The Study of Shakespeare's Language: Its Implications for Editors, Critics and Translators

N.F.Blake

University of Sheffield

I have on one or two previous occasions spoken and written about the problem of Shakespeare's language in so far as it seems not to figure prominently in the way modern editors present Shakespeare's plays (Blake 1996 & 1997). Earlier editors, from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were often concerned with 'correcting' his language in that they tried where possible to choose a reading from the quartos or First Folio which was the least incorrect by their standards or, where that was not an option, to correct what was in the First Folio by what was found in one of the later folios or by introducing an emendation.[1] Their interest in the language hardly went further than that. As notions of correctness have receded and as most modern editors have little knowledge or appreciation of the language of Shakespeare's time, comments about his language have become less and less frequent in twentieth-century editions. In this paper I will consider the implications of this state of affairs by reviewing some modern editions of *Macbeth*. The ones I will consider are those by Muir 1951, Brooke 1990 and Braunmuller 1997 as well as the text in the Oxford Complete Shakespeare by Wells and Taylor 1986. I have also used the dual English-Spanish version edited by Manuel Angel Conejero 1996. I shall first consider some passages in detail and then draw from this discussion some more general points.

Let us take first the short opening scene with the three witches. In examining the language of this passage I wish also to evaluate how far the emendations which have been made are justified and what aspects of the scene's language might need more explanation than they receive in these editions. The text in the First Folio, which is the base text used by modern editors in the absence of any quarto, reads:

1. When shall we three meet again?
In Thunder, Lightning, or in Raine?
2. When the Hurley-burley's done,
When the Battaile's lost, and wonne.
3. That will be ere the set of Sunne.(5)

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[1] As for example Pope 1728 does in his edition.

1. Where the place?
2. Vpon the Heath.
3. There to meet with *Macbeth*.
1. I come, *Gray-Malkin*.
All. *Padock* calls anon: faire is foule, and foule is faire,   (10)
Houer through the fogge and filthie ayre. *Exeunt.*[2]   (11)

The editors here represent the text more or less as it is found in the Folio. Although the spelling and punctuation are modernised, editors tend to keep the Folio's punctuation where they can, and in this respect Braunmuller 1997 is the most conservative. The most striking feature of the passage is that the last two lines of the scene in the Folio are completely recast. They appear in Braunmuller's 1997 edition as

SECOND WITCH Paddock calls.   10
THIRD WITCH Anon.
ALL Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
 Hover through the fog and filthy air.13 (1997:103)

The lines which are given to all the witches in the Folio are split up to give some extra short lines to the second and third witches - a point to which I shall return.

A quick look at the editors' collations and notes yields the following results. The collations have almost no comments on punctuation. Muir 1951:3 alone notes that the omission of the question mark at the end of the first line by Hanmer 'is superfluous'. As for changes to the text Muir 1951 records that both Hanmer and Capell emend the *or* in line 2 to *and*, though he makes no comment upon the emendation. All note the rearrangement of the final lines in the scene. The notes, for their part, are principally devoted to the explication of words; there is nothing on syntax. One word whose meaning all editors comment on at some length is *Hurley-burley*, though their glosses are slightly different. Muir 1951:3 glosses 'uproar, tumult, confusion, especially the tumult of sedition or insurrection' and adds various parallels and ends with the suggestion by Knights that the word and the following line 'suggest the kind of metaphysical pitch-and-toss which is about to be played with good and evil'. Braunmuller 1997: 102 has the same gloss, but adds 'Reduplications with suffixed -*y* are common in English ..., but the see-saw childishness is here appropriate to the sisters' obscurely ominous way of speaking and the teetering confusion of opposites to follow'. Brooke 1990:95 glosses 'commotion, confusion - originally used of noble fighting, but in the sixteenth century commonly confined to the confusion of civil war'. The editors cannot agree on the connotations of this word which vary from metaphysical implications through former noble strife to childish ominousness. The word *padock* is glossed as 'toad' by all of them, though some add the concept of a 'familiar'. *Gray-Malkin* is noted to be the name of a cat, another witch's familiar. Muir 1951 has no other glosses. Brooke 1990:95 simply notes that *anon* means 'immediately (the looser

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[2] For quotations from the First Folio I have used the 1996 *Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*.

sense "soon" did also occur in Shakespeare's time)'. Braunmuller 1997 glosses rather more words. *Battaile* is 'conflict ... could also mean "body ... of troops ... composing an entire army, or one of its main divisions" (OED *Battle sb* 8a) a meaning appropriate to the slaughter soon described'. *Heath* is 'wilderness, uninhabited and uncultivated ground' (Braunmuller 1997:102) and *filthie* is 'murky, thick' (Braunmuller 1997:103). Otherwise the comments are largely about proverbial language and the concepts of witches and their familiars.

