



HAL
open science

The Effectiveness of Language in Speeches by Trump and Shakespeare

Stan Reiner van Zon

► **To cite this version:**

Stan Reiner van Zon. The Effectiveness of Language in Speeches by Trump and Shakespeare. 2018. halshs-01835625

HAL Id: halshs-01835625

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01835625>

Preprint submitted on 21 Sep 2018

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Copyright

The Effectiveness of Language in Speeches by Trump and Shakespeare

Stan Reiner van Zon, Utrecht University



Still from *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, Youtube video

Introduction

On July 19th, 2017, Stephen Colbert of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* donned a ruff, held aloft a skull and proceeded to read several lines of iambic pentameter. But the lines were not *Hamlet*, but Donald Trump's twitter message: "The Dems scream death as OCare dies!"¹ The intent was farcical, but is the comparison as farcical as Colbert's skit assumed? On the 16th of June 2015, Donald J. Trump descended the escalator in Trump Tower to announce his candidacy for president of the United States. A year later, on the speech's anniversary, journalist David Graham wrote for *The Atlantic*:

Someone reading the morning news on June 17 would have known what the major themes of Trump's campaign would be, what his political persona would be, why he might be a major force, how he would bedevil the Republican Party, and just what his weaknesses would be.²

¹ Stephen Colbert, "Was That Tweet from Trump or Shakespeare?" *Youtube.com*, CBS, 20 July 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWoSLf_samY> 15 Jan. 2018.

² David Graham, "What the Press Got Right About Trump's Candidacy," *The Atlantic.com*. Atlantic Monthly Group, 16 June 2016, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/06/what-the-press-got-right-about-trumps-announcement/487247/>> 15 Jan. 2018.



In hindsight, the speech was an example of highly effective language. It set out the themes and idiosyncrasies of a campaign that would take its candidate all the way to the White House. Shakespeare, of course, is the uncontested master of effective language, as testified by the perennial deployment of Shakespearean language for all manner of political and cultural causes. This study posits that it would be both fruitful and salient to contemporary issues to take the comparison between Trump and Shakespeare's language seriously, and understand both as examples of highly effective language use. This study hopes to establish this by using the tools of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to compare the aforementioned Trump speech to two famous Shakespearean speeches: The "This Sceptered Isle" speech from *Richard II*, and the "Evil May Day" speech from *Sir Thomas More*.

While Trump's road to the White House began two years ago, academic analysis of his rhetoric has only just begun to take off. When the first version of this paper was written in the summer of 2017, searches on the Google Scholar platform for "Trump rhetoric" and "Trump discourse" led to only one relevant result. As of January 2018, searches returned over two dozen relevant results. Including a search on citations of Trump's announcement speech, and narrowing results to published articles related to discourse and rhetoric left eleven relevant publications. Of these, three were inaccessible to the author of this study. These studies used the following approaches: Crines and Dolowitz: rhetorical analysis;³ Lamont, et al.: qualitative content analysis;⁴ Slaughter: cultural rhetoric;⁵ Demata: Wodak's Discourse-Historical approach;⁶ Levinger: rhetorical and discourse analysis, focusing on emotional appeals;⁷ Johnson: Rhetorical analysis that "expands Roberts-Miller's understanding of demagoguery";⁸ Al-Saedi: "discourse analysis approach in light of Tannen's (2007) framework of repetition in

³ Andrew Scott Crines and David P. Dolowitz, "The Oratory of Donald Trump," *Republican Orators from Eisenhower to Trump*, ed. Andrew Scott Crines and Sophia Hatzisavvidou (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 291–318. *Google Books*, <<https://books.google.nl/books?id=jA5ADwAAQBAJ>> 15 Jan. 2018.

⁴ Michèle Lamont, et al., "Trump's Electoral Speeches and his Appeal to the American White Working Class," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 68 (2017): S153-S180.

⁵ Stephany Slaughter, "#TrumpEffects: Creating Rhetorical Spaces for Latinx Political Engagement," *The Latin Americanist*, 60 (2016): 541-576.

⁶ Massimiliano Demata, "A Great and Beautiful Wall," *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 5 (2017): 274-94.

⁷ Matthew Levinger, "Love, Fear, Anger: The Emotional Arc of Populist Rhetoric," *Narrative and Conflict: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, 6.1 (2017): 1-21.

⁸ Paul Elliott Johnson, "The Art of Masculine Victimhood: Donald Trump's Demagoguery," *Women's Studies in Communication*, 40.3 (2017): 230.



Students' best essays collection, Stan Reiner van Zon, Utrecht, March 2018 (Pre-print version)

discourse”⁹; and Sclafani, whose work is most extensive of all: a book-length sociolinguistic study devoted to Trump.¹⁰ While there is some overlap between this study and those mentioned above, in particular those using some form of sociolinguistics or discourse analysis, the combination of Fairclough CDA and Shakespeare is unique to this study.

