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Shakespeare's Now[1]

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This paper argues that the word *now* was for Shakespeare and fellow playwrights a precise as well as polyvalent linguistic tool which they used not only as a temporal adverb, but as what linguists call a pragmatic discourse marker to structure the spatio-temporal dramatic design as well as to represent the dynamics of interpersonal exchanges among characters, especially power relations. This is first illustrated by the work of two of Shakespeare's contemporaries from whom he arguably learned much about the craft: Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. Close analysis follows of two early Shakesperean play texts: the comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and the history *3 Henry 6*, the Folio play text with the highest number of instances of *now*. Both plays are shown to anticipate the direction Shakespeare's use of *now* will take. Specifically, the structuring function of *now* is withdrawn from male figures of authority who are thus denied the hold over history to which they aspire.

Keywords: Shakespeare's language, *now*, pragmatic discourse markers, temporal adverb

The value of now *to early modern playwrights*

Shakespeare's frequent use of the word *now* has been pointed out by Sharon Beehler who suggests that he thereby "calls attention to the present moment", which she connects to the classically derived notion of *kairos* as decisive or opportune moment (Beehler 2003, 74). The frequent occurrence of *now* is not, however, confined to the plays of Shakespeare; it is found in the plays of his contemporaries too (Culpeper *et al.* 2023, "now"). Drawing on historical linguistics as well as

1 My thanks for their encouragement and input to: Jonathan Hope, Martin Hilpert, Andreas Jucker and the members of the research seminar in medieval and early modern literature at the University of Geneva who listened to a draft of this paper on 28 February 2024.

digital resources[2], this paper adopts Ludwig Wittgenstein's familiar analogy between words and tools (Coeckelbergh and Funk 2018, 167; 169) to argue that *now* was for Shakespeare and fellow playwrights a precise as well as polyvalent linguistic tool which they used not only as temporal adverb, but also as what linguists call a pragmatic discourse marker to structure the spatio-temporal dramatic design as well as to represent the dynamics of interpersonal exchanges among characters, especially power relations.

Both Beehler and the recently published Arden *Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's Language* consider only the use of *now* as temporal adverb: "As now, at this time, at the present time" (*Encyclopedia* entry, Culpeper *et al.* 2023). No account is taken of the uses of *now* "with temporal sense weakened or lost" (*Oxford English Dictionary* sense II) which serve primarily expressive and rhetorical purposes (*OED*). As thus used, *now* is described by linguists as a pragmatic discourse marker that helps to structure discourse, especially speech, and that inflects the dynamics of interpersonal exchanges (Schourup 2011, 2115)[3]. That such uses of *now* were available to Shakespeare and his contemporaries is evident from instances in the *OED* and from the work done by historical linguists who have trawled the available historical corpora "which contain genres that represent 'spoken interaction'", including "dramatic constructions of speech such as plays" (Defour 2008, 63). These scholars point out that "the evolution of *now* as text-structuring marker starts early on" in the middle English period (Defour 2008, 74; Aijmer 2002, 52-63). Plays are not specifically discussed, though Karin Aijmer points out that one of the examples given in the *OED* from *As You Like It* – "Now, if thou wert a poet, I might have some hope thou didst feign" (III.iii.219-20)[4] – illustrates that the pragmatic use occurs "[i]n Shakespeare's English" (Aijmer 2002, 63), while Claudia Claridge notes in passing the

2 Jonathan Culpeper *et al.*, "ESC: First Folio Plus", accessed 5 March 2024, https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/shakfinco06/. Cross-checking with other resources has required some minor adjustments to the numbers. My warmest thanks to Emily Louisa Smith for helping me navigate these resources.

3 The term "discourse particle" is preferred by Karin Aijmer but "discourse marker" is more common. Aijmer 2002, 57-95.

4 Unless otherwise indicated, references to Shakespearean texts will be to Shakespeare 2016.

relative high frequency of *now* in comedies which later declines (Claridge 2018, 229; 230).

Comparable, I suggest, to the hinge – a time honoured object-tool – *now* is used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, especially at the beginning of a sentence and/or verse line, to mark turns between actor-speakers and locales as well as between a (thereby closed) past and new possible trajectories towards the anticipated fulfillment of the design[5]. Connected etymologically to the word *new* (*OED*) with which it is syntagmatically associated by Shakespeare, as we shall see, *now* "[t]he topic changer"[6], thus operates at the metadramatic level directing attention precisely to the new – speaker or addressee, locale, or situation, as when, in an example taken up below, Cupid opens Act III of Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*: "Now, Cupid, cause the Carthaginian queen, / To be enamoured of thy brother's looks" (Marlowe 2023, III.i.1-2). For Aristotle the new – change – is, with mind, the precondition for a sense of time (Langer 2016, 95-97; 98-100) and playwrights' structuring use of pragmatic *now* has a temporal affordance insofar as it permits spectators to register the passage of time in the play world. Indeed, the "division between *now* as a temporal adverb and as pragmatic marker cannot always be easily made" (Defour 2008, 71) and, as instances will illustrate, playwrights may use *now* to do double work as both[7].