As for the re-arrangement of the final two lines in the Folio only Brooke 1990: 217 provides an explanation for the change. The justification he offers, based on the proposals made by Hunter following Singer, is that in the last two lines the words from *faire is foule* must be understood to form a couplet and should be edited as such and that the Folio's *Padock calls anon* should be divided into two lines to maintain the rhythm of the three witches each speaking in turn. This arrangement is designed then to provide three conversational turns consisting of first, second and third witches. But how one is to understand the meaning of the text generated by this new arrangement and why the re-arrangement of the lines should be considered superior to that in the Folio are not commented on, let alone explained, by the editors.

It follows from their silence about the rest of the language in this scene that the editors assume the meaning is so straightforward that no comment is necessary and that readers whether in school or university should have no problem in understanding what is meant and in appreciating how the whole passage hangs together. I wonder whether many native English speakers would find this passage as easy to comprehend as the editors seem to imply, and in Spain both students and translators may well have difficulty in making sense of the scene as edited in these editions. No modern editor goes so far to claim that because the supernatural is involved the witches may not make sense, although Braunmuller 1997:102 notes their 'obscurely ominous way of speaking and the teetering confusion of opposites'. In his translation Conejero 1996: 57 adds as a note to lines 10-11: 'La traducción de las intervenciones de las tres brujas en esta escena es, probablemente, poco literal en el sentido clásico del término'. Nevertheless, I shall argue that their language can make sense, if understood properly.

The first thing to note is that some editors make 'Vpon the Heath.' the second half of a line which starts with 'Where the place?'[3] This is done to make *Heath* rhyme with *Macbeth* (although the rhymes *Heath/-beth* were not true then and are not now) so that these two lines form a couplet parallel to the first couplet (lines 1-2 rhyming *again/Raine*), though the next three lines form a rhyming triplet (lines 3-5 rhyming *done/wonne/Sunne*). The last line of this proposed editorial couplet (*There to meet with Macbeth*) has only six syllables and so does not conform to the four-stress lines of the other couplets. The words at the end of the scene from *faire is foule* are also edited as a free-standing four-stress couplet. This arrangement makes the rhythm of Folio's lines 9-10, coming between the early couplet/triplet and the last couplet, different from the rest of the scene since they

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[3] The result is that the lineation in the various editions differs.

have neither the stress nor the rhyming patterns found elsewhere. Hence the attempt to force these intermediate lines into the pattern of first, second and third witches speaking in turn is undermined by the change in poetic structure and rhythm and calls the widely accepted emendation into question.

The question marks at the end of the first two lines suggest, as edited elsewhere, that there are two questions: when the witches will meet again and whether the meeting should be in thunder, in lightning or in rain. But thunder, lightning and rain tend to come together rather than separately and the stage direction for this scene in the Folio reads *Thunder and Lightning*. So one can appreciate why early editors wanted to change *or* to *and*. Possibly editors accept the view that there is little difference in meaning between *or* and *and* here and Shakespeare simply chose the one which fitted in with the harmony of the lines. There is indeed some evidence for this view (See Blake 1983: Ch. 6), though readers might have welcomed some guidance on the matter. This might then be thought to fit in with the next couplet where the sense of *lost, and wonne* is somewhat superfluous, since if one side wins the other must lose. Keeping the two question marks in lines 1 and 2 means there are apparently two questions rather than one, and the second question is elliptical. At the same time the next two lines are kept as two clauses separated only by a comma, although each clause is a complete sentence in itself. This does not seem to conform to modern punctuation which is the editorial aim. Retaining the original punctuation here may not be the most sensible option for an editor to follow who is introducing modern punctuation.

The first line to call for more detailed linguistic comment than it receives is line 8 'There to meet with *Macbeth*'. Since they make no comment, editors presumably take *meet with* to mean the same as *meet*, which normally indicates some prearranged meeting, as is true of *meet* in line 1. That is not the case here. The witches are going to waylay Macbeth without his prior knowledge and by taking him unawares to test him. The phrasal verb *meet with* has the sense 'to attack, waylay' (cf. OED **Meet** *v.* 11c 'To encounter (an enemy)') and that must be the sense intended here. The phrasal verb is used elsewhere in Shakespeare in this sense as in 'The King with mighty and quick-raisèd power | Meets with Lord Harry' [i.e. Hotspur] (*1 Henry 4* 4.4.12-13). It continues the sense of conflict which is referred to in the battle and introduces a new struggle just when the previous one had been *lost, and wonne*. The witches arrange to *meet* one another, but they will *meet with* Macbeth.