Shakespeare has, of course, been subjected to analyses beyond count, too much for a study of this scope to properly engage with. However, an extensive engagement, were it feasible, would still be outside the scope of this study. Notes from annotated editions, two for each play, will be used to enrich and strengthen the Shakespearean analysis, but this study's foundation is modern Discourse Analysis. In addition, this study considers its approach inherently meaningful because the speeches in question are still referred to and employed as if they were contemporary political speeches. Ahead of the Brexit vote the “This Sceptred Isle” speech was referenced repeatedly. Neal Ascherson in *The New York Times* wrote regarding leave voters: “There’s still a providential feeling about Shakespeare’s ‘sceptred isle’ as ‘this fortress built by Nature.’”¹¹ A few months earlier Jonathan Jones in *The Guardian* made a similar invocation, writing that: “All the passion about the EU debate may seem to be on the Brexit side, with their enthusiasm for national sovereignty and visions of a sceptred isle.”¹² The “Evil May Day” speech has a shorter history in the Shakespearean canon, but that has not deterred its deployment for contemporary causes. On September 16th, 2016, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power gave a speech titled “Remarks on ‘The Strangers’ Case’: The Power of Empathy in Art and Diplomacy.”¹³ In the middle of Ambassador Power’s speech, actor Jay O. Sanders performed the “Evil May Day” speech for the audience.

⁹ Habeeb M. Areef Al-Saeedi, “The Function of Repetition in Trump’s Inaugural Address: A discourse analysis study,” *Journal of Education College*, Wasit University, 1.28 (2017): 714.

¹⁰ Jennifer Sclafani, *Talking Donald Trump: a sociolinguistic study of style, metadiscourse, and political identity* (New York: Routledge, 2018). *Google Books*, <<https://books.google.nl/books?id=uxlwDwAAQBAJ>> 15 Jan. 2018.

¹¹ Neal Ascherson, “From Great Britain to Little England,” *Nytimes.com*, The New York Times Company, 16 June 2016, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/19/opinion/sunday/from-great-britain-to-little-england.html>> 15 Jan. 2018.

¹² Jonathan Jones, “These anti-Brexit posters show just what we lose by leaving the EU,” *The Guardian.co.uk*, Guardian News and Media Ltd, 26 Apr. 2016, <<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/apr/26/anti-brexit-posters-wolfgang-tillmans-eu-referendum>> 15 Jan. 2018.

¹³ Samantha Power, “Remarks on “The Strangers’ Case’: The Power of Empathy in Art and Diplomacy, at the Lincoln Center Global Exchange,” *2009-2017-usun.state.gov*, U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York City, 16 Sept. 2016, <<https://2009-2017-usun.state.gov/remarks/7434>> 15 Jan. 2018.



Students' best essays collection, Stan Reiner van Zon, Utrecht, March 2018 (Pre-print version)

To keep editorial influence similar between texts, the same source is used for both speeches: *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*.¹⁴ Differences between the Oxford Shakespeare text and the annotated editions used were kept in mind during, but not included in, the analyses. For the “Evil May Day” speech, the entire Shakespearean passage was used. For the “This Sceptred Isle” speech, the passage from the beginning of the scene to Gaunt’s departure and the following two lines of Richard’s immediate retort were used.

While this study is limited in scope, it intends to establish that this type of analysis has great potential: that an understanding of the language of a master such as Shakespeare can help deepen our understanding of how even a more linguistically challenged figure such as Trump also displays mastery of language, and that modern methods designed for modern discourse, such as Fairclough’s, can still contribute to our understanding of Shakespearean language.

Methodology

This study’s analysis will apply to the chosen texts the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis as presented by Norman Fairclough in *Discourse and Social Change*.¹⁵ Fairclough’s CDA provides a set of sociolinguistic features through which to engage in textual analysis that are both strongly linguistically grounded and primed to catch the political and social implications of the text being researched. The choice for this work over Fairclough’s more recent works was made because the model presented in *Discourse and Social Change* is more linguistic in nature, making it particularly apt for a study narrowly focused on three small texts. With only minor modifications, this analysis will follow the structure for textual analysis provided by Fairclough in chapter eight and elaborated on in chapters five and six. This structure consists of highlighting the following language features (explanations are adapted and at times simplified, all page references here are to *Discourse and Social Change*):

Interactional Control: The extent to which participants control who speaks, when they speak, and what is spoken about. For brevity’s sake, this study uses the term more narrowly than Fairclough, encompassing only: Turn-taking (152); Exchange Structure (153); Topic

¹⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1998). All quotations from Shakespeare follow this text. Act, scene and line numbers are given in parentheses in the main text.

¹⁵ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016). All page references to this work are in parentheses in the text.



Control (154); Setting and Policing Agenda (155); Formulation (157). This study considers politeness, modality, and ethos as separate headings, as below.

Politeness: The way participants use politeness strategies to establish and manage their relationship towards other participants (162).

Modality: A grammar element. How speakers express levels of affinity with certain statements (158).

Ethos: The construction of selves, identities, throughout the text (166).

Connectives and Argumentation: The meaning constructed by the explicit and implicit relations between the clauses and sentences of the text (169).

Transitivity: Another grammar element, regarding verb processes, their agents, and their goals. An important factor is how favoring certain types of processes can emphasize or deemphasize agents, goals, responsibility, and/or causality (177).

