the 14th century. - Jordan (1968: §78, n.) mentions the item from the *Polychronicon*.

[28] A similar suggestion is made by Samuels (1953: 36) who invokes the "combined influence of the initial palatal consonant and *i*-mutation." An analogous solution had been mentioned and been immediately rejected by Bülbring (1900: 97-104). For critical comments on Samuels's version of the hypothesis see, for instance, Kuhn - Quirk (1955: 397, fn. 19), Stiles (1988: 347) and Hogg (1992a: §5.72).

[29] Lass's examples replace those given by Stockwell - Barritt (1955: 383), i.e., Old English *dyde* 'did' and various realizations of Modern English *room*. These appear equally trivial and irrelevant.

subsumes *cyse, cise* as a special (or rare) case[30] has been available for a long time.

4.

As has been hinted at above, this section will be on a second lexical item that occasionally appears to have paralleled *cyse, cise* to a large degree as regards its phonological development. The long *ea* diphthong (< long *æ* through PD < West Germanic long *a*) in West Saxon *sceap* 'sheep' apparently could at times, under somewhat obscure[31] conditions, be subject to *i*-umlaut. This in turn, of course, means that *cyse, cise* may not be quite as isolated as is frequently believed.[32] West Saxon *sceap* is a neuter *a*-stem, and it is indeed hard to understand how *i*-umlaut could occur at all in its paradigm. Luick (1964: §255, n.) suggests that **sciep* and later sporadic *scyp* are due to *i*-umlaut caused by the second element of the compound **sciephierde* 'shepherd'. This seems to be endorsed by Jordan (1968: §78), but is questioned by Brunner (1965: §92, n. 9) who appears to have misunderstood Luick.[33] Smith (1956: 100-101) points to the fact that *scyp* is met with in the West Saxon of the Old English charters and attempts to explain **sciep* as corresponding in formation to mutated *celf* instead of the usual (Anglian) *calf*. Whatever the correct derivation of *sciep* may be, and the two attempts at an explanation referred to here are by no means very convincing, there are numerous attestations of place-name forms that require the assumption of underlying **sciep*. Early instances of relevant place-name spellings[34] are, for example, given by Ekwall (1960), s.vv. *Shefield* (Sussex), *Shefford* (Berkshire), *Shifford* (Oxfordshire), *Shipham* (Somerset), *Shiplake* (Oxfordshire), *Shiplate* (Somerset), *Shipton Lee* (Berkshire),

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[30] If one follows Lass (1994: 82), *cyse, cise* will always be special anyway and without "etymological parallels throughout every step [Lass misquotes *stage*] of its reconstruction," as Stockwell - Barritt (1955: 382) put it. I assume that any alternative explanation so eagerly awaited by Lass would be doomed to suffer attacks similar to those on the traditonal one involving PD.

[31] These circumstances are about as obscure as the etymology of the word, see, for instance, ODEE, s.v. *sheep*. Cognates of *sheep* appear to exist only in West Germanic languages.

[32] Regrettably, there are no past optative forms of West Saxon strong *gietan* with *i*-umlaut of *ǣa* (< long *æ*): although in theory they should have been subject to *i*-umlaut, the manuscripts only have levelled forms without it; see, for instance, Brunner (1965: §377 and n.).

[33] Brunner apparently thinks that Luick is only concerned with *i*-umlaut in *scyphyred* 'shepherd' and does not comment on West Saxon forms of the simplex that may be derived from a hypothetical **sciep*. Campbell (1959) and Hogg (1992a) do not discuss the problem in hand. An overview of spellings of the Old English equivalent of *sheep* is provided by Jordan (1903: 143-148). Bülbring (1900: 97) had already pointed out a <scyp> spelling (with an accent on the *y*) in a manuscript of Ælfric's *Grammar and Glossary*.

[34] I will refer only to Late Old English and Early Middle English attestations, as later forms with <i, y> spellings may reflect shortening of long closed *e* in polysyllabic words.

Shipton Moyne, *Shipton Oliffe* and *Sollars* (all in Gloucestershire), *Shipton on Cherwell*, *Shipton under Wychwood* (both in Oxfordshire).[35]