The First Witch asks where the next meeting is to be and she is answered by the other two witches who give her the place and the purpose of the meeting. The First Witch then says in the Folio 'I come, *Gray-Malkin*' (9). This sentence is reproduced by the editors without comment apart from their explanations of the cat's name. What precisely does this sentence mean? As it stands, the comma and the name *Gray-Malkin*, which appears to be a form of address, indicate that this sentence is said to someone other than the other two witches, namely to Greymalkin (or Grimalkin). But Greymalkin, the assumed familiar of this witch, is

not present and is not included in any stage direction (original or editorial) and it is unusual to say the least that this witch should address her response to her familiar rather than to the other witches with whom she is talking. Presumably the phrase *I come* means 'I will be there, I am coming' and, if so, it should be addressed to the other two witches to confirm the First Witch's presence at the next meeting. The solution, that Greymalkin is the name of one of the other witches, does not seem credible, has never been proposed and would create a further problem in understanding who *Padock* is in the following line. It is surprising that editors do not face this difficulty, unless there is a simple solution which has escaped me. But, as this brief analysis shows, pragmatically this sentence does not fit in with what has gone before or what is to come. Hence the First Witch's reply may need to be adjusted textually to make it suitable for this conversational exchange. One way of doing so without too much difficulty would be to re-arrange the punctuation. Instead of having the comma after *come*, it might be better to put it after *I*, which is the spelling also used for *Ay*, meaning 'yes', in the Folio, as in *Macbeth* 2.2.26. The sense would then be 'Yes (i.e. I agree with the suggested meeting and its purpose), and accompany me Greymalkin', presumably either to the meeting with Macbeth or to an immediate departure since the next meeting of the witches has now been arranged. This would provide an adequate response to the information the other witches had given her, because she accepts place and purpose, and it also introduces the familiars which are presumably designed to underline the evil nature of the witches. The presence of Greymalkin at the meeting with Macbeth would emphasise its wicked purpose. It is not difficult to imagine a compositor thinking that 'I, come' should be read as 'I come,'. A further possibility is to replace the comma of the Folio with a full stop. Then the 'I come.' would be a reply to the other witches to indicate her agreement to be present at the next meeting, and 'Greymalkin' would be a form of address presumably to get the cat to be ready to depart and would form a new conversational exchange. This second possibility is less attractive as it leaves this form of address up in the air because its conversational purpose is unclear, though it can be paralleled in Shakespeare.

The next speech which in the Folio is given to all the witches starts '*Padock* calls anon' (10). It is clearly a single sentence with normal structure of subject-transitive verb-object (or possibly subject-transitive/intransitive verb-adverb). Modern editors, as we have seen, divide it into two sentences 'Paddock calls' and 'Anon' which they allocate to separate witches. Apart from the comment in Brooke 1990 that *anon* means 'immediately', no editor offers any explanation of the meaning of the words used or how the lines hang together with the rest of the passage. One is left to assume that the Second Witch says that her familiar, i.e. Paddock, is calling, and the Third Witch responds to Paddock's call by shouting 'Immediately', meaning presumably that she or her fellow witch will come to Paddock immediately. Why Paddock is calling and why the Third Witch should answer Paddock's call, as Paddock is the Second Witch's familiar, are left unexplained. One begins to fear that editors believe witches talk nonsense. But the sentence as it stands in the Folio does make sense and can fit in with the rest of the passage. *Call* is both a transitive and intransitive verb and, as the former, takes an

object which is often what is called out (OED **Call** *v.* 3). One way of making sense of these words is to take *call* as a transitive verb whose object is the final couplet starting *faire is foule*. But as there is no reason Paddock should utter this couplet immediately, this interpretation seems unsatisfactory. The reading '*Padock* calls anon' can also be understood to mean 'Paddock calls out "At your service"'. *Anon* is the cry which servants and others say when they are summoned, and the best known example is in *1 Henry IV* where Prince Hal and Poins tease Francis, the tapster, by summoning him from different sides and, as he is uncertain which way to turn, he keeps shouting 'Anon'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* makes it clear that servants often used this word as recognition that they were being summoned and a sign that they were ready to serve whoever was calling (OED **Anon** *adv.* 6). In *Macbeth* when the porter at the end of his monologue says 'Anon, anon, I pray you remember the Porter' (2.3.16-17), he means 'At your service and don't forget the porter'. If the sense is 'Paddock calls out "At your service"', it is possible to see how it fits into the passage. After the First Witch agrees to the meeting and tells her familiar to accompany her, the witches then hear Paddock calling out that he would also be willing to participate with Greymalkin in this new wickedness. Paddock does not want to be left out, if Greymalkin is going to be there. Presumably Paddock is off-stage. I see no reason why this sentence should not be said by all the witches, if the shout comes from off-stage for that indicates that the witches all have their familiars in tow, though it could be said by just one of them.