Word Meaning, Wording, and Metaphor: The meaning of words and/or the wording of meaning (185, 190). In the case of metaphor (194), the salient elements for Fairclough's method are a metaphor's ideational implications: how does it (mis)represent events or issues?

The feature of Theme (177) was included in the analyses but cut from this paper on account of space. In all three analyses, issues of theme almost wholly overlapped with those of other more salient features.

Even with the exclusion of theme, the above list still contains considerable overlap, while falling short of the complexity and nuance as established by Fairclough. A full analysis of the type Fairclough suggests would be beyond the scope of this study, as would an exhaustive analysis of the chosen texts. The method for this study was to use the above list as a reference to pin-point key movements and moments in the chosen texts displaying some or many of these features. Each text was read and subsequently analyzed according to the extent to which it deployed each of the concepts from the above list. The Shakespearean speeches were treated first, followed by that of Trump.

Analysis A: “This Sceptred Isle” Speech

Interactional Control

Interactional control is most noticeably salient in line 116 where, as Wells notes, “Richard interrupts Gaunt’s sentence, and turns it back on him.”¹⁶ Yet this is only the climax of a struggle for interactional control that extends throughout. Gaunt’s agenda is to “counsel” the king (II.i.2), and his strategy for policing that agenda is to rely on his sickness to “Enforce attention” (II.i.6). Both Wells and Forker note the proverbial power given to last words in Shakespeare’s time, but there is more to it, as Forker writes:

As Gurr (85) points out, Gaunt’s sitting posture sets up a telling reversal of the usual decorum when the King enters at 68.1: in 1.1 the King presumably sat while the court stood [...]; but Gaunt, near death, can be accorded the symbolic status of a privileged elder statesman, who in terms of wisdom outranks his royal nephew.¹⁷

Using Fairclough’s terminology, this can be phrased as: in the genre of “counsel to the king,” the conventional hierarchy would grant Richard absolute control. However, Gaunt counters by invoking the genre of the “dying man’s last words,” which upends the hierarchy and affords him absolute control instead. This understanding helps add another layer to some of Richard’s statements that question or minimize Gaunt’s sickness, such as Richard’s direct questioning in line 84: “Can sick men play so nicely with their names?” Or again, similarly, in line 88. When Richard admits that Gaunt is sick (II.i.90, 92), it prompts Gaunt’s exhaustive criticism (II.i.93-115). However, Richard’s acquiescence in Gaunt’s genre does not last, and his interruption denies it when formulating it as: “Presuming on an ague’s privilege” (II.i.117). Richard still continues to undercut Gaunt’s justification for his alternative genre, as illuminated by Forker’s note on the word “frozen” in line 118:

The usual symptoms of *ague* are alternating fever and shivering, but this customarily non-fatal ailment seems too slight for Gaunt’s mortal illness. Although Richard has already anticipated his uncle’s death (see 1.4.64), he may subconsciously – or even callously – minimize the seriousness of his uncle’s plight. (Forker 254)

¹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Four Histories*, ed. Stanley Wells, et al. (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 103. All subsequent references to commentaries in this edition are in parentheses in the text. They include the editor’s name and page number.

¹⁷ William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, ed. Charles R. Forker (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002), 241. All subsequent references to commentaries in this edition are in parentheses in the text. They include the editor’s name and page number.

Though Gaunt continues to give a final monologue, he loses the interactional control struggle as it is Gaunt who is forced to leave and Richard, who, in lines 140-141, takes the last word.

Politeness

Politeness strategies overlap and deepen our understanding of the interaction between Gaunt and Richard discussed above. Gaunt deploys genre to justify using impoliteness. Richard attempts to maintain politeness, but ultimately is unable to assert control without switching to impoliteness himself. Richard dominates the politeness exchange as his impoliteness is enforceable by social action (execution, pardon the pun). However, Gaunt is not cowed, which buys him a final paragraph.

Modality

The most common modality is plain declaratives. The most salient exceptions are when Gaunt is asserting his right to speak as a dying man. He uses “they say” (II.i.5), and “Methinks” (II.i.31). Forker notes: “**Methinks** literally, ‘it seems to me’” (Forker 244). Gaunt strategically lessens his affinity to assert that he is not inventing a prerogative for himself, but invoking an established genre, that of the dying man’s prophetic last words, that gives him the said prerogative.

Ethos

Ethos overlaps to a large degree with the issue of genre discussed above. However, the lens of ethos draws focus on one imbalance in that contest: Richard contests Gaunt’s ethos as the “dying man,” but Gaunt does not reciprocate. As Forker notes, the idea of “christological kingship [...] is also supported by Gaunt” (Forker 18), so Gaunt does not deny Richard’s rights as king.