Even as it performs this metadramatic function, *now* does work in interpersonal exchanges. This may be between characters for whom it serves "the purpose of interactional control" (Claridge 2018, 224) as when, in *3 Henry VI*, King Edward declares, "Now, perjured Henry, wilt thou kneel for grace" (vi.8); or an "affective or evaluative function" (Aijmer 2002, 62) – the expression of opinions and judgements as

5 My thanks to Devani Singh for suggesting the importance of the position of *now* in the sentence and/or verse line. Defour observes: "Pragmatic markers […] typically although not exclusively occur in sentence-initial position." (2008, 64).

6 Running title to chapter 2 in Aijmer 2002, 57-95, which, quoting Bolinger (1989, 291) reprises: "*Now* is a discourse marker basically for change of topic". See too Defour 2008, 71-72. And compare *OED* "now" sense II.6: "Introducing an important or noteworthy point".

7 Andreas Jucker has suggested to me that punctuation may be significant. More work needs to be done, but where *now* is primarily pragmatic it is usually followed by a comma, as the temporal deictic is not.

well as of emotions and desires – as in the recurrent phrase "Now, trust me" in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (I.ii.24; see below). This expressive use of *now* may also occur between characters and spectators, who are thereby drawn into an immediate intimate relation with the speaker and action, as in "Now sir" addressed by Lance to a member of the audience in *Two Gentlemen* (II.iii.14; see below). This interpersonal expressive function of *now* contributes to "subjectification" (Aijmer 2002, 62), the effect of a feeling, thinking subject which might be heightened in performance by intonation, notably "accents of power" which, as Dwight Bolinger points out, "may strike an initial *now*" (Bolinger 1989, 292), as, for instance, in performances of the inaugural utterances with initial *now* by male figures of authority which open *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd and three early plays by Shakespeare.

In what follows I look briefly at the use of *now* by two playwrights from whom Shakespeare arguably learned much: Christopher Marlowe as well as Thomas Kyd[8]. I then examine two early Shakespearean play texts: first, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* possibly his first attempt at dramatic writing, which showcases the value of this linguistic tool to the playwright's craft even as it makes prominent use of it to structure the action; second, the history play, titled in the Folio *The Third part of King Henry the Sixt*, the play text in the Shakesperean canon which has the most instances of *now* (119) and in which Marlowe and/or Kyd may have had a hand (Burrows and Craig 2017, 194-217)[9]. In the history play, as in the comedy, utterances with *now*, usually in initial sentence and/or verse-line position, serve to structure the spatio-temporal design by marking turns to the new – speaker, addressee, locale or situation. In both plays, but especially the history, these utterances are largely spoken by male protagonists who enjoy positions of institutional authority or power. The metadramatic structuring function of *now* thus coincides with its use by such figures to seize the turn in interpersonal exchanges and to assert control over the action and other characters[10].

8 Their importance for Shakespeare has most recently been explored in Freebury-Jones 2024, 40-68; 72-109.

9 These attributions have been vigorously, if not conclusively, challenged, in Freebury-Jones 2024, 52-60.

10 That Shakespeare as actor was reputed to have "often played kingly parts" bears interestingly on this coincidence; see Freebury-Jones 2024, 17. Bolinger ob-

Now is also used in its "affective or evaluative function", but more prominently in the comedy and by a female figure which suggests a gender as well as generic inflection to the use of the word in these early plays. In addition, this affective function is intensified in both plays in instances where *now* is repeated at very close intervals, heightening the emotional charge and tending to arrest the action rather than marking a new turn that takes it forward. Finally, the two plays signal the direction that Shakespeare's use of *now* will take as he develops his craft, the history play specifically in revisions made to the Octavo version. Most importantly, the close relation we find in the two early plays between this metadramatic structuring and assertions of control by male figures of authority will weaken and eventually disappear. The undergirding of institutional authority by the spatio-temporal design is thus withdrawn and the hold exercised by male figures of authority on the new(s) – on history – is denied.