The last couplet calls for little comment, except possibly for the word *Houer*. No editor comments on this word, its form or meaning. I assume they understand it to be a verb and, given its position, it presumably is in the imperative form, though it could be taken to be a present tense form with the subject 'we' or 'they' understood. If it is an imperative, to whom is it addressed? Are the witches talking to themselves? If it is a present tense of the verb is the subject really 'we', or in light of the previous line with the mixing of foul and fair, is it both fair and foul which hover in the bad air? OED *Hover v1* 3 recognises the meaning 'To continue in a state of suspense or indecision, to waver as in an indeterminate or irresolute state', which might apply to Macbeth at a later stage, but hardly now. In any case this solution does not help to explain how the grammar works. There is also a noun *hover* found from 1513 to 1883 with the meaning 'The act or condition of remaining in suspense' (OED *Hover sb.* 2). As OED says this word has a Northern tone, it may be appropriate here. However, this noun like the verb suggests a state of stasis, whereas the following preposition *through* suggests some movement. But *through* might be understood in the sense 'so as to penetrate every part or district of; throughout, everywhere in' (OED *Through prep.* B.I.3). The witches' plans and evil intentions (that potent mixing of benefit with wickedness) are in a state of suspended animation throughout the fog and murky atmosphere until they can be realised in the projected meeting with Macbeth on the heath. The general connotation of *houer* is clearly less than favourable, and may be related to the unfavourable adjectival form *hovering* in 'a hovering temporizer' (*Winter's Tale* 1.2.302) said of Camillo by Leontes, and *through* indicates its pervasiveness. I understand these last two lines to mean: 'Evil and good are inextricably mixed in a

suspended state throughout the fog and putrid atmosphere'. Conejero translates these lines as:

> Lo bello es feo y feo lo que es bello;
> la niebla, el aire impuro atravesemos. (1996:57),

where *atravesemos* is the imperative, for Spanish forces a choice among the different persons and here the choice is first plural. How the latter line hangs together with the previous one is not clear since they are separated by a semi-colon.

There is one final difficulty, namely how the final couplet beginning *faire is foule* hangs together with the statement '*Padock* calls anon' or the rest of the scene. Most commentators make no comment on this and presumably accept that it is a kind of final charm which the witches intone at the end of the scene, which would be a different way of concluding their wickedness similar to 'Peace, the Charme's wound vp' at 1.3. 35. As it is said by all the witches, this makes sense. It would in that case refer forward to what they are going to tell Macbeth and Banquo, which is apparently good news, but it conceals the seeds for wicked action to achieve the result predicted. But it might also refer to the presence of Greymalkin and Paddock at the coming meeting, who could be presented as both 'fair' and 'foul' - attractive to look at, at least in the case of Greymalkin, but wicked underneath.

While I cannot prove that the meaning I offer for these lines is correct, I do claim that I have tried to make sense of the lines in a way which readers and translators can grasp. Equally I have focussed on what I consider to be one of the most important tasks an editor has to face, namely to elucidate the meaning of the text he or she is presenting to the wider public. In doing that I have had to make certain assumptions and minor changes in punctuation. But in making changes or emendations I have explained why a change needs to be made and how it could be justified. Otherwise, I have kept to the text as presented in the Folio. I do not think we need to take the more drastic decision that the witches make little sense and that, therefore, the scenes in which they appear must have been written by someone other than Shakespeare. As Conejero 1996: 55 notes: 'Esta escena [Act 1 Sc.1], en la que aparecen por vez primera las tres brujas, breve y sin función dramática aparente, ha sido considerada espúrea por parte de un sector de la crítica'. For me it has a very clear function, but one needs to understand the language to appreciate that function.

Let us turn now to the second appearance of the witches at the beginning of Act 1, scene 3, though I do not reproduce the whole scene in which they appear. The witches are preparing for their meeting with Macbeth and Banquo. During this preparation the following exchange occurs:

> **1.** Her Husband's to Aleppo gone, Master o'th'*Tiger*:   (6)
> But in a Syue Ile thither sayle,
> And like a Rat without a tayle,
> Ile doe, Ile doe, and Ile doe.
> **2.** Ile giue thee a Winde. (10)
> **1.** Th'art kinde.