Of course, the most salient expression of ethos in this scene is Gaunt’s description of England, the “Sceptred Isle” speech proper (II.i.31-68). Gaunt, as Wells notes, represents “values associated with the old order, and Richard is to be judged partly by them” (Wells 12), and this speech lays out those values. An exhaustive analysis of Gaunt’s ethos is not possible here, so this study will focus on the most salient points. First, Gaunt’s ethos involves blurring the distinctions between concepts: distinctions between a territorial, social, and royal concept

of “England,” and distinctions between natural, Christian, and martial characteristics. This reflects that a core aspect of Gaunt’s ethos is unity. Forker notes that: “Ure (51) points out that Daniel identifies civil war in both France and England with ‘contagion’” (Forker 246). Forker is unsure here, but the same imagery features prominently in the “Evil May Day Speech.” The notion of civil war is then again echoed in line 66, on which Forker notes: “The notion of England conquered by internal quarrels when foreign invasion would otherwise fail was common in Elizabethan propaganda” (Forker 248). The result is an ethos where England is a nation that is not just independent, strong, and respected, but also unified. Gaunt’s grievance, then, can be read as not merely a legal complaint. It is that Richard’s “signing away his rights to favourites” (Forker 253) marks his dependence on and weakness to those favourites which leaves England disrespected and ultimately divided.

On the basis of the above results, two key passages were taken as most fruitful for a closer linguistic analysis of the remaining language features: The “Sceptred Isle” Speech proper, lines 31-68, and Gaunt’s exchange with Richard, lines 69-141, in particular the climax of lines 93-141.

Connectives and Argumentation

The issues of connectives and argumentation are most salient in the “Sceptred Isle” speech proper. A close look at clausal relations allows us to distinguish a pattern in the speech: “His rash [...] itself” (II.i.31-39); “This royal [...] war” (II.i.40-44); “This happy breed of men [...] less happier lands” (II.i.45-49). All these segments adhere to a pattern that starts with a statement, followed by repeated elaboration, mostly rewording, and ending on an extension. What makes this pattern salient is that the final extension in each case can be read as a reference to war or civil strife. The first, “Consuming means, soon preys upon itself” (II.i.39), is, like “contagion” above, imagery that returns in the “Evil May Day” scene, where “men like ravenous fishes; Would feed on one another” (Add.II, d, 95-96). This makes a civil strife reference a plausible interpretation in the context of this study. The pattern is less clear in the following lines (II.i.50-64), and can be read as continuing or not, but the final lines, “That England [...] of itself” (II.i.65-66), return to imagery of war and civil strife. As a whole, this pattern reflects the strong cohesion and tight structure of the speech, but it also reflects Gaunt’s framing of himself as a “prophet” who “foretells” (II.i.31-32), as the end of each section on war and civil strife foretells how Richard’s reign will end in war and civil strife. Though a bit



fanciful, the repeating of the pattern can even be read as referencing the extended period of war and civil strife that will continue through both tetralogies.

Transitivity

Issues of transitivity are most salient in the latter passage, the face-off between Gaunt and Richard. In the first half, Gaunt deploys passives and nominalizations in a manner that avoids putting himself in the agent position. In the second half, Gaunt uses similar techniques but now to consistently place Richard in the goal position, often indirectly as “they land,” “they head,” “they shame,” etc. (II.i.95, 101, 106). Both cases reflect Gaunt’s strategy in this exchange, as discussed above: to articulate his advice as objective, and to criticize Richard above all for weakness and dependence (put differently, for lacking agency). Ironically, when Richard interrupts Gaunt, he is still putting Gaunt in the agent position, not himself. This contributes to the sense that though Richard seizes control, Gaunt is the ideational victor in this exchange.

Word Meaning, Wording, and Metaphor

Amongst the concepts of word meaning, wording, and metaphor, most salient is Gaunt’s combination of overwording (repetitious use of the same word or phrase), rewording, and metaphor. Forker describes Gaunt’s technique from line 33 onward as: “[A] piling up of proverbial maxims or apothegms (*sententiae*), [...] [it is] meant to establish Gaunt as a figure of long experience and seasoned wisdom” (Forker 245). Salient here is how subtly the imagery shifts to follow the pattern established above. “Consuming means, soon preys upon itself” (II.i.39) includes implications of civil strife that the other metaphors do not. The transition between “imagery of fire, storms, riding and eating” (Forker 245) is so subtle, with overlapping meanings in each metaphor, that the change in meaning and implication feels so natural as to become almost imperceptible.

Another salient use of wording is the word “ill.” Richard gives in on the issue of Gaunt’s illness by calling Gaunt “ill” (II.i.92). Subsequently Gaunt echoes the word twice as he begins his rebuke (II.i.93-94), emphasizing that Richard gave Gaunt the right to speak when Richard declared him ill.



Analysis B: “Evil May Day” Speech

Interactional Control

Jowett, in one footnote, briefly discusses a key transition in this scene:

[Lincoln] begins to change tune as soon as More enters; he calls for peace at 41-2, urges that More be heard at 49-50, and expresses frustration that the crowd cannot be ruled at 62-3. George Betts, in contrast, prefers to hear both Surrey and Shrewsbury at 39, and advances the rebels' case at 80-2.¹⁸

Fairclough's CDA allows us to see these changes as a struggle over interactional control between not only Lincoln, More, and Betts, but all participants. This study distinguishes three stages: Lincoln claiming and asserting control; a state of chaos; and More entering and gradually gaining full control.