While in the above place-name evidence early <i, y> spellings may, with some degree of confidence, be explained by reference to familiar West Saxon phonological developments (PD, *i*-umlaut of long *ea*), similar spelling evidence occurring in Anglian areas outside Northumbria is somewhat puzzling. Northumbrian Old English of course knew PD of long *e* in the lexeme under discussion,[36] but apart from frequently quoted[37] *scipa* (gen. pl.) in *Rushworth*[1] Mercian as it is recorded in the manuscripts does not provide us with relevant evidence. Kristensson (1987: 133), working on the basis of local documents dated between 1290 and 1350, calls attention to <i> spellings in place-names from Derbyshire and Shropshire, in which West Saxon sound laws cannot, of course, have operated. According to him, /i/ in these names is probably due to shortening of long *e* (either directly or via short *e*), but he does not exclude the possibility that the relevant forms go back to Old English **sciep*. Whether shortening really is the more probable solution to the problem remains doubtful, as, for instance, *Shipley* (Derbyshire) is already spelled with <i> in 1086 (Domesday Book)[38] and shortening to /i/ this early is unlikely. There remains the intriguing possibility that some Mercian subdialects did possess one more type of PD.[39]

The foregoing digression was only meant to demonstrate that matters are far from simple and that a unified explanation for strikingly similar phenomena, though possibly desirable, remains unlikely. On the other hand, it is strongly recommended here that Lass (1994: 82) (and others) refrain from claiming that *cyse* is unique as regards its phonological evolution. That, at least, is far from certain.

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[35] See also Mills (1991), s.vv. *Sheffield Green* (East Sussex), *Shefford, East & Great* (Berkshire), *Shiplake* (Oxfordshire), *Shipton Moyne* (Gloucestershire) and *Shipton under Wychwood* (Oxfordshire). Relevant material may also be found in MED, s.v. *sh*ē̦*p* n., 7 (b). See further Zachrisson (1926-1927: 139), Bohman (1944: 129-130, 132-133), Smith (1965: 67-68), Kristensson (1987: 131-133) and Dietz (1989: 318).

[36] For the Northumbrian development see, for instance, the recent treatment by Hogg (1992a: §5.54), who considers simple raising of long *e* to *i* in *scip* 'sheep' equally possible. It is somewhat puzzling that in Middle English, apart from sporadic *Ship-*, *Skip-* in place-names, the North has only *shep* which cannot go back to Old Northumbrian *scip*, see Kristensson (1981: 11-12). Again, *chaque mot a son histoire*.

[37] See, for instance, Campbell (1959: §187), Brunner (1965: §91, b), Hogg (1992a: §5.55) and Kristensson (1987: 133).

[38] See Ekwall (1960), s.v. *Shipley*.

[39] See again my fn. 11.

5.

Thus far these notes have concentrated on the PD of front vowels and I will turn now to the diphthongization of back vowels after *j* and *sc*. There are certainly numerous adherents of the view that little, if anything at all, ever happened in the environment mentioned, and Lass's (1994: 79) implicit denial of the existence of the PD of back vowels cannot, for once, be termed excessively eccentric.[40] Of the authors of our standard handbooks Brunner (1965: §§90, 92) appears to be the most equivocal as regards the status of this special kind of PD, believing that, at least in part, relevant spellings are purely diacritical. Discussions of these matters tend, in general, to be confusing and somewhat inconclusive, and readers are referred to the treatments in the handbooks.[41] This section will only present a somewhat neglected strand of argumentation that, at least to my mind, makes a powerful case for the assumption of a certain type of PD of back vowels, traces of which are still to be found in Middle English.

As so often, one may best take Luick (1964) as a point of departure. In his §254 he discusses the rise of diphthongs from velar vowels after *sc* in West Saxon as in *sceacan* 'shake' (< *scacan*) and *sceort* 'short' (< *scort*) and reaches the conclusion that in all likelihood the new diphthongs were either rising or level ones. But between instalments of his *opus magnum* Luick changed his mind. In the list of corrections printed on unnumbered pages following the table of contents of the first volume of the 1964 reprint (*sub* S. 229 § 254 Z. 3) he admits to the possibility that in rare cases the diphthongs under discussion could become falling ones and refers the reader to his §357. In that paragraph Middle English *shert* is quoted without any source provided. The form presupposes an Old English falling diphthong *eo* that underwent the usual development via the rounded monophthong *ø* to *e* (a straight sequence /o/ > /e/ is cer-

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[40] PD of back vowels is, for instance, considered extremely unlikely by Bauer (1973: 21). Wełna (1987: 55-56), in what is essentially a running commentary on Luick (1964), follows Bauer. Bauer (1973: 19-20) advances phonetic arguments against assuming the development of palatal glides before back vowels. Dobson (1968: §432), however, presents Early Modern English evidence that appears to suggest a similar process: Hart, the orthoepist, has [j] after [š] in *show*; see further (with additional items) Danielsson (1963: §134) and Diensberg (1985: 127-128). I am grateful to Professor Bernhard Diensberg for drawing my attention to the Early Modern English material.