3. And I another.
1. I my selfe haue all the other,
 And the very Ports they blow,
 All the Quarters that they know,(15)
 I'th'Shipman's card.
 Ile dreyne him drie as Hay:
 Sleepe shall neyther Night nor Day
 Hang vpon his Pent-house Lid:
 He shall liue a man forbid:(20)

The First Witch has been complaining about a sailor's wife and the punishment the witch will exact upon her husband. One problem in this passage is the meaning of line 9 'Ile doe, Ile doe, and Ile doe'. Comment by editors on this line is not frequent. Braunmuller 1997:110 translates *doe* as 'act; fornicate', though the two glosses are hardly in the same semantic field. He adds that witches are often associated with 'female sexual desire'. This appears to relate the witch's *doe* with the modern colloquial *do* meaning 'to have sexual intercourse'. Muir 1951:12 notes that other commentators relate *Ile doe* to the witch being like a rat and suggest that she will gnaw through some part of the ship such as the rudder to make the ship drift helplessly or to sink it. Neither of these suggestions seems satisfactory. At this time *do* can mean 'to have sexual intercourse', but this sense seems inappropriate here as the Second Witch responds to this statement by the First Witch by saying 'Ile giue thee a Winde'. For the First Witch to intend to act as a succubus has no relevance to the Second Witch's offer of a wind. Wind and sexual intercourse have no necessary relation. Even if the ship is damaged by the gnawing of a witch-like rat, the wind would not be appropriate since the sinking of the ship or its rudderless wandering would be sufficient turmoil without a wind. The sense may be no more than 'act, carry out (some enterprise)' (OED *Do v.1* 20) The First Witch will initiate some action, though what is not made clear till later. Her *do* probably means no more than 'I'll set to work vigorously [on the captain by assailing him with contrary winds]'. In Shakespeare repetition is often used for emphasis. The other witches clearly understand that the captain will be afflicted with storms which will make his journey hazardous and involve his constant attention. Hence the offer of winds by the other two witches, and then the claim by the First Witch to have all the other winds. It would appear that the witches have no power to sink the ship (cf. 1.3.23), but they do have the power to inflict as much trouble as they want upon the captain short of his actual death. The three witches have control over all the winds with which the First Witch will punish the captain for his wife's behaviour towards her.

This notion is introduced by lines 13-16, which have caused editors considerable uncertainty as to their meaning. Modern editors tend to follow the punctuation of the Folio, although Muir 1951 has a semi-colon at the end of line 13 and some omit the comma at the end of line 15. It might, in fact, be better to have a full stop at the end of line 13, since this line ties in with what the other witches have said before a new topic is introduced, namely what the winds will be used for. The next line reads 'And the very Ports they blow', in which *And* and *very* act as

intensifiers to underline what is said. This suggests a heavy stop at the end of the previous line is appropriate. It might be better to have no further punctuation in these four lines. The question is what they mean. First, there is the problem of the syntax. Is *the very Ports* the object of *blow* or does it form part of the subject with *they*, as has been suggested? Then, there is the meaning of *Ports*, usually assumed to be 'harbour or refuge for ships', but it is difficult to fit this in since the ship is at sea away from all harbours.

     would suggest a meaning as follows. Line 13 is complete in itself and merely indicates that the First Witch has control over all the other winds. The *they* in the next line must refer to the winds. It is difficult to understand *Ports* as an object of *blow*, for the meaning would be difficult, to say the least, and commentators have not come forward with any reasonable interpretation. It is possible to take *All the Quarters* as the object of *blow*, meaning that the winds blow all the quarters of the compass (*i'th'Ship-mans Card*), i.e. they blow from all angles and so disorient the captain who cannot control his ship or steer it in the preferred direction. *Card* from the end of the sixteenth century could mean both 'compass' and 'map, especially for sailors' (OED *Card sb.2* 4 & 5). The captain is left to wallow with his ship helplessly in the sea. This leaves *all the Ports* to be explained. I cannot accept that this has anything to do with harbours, for the captain is at sea and it appears that to find land is not an option for him. *Port*, in addition to 'harbour', can mean 'an opening of some kind' and thus it refers to gates and also to the holes in the side of ships, through which guns could be pointed and which let in air (OED **Port** *sb.3* 2). If this is taken as an object in a literal sense then it would mean that the winds blow through the holes in the side of the ship and so help to prevent the ship from being steered properly. This seems less probable than a figurative meaning, in which *Ports* could refer to the holes in the clouds through which the winds were represented as blowing by cartographers of the time (*i'th'Ship-mans Card*). This would compare the situation with a map in which the winds, personified as human heads with full cheeks, are blowing from different corners so as to represent the ship as buffeted by winds from all directions. To understand the phrase this way means assuming that a preposition such as *at* is understood before *all the Ports*.[4] It would be possible, though I find it unnecessary, to assume that *at* had been omitted by the compositor as it followed *And*, as both are short words beginning with *a*. Understood in the way I have suggested the lines would mean: 'Indeed, at the openings [in the sky] the winds blow every direction known to them in the mariner's compass'.