In the first stage, relations are markedly symmetrical. Lincoln and the prentices take turns introducing and expanding topics. For example, Lincoln opens on the topic of food pricing, but it is Other who introduces the topic of the strangers, and so on. (Add.II, d, 1-15). The symmetry of alternating topic development prefigures that Lincoln's control is conditional. Lincoln is most fully in control when he incites the crowd to chant against the Serjeant.

However, when the prentices are unsure about which members of the noble delegation should speak, all control is lost. Both named and unnamed participants haphazardly select themselves to speak while contradicting each other. For example, the prentices turn on Surrey, but some still call for him a few lines later (Add.II, d, 42-55). Lincoln's control was conditional on him voicing the prentices' opinion, and thus on the prentices having a unified opinion to voice.

In the final stage, More at first seeks to be selected to speak. Subsequently, More's control is incomplete, as evidenced by Betts' interruption (Add.II, d, 78). Betts responds to: “a rhetorical question: [...] Betts misunderstands, or turns the question to his advantage, and spells out the very demand that More argued should be dropped” (Jowett 188). These lines can be understood as Betts seizing the turn and attempting to police the agenda. Throughout the speech More's use of questions and suppositions creates a sense of conversational turn-taking that involves the audience and invites their interjections even as More's control increases. As More wins over the prentices, their interjections change to short affirmations, before disappearing. In

¹⁸ Anthony Munday, et al., *Sir Thomas More*, ed. John Jowett (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011), 190. All subsequent references to commentaries in this edition are in parentheses in the text. They include the editor's name and page number.



the end More talks uninterrupted for 45 lines, while he was interrupted every 10 to 15 lines or so before. When the prentices agree to “be ruled by” More (Add.II, d, 158), they have already been ruled by More’s interactional control for nearly a hundred lines.

Politeness

Politeness coincides with the interactional control features outlined above. The prentices are depicted as very sensitive to impoliteness. Crucial are lines 40-43 and 60-64. In the former, Lincoln is frustrated with the prentices, and Surrey repeats Lincoln’s words as an insult, and the prentices turn on Surrey. In the latter, Lincoln curses the prentices, but More ignores the invective, repeats Lincoln’s statement with low affinity through the word “then” (Add.II, d, 62) and addresses the prentices as “Good masters” (Add.II, d, 63).

Modality

When addressing the prentices, More adopts the lower affinity of suppositions and at key moments the rhetorical device of anacoluthon (Jowett 187, 191, also Gabrieli and Melchiori)¹⁹. This modality has four effects: it invites the prentices to postpone judgment and hear the arguments; it gives More’s statement the sound of objective truths; it induces the prentices to use their imaginations, as they try to understand More’s meanings; and it allows More to maintain politeness as he rebukes. The latter two are displayed in lines 100-110. More opens on a supposition for his “good friends,” and afterwards the crowd, having entered More’s “objective” perspective, answers with: “Marry, God forbid that!” In these ten lines, More turns the prentices against their own rebellion. This is where More gains full control and proceeds without interruption.

Ethos

Conflicting ethoses are at the core of the passage. This study distinguishes five different identities that collaborate and compete: a nationalist identity, a class identity, a subject identity, a religious identity, and a human identity. Lincoln’s references to “eating country” (Add.II, d, 7) and parsnips (Add.II, d, 20) refer to a discourse of English identity: “The English knew [being

¹⁹ Anthony Munday, et al., *Sir Thomas More*, ed. Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 99. All subsequent references to commentaries in this edition are in parentheses in the text. They include the editor’s names and page number.



a great eating country] as their reputation” (Jowett 181). “Disdain for vegetables was part of English self-characterization” (Jowett 181). Lincoln here adopts a nationalist identity for himself and the prentices, one that excludes the foreigners. Additionally the prentices and Lincoln, in particular in the exchange with the Serjeant and Surrey, adopt a kind of class identity, one especially conscious of the condescension of supposed higher classes. The same identity is articulated by Betts when he uses “handicrafts” (Add.II, d, 79) to refer to the prentices: “as members of trade guilds that gave institutional identity to the citizens” (Jowett 188). More succeeds where the Serjeant and the Earls fail in large part because, aided by Doll’s vouching, he side-steps class issues and makes himself accepted as a “man of the people” (Jowett 3). In his speech, More articulates three overlapping identities opposed to those articulated by Lincoln. First, More articulates an identity for all as subjects of order. The core of More’s description is that all subjects are beneficiaries of the peaceful order, and all stand to lose if that order is usurped. Second, More articulates a religious identity, where all are subjects to God and must follow God’s law, which forbids insurrection against authority. More articulates the “divine right” of kings (Jowett 191), but in a religious context where it is not the offense against the king but against God that is most dire (Add.II, d, 116-119). Thirdly, More articulates a human identity, when he asks the prentices to put themselves in the position of strangers. The strangers here are neither foreigners nor heretics, but human beings just like the prentices, an articulation topped by the phrase “mountainish inhumanity” (Add.II, d, 155). All three identities are joined in Doll’s response to More’s speech “Let’s do as we may be done by” (Add.II, d, 156-157). This is a reference to the Sermon on the Mount (Jowett 196, Gabrieli and Melchiori 105), but also the core of More’s argument: what they seek to be perpetrators of, they could become victims of. In addition to the interactional control explored above, More’s success in this scene can be understood as his successful articulation of an ethos diametrically opposite to the one the prentices held before, where successful means that the prentices accept this identity as their own, and accordingly take the opposite social action from what they had been doing, and surrender.