[41] See, for instance, Luick (1964: §§169-170, 253-254), Campbell (1959: §§170-183) and Brunner (1965: §§90, 92). Hogg (1992b: 112-113) declares that, "[e]ven if one accepts (as this writer does) the reality of palatal diphthongization, there is no need to accept that a parallel change affecting back vowels ... was ever anything more than an orthographic variation." In his *A grammar of Old English* Hogg (1992a: §§5.59-5.70) is certainly more cautious.

tainly not to be assumed).[42] What exactly made Luick reconsider the matter is unclear. It is possible, however, that he became aware of the somewhat meager evidence collected by Cornelius (1907: 186-187, 194). Cornelius found *schorte*/*sherte* : *herte* 'heart' (< Old English *heorte*) rhymes in literary manuscripts from Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and rather cautiously pleaded for reading *sherte* : *herte*.[43] Giffhorn (1974: 169-172), in his monograph on the Old English short diphthongs, adds evidence culled from place-name material.[44] He reports, for instance, <e> spellings in the place-name element *short* from Derbyshire,[45] Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire and Essex and additional field-name evidence from Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Middlesex. Further <e> spellings (alongside <o> spellings) occur in the place-name element Old English **sc(e)ora* 'steep slope', for instance; such spellings are recorded in Wiltshire names.[46] Giffhorn's material can now be conveniently supplemented by reference to MED, s.vv. *short* adj., *shop(pe* n. 'shop' and *sh*$\breve{o}$*re* n. (1) *'shore* etc.', for instance. It is odd, however, that Giffhorn (1974: 173, 289, n. 371) should have taken Luick to task for allegedly not admitting the possibility of the special development outlined in this section. Luick is entirely on his side in suggesting such an occasional development (and it is nothing more). Giffhorn's strictures are based on misreadings of Luick's (1964) text and especially his §360.[47] One has to agree with Giffhorn (1974: 289, n. 373), however, in demanding further research on the topic of the dialectal spread of those <e> spellings.[48]

6.

It remains for me to sum up briefly what these notes have attempted to do. The presentation was not intended to be exhaustive, but selective in order not to

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[42] *Akzentumsprung* or shift of prominence is also, incidentally, invoked by Hogg (1992a: §5.211, n. 2) with regard to a Late Old English form <gemerung>, cp. <geomerung> 'moaning' with a (long) diphthong due to PD of earlier long *o* (as expressly stated by him). According to Hogg, "[i]t seems likely that the form is due to a sporadic shift of prominence to the first element." In his §5.60 (which deals with the evidence for PD of back vowels after /j/ in West Saxon) no reference to this statement is made.

[43] Cornelius apparently assumes rising diphthongs in *Ancrene Riwle sceort* and *scheon, scheoinde*. On this see my fn. 11.

[44] Cornelius (1907) does not figure in Giffhorn's (1974: 312-326) bibliography.

[45] This appears to be further evidence for PD in Mercia; see section 4 above.

[46] Among reviewers of Giffhorn (1974) only Bierbaumer (1977: 55) appreciated the significance of this material.

[47] Giffhorn does not realize that in his §360 Luick only addresses the later development of Old English rising diphthongs. He has quite obviously not consulted Luick's §357.

[48] I do not, by the way, connect the phenomena discussed with attestations of *shert* documented by Wright (1898-1905), s.v. *short*; see further Wright (1905: §87).

overburden the notes with trivial detail. I hope to have shown that Lass's concept of 'Post-Palatal Digraphy' is seriously flawed and unable to explain a number of developments that occur in Old and Middle English dialects. Something phonetic could and did happen after palatal consonants. What happened in these environments is still best explained in the traditional manner, as the entities that developed in those environments could very much behave like the diphthongs from other sources. I can see nothing wrong with continuing to subsume the relevant sound developments under the name of PD. I readily admit to the fact that PD is of no great importance to the overall history of the English standard language (traces of its one-time operation appear fossilized only in place-names),[49] but to remove PD from the phonologies of our handbooks by graphotactic sleight of hand is utterly misguided. Indeed, nothing historical is very simple, and the real linguistic history of English is more complicated than the one according to Lass. Is it too much to ask that Lass and the other members of that self-styled vociferous minority mentioned in the introduction withdraw their ill-conceived hypotheses concerning PD?[50]

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[49] In his preface Lass (1994: xiv) stresses that his textbook is not intended to treat Old English as a mere precursor of Modern English. One may say, however, that in its comparative neglect of dialectology it betrays a strong teleological bias. Lass's (1994: 283-289) subject index does not even have an entry "dialects" (or "varieties"). This kind of approach does certainly not facilitate access to the Old English texts proper, surely still one of the valid reasons for studying that language. But then again the textbook may be designed for classrooms in which there are no texts.

[50] I am much obliged to Professor Bernhard Diensberg for comments on these notes. All remaining errors and erroneous assumptions are mine only.

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