The use of now *by Shakespeare's immediate forerunners: Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe*

The value of *now* as a tool for the playwright is illustrated by the work of two of Shakespeare's contemporaries who were particularly important at the outset of his career: *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd (?1587, first published in 1592) and *Dido, Queen of Carthage* by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe (?1584-85, first published 1594). The action proper of the 1592 Quarto of *The Spanish Tragedy* (after the framing exchange between Revenge and the ghost of Andrea) opens with "Now" uttered by the Spanish king: "Now say, Lord General, how fares our camp?" (Kyd 2013, I.ii.1). This inaugural *now* that might be marked in performance by an "accent of power" (Bolinger 1989, 292; see above) declares at once the authority of the king, the identity of his addressee and the topic of their exchange.

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serves that the function of "change of topic" is at "a slight remove" from the (male) speaker's seizing of the turn: "Since he is the one who says *now*, he puts himself in command of the situation" (1989, 291). For a brilliant analysis of how turn taking is used by Shakespeare to individuate characters and to represent social relations between them, see Morgan 2019.

An *EEBO*[11] search in this edition yields 17 instances of *now* uttered by this figure of political authority, 7 in initial sentence and verse-line position, who is surpassed only – but tellingly – by Hieronimo, principal agent of the authorial design, with almost no institutional authority, who utters 20 of the total 84 instances (excluding the idiom "how now?", discussed below), 7 of which are likewise in initial sentence and verse-line position. The metadramatic structuring value of *now* as well as its value for the protagonist's assertion of control is, moreover, highlighted in the last of the "additions" to the 1602 edition (possibly by Shakespeare and /or Heywood; Taylor 2017, 246-260) in which three meta-dramatically inflected *now*s (one in Latin) structure Hieronimo's triumphal announcement of closure: "Now do I applaud what I have acted. / *Nunc iners cadat manus.* / Now to express the rupture of my part, / First take my tongue and afterwards my heart" (*The Spanish Tragedy*, IV.iv.46-49).

Marlowe's *Dido* does not open with inaugural *now*, but the word is used throughout – an EEBO search in the 1594 edition yields 60 instances – not only as a temporal deictic, but also to mark turns in the action as when Venus declares, "Now is the time for me to play my part" (*Dido, Queen of Carthage*, I.i.182); (of Ascanius) "Now is he fast asleep" (II.i.316) and to Cupid, "Now, Cupid, turn thee to Ascanius' shape / And go to Dido, who instead of him / Will set thee on her lap and play with thee" (II.i.323-25), a stratagem adopted by Cupid in a self-addressed speech that opens Act III: "Now, Cupid, cause the Carthaginian queen, / To be enamoured of thy brother's looks" (III.i.1-2). The closing turn is similarly announced by the eponymous protagonist: "Now, Dido, with these relics burn thyself" (V.i.292). She is immediately followed by her sister Anna who declares to the (dead) Iarbas, "But Anna now shall honour thee in death" (324), and who ends the play with, "Now, sweet Iarbas, stay! I come to thee!" (328). Taking control of the action with *now* even as she centres attention on herself, Anna inaugurates the final new action that closes the play in the same way that the Spanish king inaugurates the opening action of *The Spanish Tragedy*.

11 *Early English Books Online*, https://proquest.libguides.com/eebopqp.

Inaugural and closing now *in early Shakespeare*

Inaugural *now* uttered by a male figure of authority opens three early plays in the Shakespearean canon: the eponymous aspiring Duke of Gloucester, in *Richard III* (mid to late 1592[12]): "Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer"; Theseus, Duke of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (early 1596): "Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour / Draws on apace"; and the eponymous English monarch in *King John* (mid-1596), a play text that shares other stylistic features with *Dream* (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 521-22): "Now say Châtillon, what would France with us?". In all three too, closure, or the closing action, is announced by an utterance with initial *now* spoken by a second male figure who (as in *The Spanish Tragedy*) is the antagonist (or perhaps alter ego) of the first: Richmond (Henry VII): "Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again" (V.vii.40); Oberon: "Now until the break of day / Through this house each fairy stray" (V.ii.31-32); Bastard (Philip Falconbridge): "Now these her princes are come home again, […] Naught shall make us rue, / If England to itself do rest but true" (V.vii.115; 117-18). If imperceptible to spectators, the arc of the spatio-temporal design is thus drawn between opening and closing hinge utterances with initial *now* spoken by (opposed) male figures of power as, within this arc, turns are marked. The structuring value of *now* for early Shakespeare as for his contemporaries and forerunners Kyd and Marlowe could hardly be more evident.