On the basis of the above results, two key passages were taken as most fruitful for the closer linguistic analysis of the remaining language features: Lincoln’s opening interaction with the prentices, lines 1-21, and More’s speech proper, lines 69-155.



Connectives and Argumentation

The most salient feature here is More's complex clausal relations. Two instances are what Jowett identifies as (potential) anacoluthon (Jowett 187, 191). These are part of a broader structure that engages the audience to activate their imaginations. For example, at the start of the speech, lines 69-70, More delays using the word "peace" till the very end. For one-and-a-half whole lines the listener is waiting to hear, left to wonder, what the object of the sentence is. The same effect is even stronger in the following anacoluthon. More never grammatically closes the construction, leaving the phrase "Not one of you here present" (Add.II, d, 70) as "stranded" (Jowett 187). The intended meaning still becomes clear at the end of the sequence (Add.II, d, 75): "not one of you here present... would have been brought to the state of men." This effect is repeated again in suppositions such as "grant them removed" (Add.II, d, 81). These force the listener to continually activate their (interpretive) imagination.

Transitivity

The most salient use of transitivity is in More's speech, namely the constant use of directed action. By far, the prentices (addressed as "you") are the most common agent, but when discussing God's laws, the "other ruffians" (Add.II, d, 93) or other countries, these are also cast as agents of directed action. The result is a speech that heavily emphasises responsibility and consequences. The prentices do things to strangers, other ruffians and countries do things to the prentices, God institutes laws, the king upholds them, and the prentices violate them. Combined with the above notes on invoking imagination, the result is that the speech is almost entirely geared towards getting the prentices to think about their actions and their consequences. By contrast Lincoln, as explained below, presents their insurrection as a disease, where the prentices have neither agency nor responsibility. Additionally, if "other ruffians" and "other countries" are taken as representing the same concept, then More possibly creates a sixth identity, that of the "rebellious xenophobe," or that of "those who would do to the prentices what they want to do to others." In this interpretation More makes the prentices both agent and target, both perpetrator and victim.

Word Meaning, Wording, and Metaphor

Regarding word meaning and wording, the primary keyword is "stranger". As established in the preceding segments, Lincoln articulates "strangers" as outsiders, a foreign infection, that



are both suffered by the prentices and make the prentices suffer. The prentices are “poor prentices” (Add.II, d, 12) while the strangers are “dung” (Add.II, d, 17). Metaphorically, salient is that by couching their rebellion in the metaphor of disease, Lincoln hides the prentices’ responsibility for their insurrection. Through metaphor the prentices’ rebellion is presented as a causal relation as natural as sickness resulting from poor eating.

Perhaps the most effective use of language in the whole scene is how More subverts the meaning of “stranger”. Salient here is how More addresses the prentices as “poor things” (Add.II, d, 76), echoing Lincoln’s words but in a very different meaning, and connecting it to “wretched strangers” (Add.II, d, 83). Equally salient is the function of the word “you”: More deploys “you” as a neutral identifier to which, through a combination of wording and metaphor, he gives a variety of meanings from “rebel” to “victim of rebellion” to “stranger,” most powerfully in the line: “you must needs be strangers” (Add.II, d, 144). In this More makes the prentices’ acceptance of an address as “you” an acceptance of the identity More has articulated for them, one that can only lead to their surrender to More at the end of the scene.

Analysis C: Presidential Announcement Speech

Interactional Control

Interactional control works in Trump’s speech on three levels: brief moments of full interaction, when Trump responds to the crowd; feigned interaction, when Trump addresses the crowd as if in an exchange; and represented interaction, when Trump presents a story of him and others talking. The audience responds to Trump at many moments during the speech, shouting phrases like “we want/need Trump,”²⁰ and roughly nine times Trump responds directly. Most often, it is to agree with the crowd, with a “Thank you” or “you’re right” or at one point “thank you, darlin’.”²¹ These are platitudes, but they help invoke a lifeworld language, that is the informal language of casual social life, through which Trump creates an impression of interacting with the crowd socially, as equals, as opposed to talking at them as a distant (political) authority figure. Similarly to More, Trump’s style includes feigned interaction that invokes the genre of conversation. For example, Trump uses conversational rhetorical questions such as: “They just

²⁰ Donald Trump, “Donald Trump Presidential Campaign Announcement Full Speech (C-SPAN),” *Youtube.com*, C-SPAN, 16 June 2015, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apjNfkysjbM>> 15 Jan. 2018.