     The result is, as the rest of the speech suggests, that the captain is unable to rest, for he is busy trying to control the ship and steer it in the right direction. Consequently, he becomes exhausted and loses weight and his temper. Though the witches cannot destroy him directly, they can torment him to the limits of his endurance. All of this I take to be an image of the way the witches plan to treat Macbeth. He will be blown hither and thither by the various emotional winds working in conflicting directions so that, for example, duty will be in conflict with

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[4] See for example, Franz 1924: 542.

ambition, loyalty with greed for power. The witches cannot destroy Macbeth directly, but they can tempt and torment him so that he ultimately destroys himself. It is perhaps not inappropriate, therefore, that just before the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo, the First Witch should intone at lines 26-27:

> Here I haue a Pilots Thumbe,
> Wrackt, as homeward he did come.

The stage has been set for the main drama. Before we leave this particular passage, we need to remember that winds are often linked with the pains of hell in Shakespeare. When Othello realises his crime in murdering Desdemona he exclaims:

> Blow me about in windes, roast me in Sulphure,
> Wash me in steepe-downe gulfes of Liquid fire. (5.2.286-87)

In *Measure for Measure* when Claudio is trying to get Isabella to save him from death, he refers to what we might expect in the other life including

> To be imprison'd in the viewlesse windes
> And blowne with restlesse violence round about
> The pendant world: (3.1.124-26),

though his list of possible torments contains fiery floods and thick-ribbed ice. It is clear that Shakespeare saw wind as one of the torments which humans faced in this world and the next. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the witches should use it as an instrument of punishment.

In considering these two passages, I have suggested that editors do not always explain what the lines in the play mean and certainly do not provide sufficient help for readers and translators to understand the text fully, because their interest in and knowledge of the language are incomplete. Most comments which they include are limited to the meaning of individual words. In more recent editions, this often means providing a reference to the OED or simply stating that the OED does not have an appropriate meaning. Even if the meanings given by editors are correct, they rarely comment on other possible meanings and never show how the word and its meaning fit in with the passage as a whole. Comments on syntax and pragmatics hardly ever appear, and even if they do they refer to Abbott's 1890 grammar as though that were sufficient. It may be useful in the rest of this paper to look at some points in language to highlight some difficulties which could be given more attention by editors and commentators.

Editors' views on the punctuation found in the Folio or the quartos are often patronising or dismissive, though this attitude is less marked than it was. Emendations to the Folio's punctuation are not always noted in the collations, for many think it is arbitrary. Braunmuller 1997, the most recent editor, tries to keep the Folio punctuation where he can, perhaps sometimes too much so, for he does not always explain how one is to understand it. And one has to accept that modern punctuation follows different principles from those in the early seventeenth century. I think it is right to start from the original punctuation, not because it is

Shakespeare's but because it is closer to Shakespeare than we are, although we must accept that modernising the spelling has implications for the original punctuation.

There are times when modern editors are too quick to disregard the punctuation in the Folio. At 3.1.42-45 the Folio reads:

> Let euery man be master of his time,
> Till seuen at Night, to make societie
> The sweeter welcome:
> We will keepe our selfe till Supper time alone:

Editors here assume that the final clause is closely related to the previous one and so replace the colon after *welcome* with a comma and insert a heavy stop after *Night*. Braunmuller 1997: 162 notes that the Folio 'is repunctuated because "it is solitude which gives a zest to society, not being master of one's time" (Clarendon, following Theobald)'. While one may agree with this sentiment, the implication of the text of everyone being master of his own time is that each will spend it as he wishes without being at the beck and call of others. For the nobles this period of doing what one wants to will make the communal activities of the evening more acceptable. In the Folio there is a sharp break before the final line which needs to be kept. It is only Macbeth who will keep himself to himself, and this syntactic break underlines that for his part he may not find having company as agreeable as the others will.