The value of now *advertised:* The Two Gentlemen of Verona

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, dismissed by Park Honan as "apprentice work" (Honan 1998, 55), the value of *now* to the playwright's craft is showcased through what might be described as an apprentice's master class in dramatic construction, staged through a servant-clown Lance whose name suggests an authorial proxy (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 179). On his first entrance in II.iii, alone on stage, Lance tells the audience the story of his leave-taking from his family, the tears shed and the indifference of his dog Crab. Seemingly dissatisfied with the (in) effectiveness of telling, Lance announces a switch to showing: "Nay,

12 Dates given in parentheses are taken from Shakespeare 2016.

I'll show you the manner of it" (II.iii.10). In what Keir Elam calls "a metadramatic exposition" Lance "discovers that the sign-vehicles" on stage "are perfectly interchangeable" (Elam 1980, 14), that inanimate objects – shoes, staff and hat – may stand for human agents – father, mother, sister and Nan the maid. But Lance's show – strictly, a hybrid of telling and showing – not only shows that in theatre "there are no absolutely fixed representational relations" (13), but also that the word *now* is key to the construction of the dramatic design. Having resolved the vexatious question of which shoe stands for his mother, which for his father – "there 'tis" (14) – Lance turns to a new object-signifier and a new human signified, marking the turn with an expressively charged *now* addressed to a member of the audience, collectively drawn via this representative figure, into the immediate, intimate creative work of identifying the inhabitants of his play world: "Now sir, this staff is my sister" (14). Lance dithers some more as to who is what, but once settled – "Ay, so, so" (17) – he comes to the action. Taking up ten lines plus one word in the Folio this action is marked by no less than seven *now*s, each marking a turn to a new figure – father, mother, sister, dog – or a new action that either blocks a prior action – the request for blessing and the son's kiss are both prevented by the father's weeping – or exists only as wished for – that his mother would speak like a mad (or, as Oxford glosses, in Shakespeare 2017, "country") woman. The final *now* marks not only the turn to a new figure – the dog – but also the climactic sharp contrast illustrated by its lack of (human) affect and language for which Lance (comically) reproaches it.

> *Now* come I to my father: 'Father, your blessing.' *Now* should not the shoe speak a word for weeping. *Now* should I kiss my father – Well, he weeps on. *Now* come I to my mother. O, that she could speak *now,* like a wold-woman! Well, I kiss her – why, there 'tis. Here's my mother's breath up and down. *Now* come I to my sister – mark the moan she makes! *Now* the dog all this while sheds not a tear, nor speaks a word. But see how I lay the dust with my tears. (II.iii.7-24, emphasis mine)

In the Folio the first two *now*s stand at the end of a line, the remaining five at the beginning, a positioning that the uneven spacing of the surrounding words suggests may have been deliberate. Particularly prominent are the two sentences/lines that begin "Now come I to", which have capital *n* while other instances preceded by the same

punctuation – a colon – do not. Whether authorial or (more likely) scribal this organisation of Lance's prose in print highlights for readers the structuring function of *now* which in performance might be highlighted by an actor's intonation and gestures.

With this proliferation of *now*s in his staged show Lance shares the highest total number (12) with the principal male protagonists Valentine (12) and Proteus (12), who are closely followed by the Duke of Milan (9) and one of the female protagonists Julia (7). Together these instances make up over 80% of the total number (63) excluding the 13 that occur in the today obsolete idiom, "how now?"[13]. While Lance uses *now* chiefly in this passage to structure the staging of his play, the use of *now* by the three principal male protagonists serves to mark turns in the larger authorial design. Particularly telling – as he speaks relatively fewer lines – is the main figure of institutional and political authority, the father of Silvia, Duke of Milan, whose first word on his first entrance is, like Kyd's Spanish king, "Now". Asserting his authority on his entrance he puts a stop to the bickering between Silvia's rival lovers Valentine and Thurio – "Now, daughter Silvia, you are hard beset" (II.iv.41) – then turns to Valentine to announce a letter of "much good news" (44), namely that Proteus is to join him in Milan. Within the play world the figure of authority uses *now* to seize the turn and as a strategy of control. At the same time his *now* directs the action away from a more or less futile exchange towards the new(s) which breaks the deadlock and opens up fresh possibilities in the trajectory of the action. Tellingly, however, the duke also has a plot of his own which deviates from the end of the authorial design and which, specifically, seeks to impose his choice of spouse (Thurio) on his daughter Silvia, as another duke, Theseus, will seek to impose the father's choice on a daughter in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. To unmask his daughter's plot to elope with her chosen partner Valentine, the Duke invents a fiction, using *now* (like Lance) as a structuring, but also an expressive tool to draw in his addressee, Valentine: "I now am full resolved to take

13 "How now" (with or without question or exclamation mark) is consistently used throughout the Shakespearean corpus by speakers who thereby seek to draw attention to themselves as well as to their addressee and the information that they seek to obtain or give.