²¹ Donald Trump, “Here’s Donald Trump’s Presidential Announcement Speech,” *Time.com*, Time Inc, 16 June 2015, <<http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>> 15 Jan. 2018.



built a hotel in Syria. Can you believe this?" However, most salient is Trump's use of conversational quotations. Trump often does this in short form, for example: "But I said, 'Don't hit Iraq'," but twice Trump presents entire conversations. The first time it is the story of "a friend of mine, who's a great manufacturer" and his issues exporting to China. The second time it is a story of Ford moving a factory to Mexico. Both cases involve narrative, quoted speech, and tangents, and both take up a lot of space: tangents included they correspond to roughly 1,500 words in the 6,500 word speech. These stories are not tight dialogues from a novel or script. Trump adds in his asides, like responding to the manufacturer's "I make a great product" with: "I know that because I buy the product," or telling the head of Ford: "Congratulations." These give Trump's speech the sense that he is really having a conversation with you, at the water cooler, or at a party. A one-sided conversation, but the one you would have with a family member or a co-worker, not a politician.

Politeness

Trump's use of politeness is a combination of the strategies of More and Lincoln. Trump is strictly polite to his audience, but excessively rude to others, as in the now infamous lines:

Thank you. It's true, and these are the best and the finest. When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

The effect, however, is to create a connection between himself and the crowd, as opposed to those he is being rude to. "They're not sending you" of course also implies: "they're not sending me." It also creates a form of punishment: any audience member that might be tempted (for example by a speech such as that by More) to identify with Mexicans would in doing so put themselves in the firing line of Trump's condemnations. The use of selective politeness makes it so that the person listening to this speech, on some level wants to be "one of us" instead of "one of them." This reflects a combination of Lincoln's and More's strategies. Trump combines More's politeness with Lincoln's rudeness.

Modality

The modality is simple, Trump continually expresses his assertions and opinions as absolute facts. He even emphasizes his own trustworthiness with lines such as: "They will not bring us



– believe me – to the promised land. They will not.” As in many of the other examples, the simple language invokes the conversational genre and lifeworld language.

Ethos

The ethos is most prominent in the above-quoted lines on Mexican immigrants. Like in More's speech, it is one of the core elements of Trump's use of language: the construction of an identity for himself and his audience. However, Trump matches Lincoln more as the identity he articulates is a simple “us vs. them.” The use of impoliteness, interactional control, all these elements join together to make these lines extremely explicit in forcing people to either identify with Trump's identity or put themselves in the subject position to Trump's invectives.

Connectives and Argumentation

One of the features of Trump's speech is the seeming lack of cohesion. As Fairclough explains in chapter five (177), this calls upon the audience to create the cohesion themselves. Similarly to how More evokes the audience's imagination to build connections, Trump's at times rambling speaking style draws the attentive audience closer into his mind. This enhances the conversational sense of Trump speaking not *at* but *with* the audience. For example, when Trump discusses how he acquired his wealth, he says:

I made it the old-fashioned way. It's real estate. You know, it's real estate. It's labor, and it's unions good and some bad and lots of people that aren't in unions, and it's all over the place and building all over the world.

The part of “it's unions good and some bad” is very poor grammar, and not very cohesive or coherent. But this allows the audience to interpret for themselves Trump's modality, whether unions are more good than bad or the other way around. It forces the audience to actively interpret, but when they do they imagine Trump the businessman building and hiring workers, which is exactly the image Trump wants to invoke.

Transitivity

Another continual feature of Trump's language is the short and simple sentences. For transitivity this often means simple active sentences with clear agents. For example: “we have a disaster called the big lie: Obamacare. Obamacare.” But at select moments Trump switches



to a passive voice. Most salient is the line following the above quote: “Yesterday, it came out that costs are going for people up 29, 39, 49, and even 55 percent, and deductibles are through the roof.” Here Trump is trying to evoke an authority, that these are clear scientific facts, and deploys passives. Here Trump mimics Gaunt more than More. However, this is a rare example; when Trump explicitly calls upon an outside authority, it is primarily through stories and quotations. This is discussed above in detail, but is also relevant to transitivity. When Trump invokes an unnamed friend or doctor, it allows him to invoke outside authority while maintaining the direct action processes that mark his style as conversational.

Word Meaning, Wording, and Metaphor

When it comes to word meaning, a good example is the line immediately following those, discussed above, on Obamacare deductibles: “And remember the \$5 billion website? \$5 billion we spent on a website, and to this day it doesn’t work. A \$5 billion website.” In itself, the figure of \$5 billion is just a number, but in the context of Trump’s speech it represents government waste and incompetence. Overwording is another technique Trump uses extensively. Focal point is a sense of wording international relations, especially economic relations, in terms of competition. Trump continually returns to losing and winning, to victory and defeat. In addition to establishing Trump’s dichotomous worldview of winners and losers, this is also another technique through which Trump establishes his More-like connection with the crowd. The crowd is invited to become winners, by supporting Trump. Those who reject the invitation, those who don’t support Trump, are ipso facto losers. Trump also uses the word “politician” as an insult, repeating the phrase “these politicians”. This synergizes with Trump’s conversational speaking style, to again put him and his audience on one side, and “these politicians” on the other.