At 5.3.19-21 when the English army is closing in on Macbeth's castle and he has been told by a servant of their number, the Folio has him exclaim:

> Take thy face hence. *Seyton*, I am sick at hart,
> When I behold: *Seyton,* I say, this push
> Will cheere me euer, or dis-eate me now.

Modern editors follow in punctuating it in this way:

> MACBETH Take thy face hence! [*Exit Servant*] Seyton! - I am sick at heart,
> When I behold - Seyton, I say! - this push
> Will cheer me ever or disseat me now.

Here *When I behold* is taken as an incomplete sentence and *I say* is addressed to Seyton who is off-stage. But *behold* may here be understood to be an intransitive verb meaning 'look around' (OED *Behold v.* 8) and *I say* might introduce the following clause. The call to Seyton would then be the same in both instances. The sense would be: 'I am sick at heart when I look around. Seyton. I assert that this coming attack will either make or break me'. This interpretation helps to give more point to the passage, for it contrasts his anguish with his defiance more directly.

It is important to realise that punctuation has a direct impact on our understanding of syntax. Two types of example may illustrate this point. The first is the relation between punctuation and the occurrence of *and*. In Act 1 Scene 3 lines 13-14, I suggested that the comma found in the Folio at the end of line 13 should be changed into a full stop, because the First Witch is moving on to a rather

different topic at the beginning of line 14. This may appear strange to some because line 14 begins with *And* and that, as a co-ordinating conjunction, is usually thought to link what is following to what has just gone before. Hence editors often find it more acceptable to join sentences beginning with *And* to the previous one. But it is a word which can also be used as an adverb and its restriction to a merely co-ordinate function is something imposed upon it by the grammarians from the eighteenth-century onwards who introduced their views of correctness into the language.[5] But even today the word is used colloquially as an adverb usually with some kind of intensive function, as in a sentence like 'And he's ever so nice'. This usage is recognised by Franz1924 and Abbott 1890, but we need to go even further than they did. In 1.3.14 I suggested it acted with *very* as an intensive, and the meaning of *and* as 'indeed' reinforces *very* to indicate the figurative meaning of *Ports* here. There are many other examples of this use of *and* in *Macbeth*. Often it is used with another adverb or a conjunction. In dictionaries this use is not recognised and groups like *and if* or *and so* are simply glossed as 'if' and 'so'. Take for example 3.1.39-40 where Macbeth is wishing Banquo a safe journey, at the same time as he is plotting how to kill him and his son. Macbeth lets him go with

> I wish your Horses swift, and sure of foot:
> And so I doe commend you to their backs.

The colon at the end of the first line suggests a heavy stop. In the next one the *And so* and *doe* suggest a different tone for the line than mere politeness. The excess of politeness and the heavy emphasis reveal a deeper meaning and Macbeth's real attitude to their journey.

A good example of the use of *and* as a discourse marker rather than as a conjunction is provided at 3.4.100-103 where *and* has no grammatical function in the sentence and has been included for a different reason. The text here reads:

> Approach thou like the rugged Russian Beare,
> The arm'd Rhinoceros, or the th'Hircan Tiger,
> Take any shape but that, and my firme Nerues
> Shall neuer tremble.

In this passage the verbs *Approach* and *Take* are understood as implying a conditional sentence 'If you approach, ...if you take...' as so often with the inversion of subject and verb. Although in principle it might be possible to interpret these verbs as imperatives, that construction makes no sense in the passage. The meaning must be 'If you approach me in these shapes, my nerves would never give way' and in such a sentence *and* has no place grammatically, though one can understand how it is used to emphasise the strength of purpose he would show under those conditions as compared to the terror he feels when Banquo appears to him as a ghost. The *and* reinforces *firme* in the passage.

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[5] See Franz 1924: 590 and Abbott 1890: 95.

An example where the *And* follows a full stop in the Folio occurs at 4.1.147-148. Macbeth has been visiting the witches to find out what else might happen in future and he learns of the dangers posed by Macduff. He decides that actions must follow thoughts without any break, and so he says:

> And euen now
> To Crown my thoughts with Acts: be it thoght & done:

So he decides to kill Macduff and his people immediately. The use of *And* strengthens the sense of *euen now* to underline this decision.