a wife" (III.i.76), "Now, therefore, would I have thee to my tutor" (84) and, after getting Valentine to propose the (his) plan of a ladder, "Now as thou art a gentleman of blood, / Advise me where I may have such a ladder" (121-22). Having successfully tricked Valentine, the Duke confidently asserts his control over events, opening the next scene with inaugural *now* – here temporal deictic as well as discourse marker – to assure Thurio that Silvia will love him, "Now Valentine is banished from her sight" (III.ii.1-2). Subsequently obliged, like Theseus, to abandon his plot, the duke is realigned with the authorial design when he spurns Thurio as "degenerate and base" (V.iv.134) and turns to Valentine: "Now, by the honour of my ancestry, / I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine" (137-38). Proceeding to cancel "all former griefs" (140) he then "plead[s] a new state in thy unrivaled merit" (142), the "new" following again closely on the "Now", marking a turn in the dramatic design as well as the conversion of the figure of institutional authority, who is now realigned with this design.

The play text's final *now* is, however, uttered not by the duke, but by the newly exonerated Valentine who, in his "new state", initiates the general amnesty of the outlaws with which the play closes: "I now beseech you for your daughter's sake, / To grant one boon", "Forgive" "[t]hese banished men" (147-48; 152; 150). It is Valentine too that marks with *now* the separation from his friend Proteus which is the play's inaugural action. Putting a stop to Proteus's proposal to accompany him – "Sweet Proteus, no" – he declares, "Now let us take our leave" (I.i.56). He proceeds to announce a future trajectory in an exchange of "news" by means of letters between them (57-58). This trajectory will be halted by the arrival of Proteus in Milan, the new "news" heralded by the *now* of the Duke's first utterance (see above). An expressive as well as temporal *now* then marks the turn to the first intimate exchange between Valentine and Proteus alone, on a stage cleared of other characters. "Now tell me", says Valentine, "how do all from whence you came?" (II.iv.114). The news Valentine has for Proteus is that his "life is altered now" (120), the *now* marking the contrast between a past from which he has definitively turned, as his servant Speed has already remarked: "now you are metamorphosed" (II.i.26). The absolute character of the change is underscored by a repetition of *now* in the closing lines of Valentine's description to Proteus of his present state.

> Now, no discourse except it be of love.
> Now can I break my fast, dine, sup and sleep,
> Upon the very naked name of love.
> (II.iv.132-34)

Here, however, the repeated *now*s in initial position not only emphasise the contrast between past and present, but structure Valentine's speech as an example of anaphora, the first of George Puttenham's rhetorical figures that work "by iteration or repetition of one word or clause" and that "much alter and affect the ear and also the mind" (Puttenham [1589] 2007, 282). This suggests Valentine's repetition of *now* carries an effect not at the level of the action, which is arrested, but rather in the response of spectators/readers, who are thus invited to feel the intense emotional charge as well as the paralysis of will suffered by Valentine as a captive of love.

Like Valentine, Proteus marks with *now* – as structuring marker as well as temporal deictic – an inaugural act of separation, here from Julia: "The tide is now" (II.ii.14). He marks likewise his change(s) of affective state(s), which again emphasize a contrast between past and present: "She is fair, and so is Julia that I love – / That I did love, for now my love is thaw'd" (II.iv.191-92); "At first I did adore a twinkling star, / But now I worship a celestial sun" (II.vi.9-10). The next step in the betrayal of Valentine is marked in the same way – "I cannot now prove constant to myself" (31) – as is the plot to get rid of his rival: "Now presently I'll give her father notice" (36). Act IV, scene ii opens with an announcement of what he will do next: "Already have I been false to Valentine, / And now I must be as unjust to Thurio" (IV.ii.1-2). The devastating consequences of these betrayals are denounced by Silvia: "Thou hast no faith left now" (V.iv.50) and then by Valentine who hammers the point home with a repetition of *now*:

> Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,
> For such is a friend *now.* Treacherous man,
> That has beguiled my hopes
> […]
> *Now* I dare not say
> I have one friend alive – thou wouldst disprove me.
> (V.iv.63-64; 66-67 emphasis mine)

Here again the repeated *now*s mark less a new turn than an arrest in the heightened emotional charge of the present, brought about by the traumatic discovery of Proteus's infidelities. However, spread throughout at more and less regular intervals, the *now*s uttered by the three principal male protagonists furnish a skeletal frame for the spatio-temporal design, marking turns to new actions, locales or situations, especially breaks with the past. These marked turns allow the audience to register the passage of time in the world of the play[14].