Trump does not seem to use many metaphors, but indirectly he does. The clearest example is again the above lines regarding the \$5 billion figure. The figure becomes a metaphor, or perhaps more accurately, a symbol. Another example is at the end of the speech when Trump declares: “Sadly, the American dream is dead.” By itself this would be shocking, but after a speech denouncing the failures of the current government and aggrandizing himself as successful and capable. It becomes a symbol of an identity Trump rejects: an identity the audience is implicitly called upon to reject, too, and in doing so identify with Trump.



Conclusion

To conclude, there are various parallels to be discovered in the language use of Shakespeare and Trump. The most interesting result is that Trump's speech mimics More's language and style more than Gaunt's. More's attempt to build a connection with the crowd, to bring himself to the crowd's level is most comparable to how Trump deploys his language. In both cases the message is powerful largely because of this connection. Gaunt's style can perhaps be understood as a classical elitist speech, whereas More adopts a populist style. A future study might extend the comparison to Hillary Clinton's and Sanders' language, to see if one or both their speaking styles are closer to Gaunt's, thus establishing a distinction between a more populist style adopted by More and Trump, as opposed to a more 'elitist' style adopted by Gaunt and more traditional politicians. Another avenue would be to explore how identification between speaker and audience becomes a method of persuasion that eschews invocations of third party authorities. In addition, this study does not cover much of the societal context Fairclough considers essential, such as Trump's words connecting him to a specific cultural demographic in opposition to other demographics. Further research could tackle that side of CDA. However, this study hopes to have sufficiently established that the comparison between Trump and Shakespeare is not so farcical after all.

Bibliography

- Al-Saeedi, Habeeb M. Areef. "The Function of Repetition in Trump's Inaugural Address A discourse analysis study." *Journal of Education College*, Wasit University, 1.28 (2017): 709-732.
- Ascherson, Neal. "From Great Britain to Little England." *Nytimes.com*. The New York Times Company, 16 June 2016. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/19/opinion/sunday/from-great-britain-to-little-england.html>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Colbert, Stephen. "Was That Tweet From Trump Or Shakespeare?" *Youtube.com*. CBS, 20 July 2017. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWoSfLsamY>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Crines, Andrew Scott, and David P. Dolowitz. "The Oratory of Donald Trump." *Republican Orators from Eisenhower to Trump*. Ed. Andrew Scott Crines and Sophia Hatzisavidou. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 291-318. *Google Books*, <<https://books.google.nl/books?id=jA5ADwAAQBAJ>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Fairclough, Norman. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016.

- Graham, David. "What the Press Got Right About Trump's Candidacy." *The Atlantic.com*. Atlantic Monthly Group, 16 June 2016. <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/06/what-the-press-got-right-about-trumps-announcement/487247/>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Johnson, Paul Elliott. "The Art of Masculine Victimhood: Donald Trump's Demagoguery." *Women's Studies in Communication*, 40.3 (2017): 229-250.
- Jones, Jonathan. "These anti-Brexit posters show just what we lose by leaving the EU." *The Guardian.co.uk*. Guardian News and Media Ltd, 26 Apr. 2016. <<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/apr/26/anti-brexit-posters-wolfgang-tillmans-eu-referendum>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Lamont, M., et al.. "Trump's electoral speeches and his appeal to the American white working class." *The British Journal of Sociology*, 68 (2017): S153-S180.
- Levinger, Matthew. "Love, Fear, Anger: The Emotional Arc of Populist Rhetoric." *Narrative and Conflict: Explorations in Theory and Practice* 6.1 (2017): 1-21.
- Munday, Anthony, et al. *Sir Thomas More*. Ed. John Jowett. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011.
- Munday, Anthony, et al. *Sir Thomas More*. Ed. Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.
- Power, Samantha. "Remarks on 'The Strangers' Case': The Power of Empathy in Art and Diplomacy, at the Lincoln Center Global Exchange." *2009-2017-usun.state.gov*. U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York City, 16 Sept. 2016. <<https://2009-2017-usun.state.gov/remarks/7434>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Sclafani, Jennifer. *Talking Donald Trump: a sociolinguistic study of style, metadiscourse, and political identity*. New York: Routledge, 2018. *Google Books*, <<https://books.google.nl/books?id=uxIwDwAAQBAJ>> 15 Jan. 2018.
- Shakespeare, William. *Four Histories*. Ed. Stanley Wells, et al.. London: Penguin Books, 2005.
- Shakespeare, William. *King Richard II*. Ed. Charles R. Forker. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. Edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Slaughter, Stephany. "#TrumpEffects: Creating Rhetorical Spaces for Latinx Political Engagement." *The Latin Americanist* 60 (2016): 541-576.



Students' best essays collection, Stan Reiner van Zon, Utrecht, March 2018 (Pre-print version)

Trump, Donald. "Donald Trump Presidential Campaign Announcement Full Speech (C-SPAN)." *Youtube.com*. C-SPAN, 16 June 2015.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apjNfkysjbM>> 15 Jan. 2018.

Trump, Donald. "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech." *Time.com*.

Time Inc, 16 June 2015. <<http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>> 15 Jan. 2018.