If these turns are primarily marked by male figures the first change of scene is marked by the principal female protagonist Julia who, on her first entrance, addresses her maid Lucetta: "But say, Lucetta, now we are alone –" (I.ii.1). The Folio has brackets around "now we are alone" which, though one of Ralph Crane's "scribal habits" (Shakespeare 2004, 122), may indicate the function of the phrase as metadramatic signal that the stage has been cleared for a new locale and new configuration of characters. That Julia is given this turn indicates the importance and agency she will have in the design. This is highlighted by her use of *now* when disguised as Sebastian to mark a contrast between past and present, in parallel with the male protagonists. Alone on stage, she recalls that she gave to Proteus the ring that he has given her to offer to Silvia, "And now am I, unhappy messenger, / To plead for that which I would not obtain" (IV.iv.86-87), and later, in her account to Silvia of the physical symptoms of the suffering caused by Proteus's infidelity, she remarks (of herself), "She hath been fairer, madam, than she is", "now she is become as black as I" (IV.iv.135; 142). Like Lance she also stages a scene with inanimate objects addressing the pages of Proteus's letter and bidding them, "Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will" (I.ii.130). "Now" here introduces a series of options for material pages briefly attributed with agency as Lance will attribute agency to inanimate objects.

Julia is, however, distinguished by her use of *now* in its "affective or evaluative function", to express subjective feelings and opinions. In the first scene with Lucetta, she first betrays her own investment in the name of Proteus with a sharp "How now? What means this

14 The structure has been harshly judged by critics as naïve and evidence of early composition. See Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 486.

passion at his name?" (I.ii.16), then explodes on hearing that Lucetta took the letter for her from Proteus: "Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!" (41), which she follows with "Now trust me, tis an office of great worth" (44)[15]. Both *now*s underscore the intensity of her feeling as well as the irony of her apparent praise. The affective function is illustrated again, though the emotional charge is very different, when Julia prepares to join Proteus in Milan and Lucetta expresses scepticism as to his fidelity to which Julia responds: "Now, as thou lov'st me, do him not that wrong / To bear a hard opinion of his truth" (II. vii.80-81). Though again marking a difference of "opinion", this "[n] ow", uttered by a vulnerable Julia, is conciliatory, even cajoling in the desire it expresses to win Lucetta over to Julia's (for spectators/readers poignantly erroneous) opinion of Proteus. This function is illustrated too but less prominently by male figures, notably Valentine, who echoes Julia when he angrily counters Silvia's dismissive judgement of his letter as "very clerkly done" (II.i.89): "Now trust me, madam, it came hardly off" (90). "Now" here marks again difference of opinion, even as it registers barely contained anger, again tinged with irony. Overall, however, given the difference in the number of lines allocated male and female speakers, there does appear to be a slight gender inflection to the use of *now*. While male protagonists use it primarily to seize the turn and assert control over others and events, a principal female protagonist uses it to express opinions and emotions as well.

The structuring use of *now* to mark turns in the spatio-temporal design and the coincidence with the seizing of the turn to speak by male figures of institutional authority is still more evident in *3 Henry VI*, the Folio version of which has more instances of *now* (119) than any other text in the Folio, and in which Marlowe and/or Kyd may have had a hand[16]. Unlike the comedy, this history play exists in more

15 Oxford emends here to "God's lady" on the grounds that "trust me" is used as a substitute for oaths in other Folio texts and that the repetition of "now" twice at the beginning of the line is "weak", see Shakespeare 2017, 1595. Inexplicably, the same phrase when used by Valentine is not thus emended. The case for this emendation of Julia's expressive outburst seems to me weak.

16 Burrows and Craig draw this conclusion from their stylistic analysis: "*The Spanish Tragedy* […] is the closest play to Folio Henry VI as a whole play", but "Marlowe emerges" as the most likely author of the "non-Shakespearean" "thirteen scenes". *Now* is included in the "more structural and grammatical" "func-

than one early version, notably the Octavo version of 1595, *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of York,* as well as the Folio version of 1623, *The Third part of King Henry the Sixt*[17]. The Folio text has nearly 1,000 more lines than the Octavo version (Shakespeare 2002, 149) and there are proportionally more instances of *now* (excluding the idiom "how now")[18]. In both versions it is used equally in scenes attributed to Marlowe/Kyd and Shakespeare not only as a temporal deictic but also to mark turns in the design to new speakers, character configurations, situations or locales. It is, moreover, explicitly associated with the new or with news (as in the comedy). In scene ii (attributed to Marlowe) an SD to the right in O – "Enter a Messenger"– faces "Now, what newes?" uttered by the Duke of York (np; F: "Enter Gabriel" [possibly the name of an actor] "But stay, what news?", ii.48) In scene xiv (attributed to Shakespeare) in both O and F Richard berates Edward for his treatment of Warwick, "*now* dishonoured by this *new* marriage" (with Lady Grey) (31-32, emphasis mine); and the entry of a messenger ("post" in F) is marked by Edward's "Now, messenger, [O: Sirra] what letters, or what news […]?" (line 83) In scene xxiv in F (attributed to Marlowe) (not in O) Somerset announces that the Queen has arrived with a powerful force, "Even *now* we heard the *news*" (32, emphasis mine).

This structuring work of marking turns to the new(s) is all the more important because there are no act or scene divisions in O and none after the initial *Actus Primus. Scoena Prima* on the first page in F[19]. For instance, in scene vi (attributed to Shakespeare) the SD in O "Enter the house of *Yorke*" (np) (F: "*March. Enter Edward, Warwicke, Richard, Clarence, Norfolke, Mountague, and Soldiers*") is immediately

tion words" among "the most common words down to the 500th" that they use in the Delta test to establish authorial characteristics (2017, 194; 217; 198 and n.). Freebury-Jones draws on different digital tools to contest their case (2024, 52-60).

17 References to the Octavo version (henceforth O) are to Anon 1595; i/j u/v spellings normalised.

18 With respect to the use of *now*, the Quartos of 1600 and 1619 do not differ from O sufficiently to justify separate consideration. For full discussion of the relations between these different versions, see Shakespeare 2002, 159-76.

19 Oxford follows the "standard scene divisions by Capell" which I reproduce; see Shakespeare 2017, 2573. The attributions given are those in Burrow and Craig 2017, 195.

followed by: "Now perjured *Henrie*, wilt thou yeelde thy crowne" (F: "Now, perjured Henry, wilt thou kneel for grace", 81). This is uttered by Edward who thus marks at once the turn in the action and his newly acquired authority following the death of his father. Indeed, over 25% of the instances in F (33) – two thirds in initial sentence and verse-line position – feature in utterances by this authority figure who continues to assert control and mark the turns of the action up to and including the closing scenes (attributed to Shakespeare): scene xxvii opens with his announcement of closure, "Now here a period of tumultuous broils" (1), (O: "Lo here"), and comes to a close on his command, "Now march we hence" (86; not in O). In the final scene xxix, in both O and F, he declares satisfaction at the achieved peace, marking the close of the play: "Now am I seated as my soul delights, / Having my country's peace and brothers' love", "And now what rests, but that we spend the time / With stately triumphs" (35-36, 42-43). This achievement of closure and the authority of Edward are, however, under an ironic shadow cast by one of these brothers, Richard, signaled, as I discuss below, through a skillful placing of new *now*s in the Folio revisions to an earlier scene in O.

First, however, it is worth noting that, as in the comedy, there are instances where repetition of *now* at close intervals arrests the action in an intensification of an emotionally charged moment rather than marking a new turn that takes the action forward. In scene ix, Henry, withdrawn from the "battle" (1), reflects on the indeterminate nature of its outcome in a lyrical passage (elaborated in F) which suspends action even as it heightens the effect of indeterminacy and attendant pathos with three (O: two) carefully placed *now*s: "Now sways it this way…/…/ Now sways it that way…/…/…/ Now one the better, then another best" (5-10) In scene xxiv, the dying Earl of Warwick, the king-maker, second only to Edward in his number of *now*s (23 instances), structures a lament with four *now*s that sound the knell of the definitive arrest that is death. This is rendered still more poignant in F by the echo of the last of these – "my manors that I had / Even now forsake me" (24-25) – on the entrance of Somerset, who is the bearer of "now"/ "news" – "even now we heard the news" (32) – as Warwick no longer is.

The effect of repetitions of *now* at close intervals, intensified by the sense of the temporal deictic, is manifest too in hostile exchanges

between antagonists: scene viii (O and F) opens with Richard in confrontation with Clifford, "Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone" (1), echoed by Clifford: "Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone" (5), before they engage in physical combat. Highly charged power struggles between antagonists will continue to be thus marked: in the opening scene of *King Lear* (Q and F) Lear's threat to Kent, "Now by Apollo" is thrown back by Kent who thus challenges Lear's authority: "Now by Apollo, King, thou swearest thy gods in vain" (I.i.143-44).

A refined use of this linguistic tool by an experienced authorial hand is evinced by revisions to scene xiv in the F version of the history play[20]. In O there are 2 instances of *now* in this scene, the first syntagmatically associated with "new", the second with "news", as I pointed out above. To these 2 instances in O the F version adds 4 further instances, 2 in the opening ten lines, 2 in the closing four lines. In O it is Edward who opens the new action in a new locale (the turn from the French to the English court) and with a new set of characters: "Brothers of *Clarence* and of *Glocester* / What think you of our marriage with the ladie *Gray*?" (D3r). In F it is Richard who opens the scene marking the turn with an ironically tinged *now* associated with the "new" event of the marriage of Edward that has crucially altered relations among the Yorkists: "Now tell me brother Clarence, what think you / Of this new marriage with the Lady Grey?" (1-2; echoed later when he berates Edward for his treatment of Warwick "now dishonoured by this new marriage", 31-32). Their grumbling is cut short by the announced arrival of Edward whose opening line has been modified in F to include an initial *now*: "Now, brother of Clarence, how like you our choice" (9). For readers and spectators alike the echo here of Richard's opening line generates an irony that drains Edward's *now* of its force as an assertion of control. Control is thus subtly transferred to Richard whose disclosure to the audience of his reason for staying with Edward when Clarence leaves to join Warwick (not in O) – "I stay not for the love of Edward, but the crown" (123) – empties his affirmation of loyalty in the final exchange with Edward. This is more prominent in F where it is moved to the close of the scene. In O Edward addresses Richard before addressing Hastings and Stafford: "What saie you brother *Richard*, will you stand to us?" (D4v), while in F he turns from Hastings and Staf-

20 On the case for F as revision of O see Shakespeare 2002, 164.

ford to Richard with "Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?" (142). On Richard's "Ay" Edward expresses confidence in victory and declares, as their collective consequent next move: "Now therefore let us hence, and lose no hour / Till we meet Warwick with his foreign power" (145-46). The rhyme here reenforces the effect of closure, a closure to which Edward aspires as his use of *now* emphasizes. Tending to support the case of F as a conscious revision of O the added *now*s in the opening and closing lines of this scene specifically introduce dramatic irony that undercuts the aspiration to control of the principal male figure of institutional authority thwarted by another antagonistic male figure who is, we might say, the news.

Richard is indeed the protagonist of the next play in the sequence, titled in F *The Tragedy of Richard III* and in the 1597 Quarto text *The Tragedy of King Richard the third*. For John Jowett it "signals a fresh departure" since "it initiates a period of mostly solo authorship" as well as establishing "a new model" (Shakespeare 2017, 2643). This fresh departure – for the new protagonist as for the author – is marked by an inaugural *now* that, unlike the play texts discussed earlier, is addressed not to another character, but to the speaker's self (with a glance perhaps at the audience): "Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer". This "[n]ow" inaugurates the staging of tortured struggles within an isolated individual subject – the opening SD in both Q and F reads "*Enter Richard Duke of Gloucester solus*" – as the new action of the tragic genre inaugurated by Shakespeare *solus*[21]. The word *now* is repeated by Richard in lines 5 and 10, a repetition which once again produces an anaphoric structure that does not forward, but arrests action. Here this arrest mirrors the frozen present state of things that Richard aspires to shatter ("But I", 14). In what follows the instances of *now* are heavily concentrated in Richard (24 instances, 8 in initial position). The next most frequent user, Queen Margaret, one of his principal antagonists, has half his number of instances (and only 2 in initial position). It is, however, as I pointed out earlier, his nemesis, Richmond, that has the final *now* marking the last turn and asserting his takeover of events: "Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again" (V.vii.40).

21 For a full-blown reading of the emergence of Richard as an allegory of authorial self-discovery see Blanpied 1983, 70-72.

Shakespeare's now*: early to late*

The direction Shakespeare's use of this linguistic tool will take is anticipated, as I have indicated, by features of the two early plays studied here. In the comedy, the Duke of Milan is the principal figure of institutional authority whose use of *now* to assert control marks initial and final turns to the new(s) in the play's spatio-temporal dramatic design, but he also deviates from this design with a plot of his own structured with *now* which fails, undermining his authority. In the history play, carefully placed new *now*s in the revised version produce dramatic irony that evacuates the assertion of control through *now* by the principal male figure of authority. The discrepancy between the dramatic design and such figures is increasingly evident as is the consequent exposure of their powerlessness, whether the eponymous King Lear, or King Leontes in *The Winter's Tale,* the Folio play text with the second highest number of instances of the word *now* (96). As I hope to develop in a companion piece, *now* is associated with turns to the new(s) – "Time's news" (IV.i.36) – in the choric speech by the figure of Time, but it is used in the play rather as temporal deictic simply, and less to structure the spatio-temporal design. More importantly, where it is used to mark turns in the design, *now* is uttered not by individual male authority figures but generic (if still male) figures: unnamed Lords or gentlemen and, most importantly, an old shepherd, who announces the play's central turn: "*Now* bless thyself. Thou metst with things dying, I with things *new*-born" (III.iii.98-99, emphasis mine). No longer bearers of structuring *now*s male authority figures are no longer supported by the spatio-temporal design. No longer the focus of "Time's news", they are denied the hold over history to which they aspire.

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