At other places in the text *and* may not be in a separate sentence, though its meaning is still to be understood as adding emotional colour to the language. At 1.4.54-55 Duncan comments to Banquo on Macbeth's excellence by saying:

> True, worthy *Banquo*: he is full so valiant,
> And in his commendations, I am fed:

Once again *and* is used with other discourse markers, like *True* and *full so*. It emphasises what is coming rather than acting as a mere co-ordinator. So it might be more appropriate to have a heavy stop at the end of the first line to let *And* have the sense 'Indeed'. In the following scene (1.5) where Lady Macbeth is reading her husband's letter, it opens

> *They met me in the day of successe: and I haue learn'd by the perfect'st*
> *report, they haue more in them, then mortall knowledge.*

Once more we see *and* preceded by a colon and introducing a different thought from that which has gone before. The sense 'Indeed' seems once more to be the most appropriate here. In all these examples, editors might be well advised to think about the meaning of *and* and the implications it has for their punctuation. In many cases to let it follow a comma does not do justice to its force or its grammatical category.

The second is the relation between punctuation and causality. This is a difficult topic because causality may be implied even though it is not signalled through the punctuation. Once more this is an example where the use of conjunctions has been regulated by the grammarians from the eighteenth century onwards. In this case grammarians have encouraged us to make clear that causality is shown through the use of an appropriate conjunction such as *because, since* or *for*. But this regulation has had little impact on the colloquial language so that someone might shout 'Watch out; he's got a gun' rather than 'Watch out, because he's got a gun'. The causality is implied. It can be argued that this implication is not always clear so that some passages may be understood as two related clauses without causality. Two sentences like 'It's stopped raining. Let's go out.' might be taken as a statement and a wish which were not closely linked, though most hearers would probably interpret a close connection between the two. An example of the difficulty which can arise for the editor can be seen at 1.3.106-7 where Macbeth, on hearing news of his becoming Thane of Cawdor, says to Ross:

The *Thane* of Cawdor liues:

Why doe you dresse me in borrowed Robes?

Here most editors put a full stop after the Folio's *liues* with its colon. But the sense must surely be 'Since the Thane of Cawdor is still alive, why do you address me with his title?'. Many readers might not understand the close connection between these two clauses if editors use a full stop at the end of the first one.

An understanding of this relationship may help to clarify some passages which commentators have had difficulty explaining. At 1.4.44-46 Macbeth, as he is about to leave Duncan to advise his wife of Duncan's imminent arrival, says:

The Rest is Labor, which is not vs'd for you:
`Ile be my selfe the Herbenger, and make ioyfull
The hearing of my Wife, with your approach:

Braunmuller 1997:121 comments on these lines in this way: 'This involuted language conveys polite deference rather than any easily paraphrasable sense: Macbeth stresses that 'you' (Duncan, his importance and his favour to Macbeth) give meaning to whatever 'we' (Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and presumably their retainers) do, however others may judge our actions'. Braunmuller 1997 has a semi-colon at the end of the first line, and this is characteristic of many editions. The heavy stop makes the link between the two parts of the sentence less clear. There is a causal relationship between them. The sense is: 'Because any leisure not spent in serving you is like painful work, I will [keep myself fully occupied] by being the messenger to gladden my wife with the news that you are coming'. This interpretation not only makes sense without implying a convoluted apology, but it also indicates that the punctuation at the end of line 13 should be no more than a comma to make sure readers grasp the connection between the clauses.

Another example occurs at 3.4.117-118 during the banquet scene and the appearance of Banquo's ghost. At this point Lady Macbeth speaks to the guests and urges them not to pay too much attention to Macbeth's behaviour and not to excite him by questioning him.

I pray you speake not: he growes worse & worse
Question enrages him:

In these lines Braunmuller 1997 has a semi-colon after *not* and a full stop after *worse*. He has no direct comment on the meaning of the passage, though he offers a gloss for *Question* 'Questioning, interrogation' (Braunmuller 1997: 182). Muir 1951 also has heavy stops at these two places, as does Wells/Taylor 1986, but Brooke 1990 has a comma at the end of line 117. No editor comments on how these lines are to be understood. The heavy stops are not helpful to people trying to understand the meaning since there must be a close relationship among these clauses, which is mainly causal. The sense is: 'Please do not speak to him since he grows more and more angry when people question him'.

In one instance causality and the use of *and* are found together, and the *and* helps to create the intensity of emotion. When Lady Macduff is talking to her son in a nervously bantering way, she says to him:

> Sirra, your Fathers dead,
> And what will you do now? (4.2.30-31)

Most editors follow the Folio in having a comma after *dead,* though Muir 1951 has a colon. None of them suggest how the passage is to be understood or what the significance of the comma is. The sense has to be understood through the *And* acting as a discourse marker to emphasise the question, which depends upon the first clause in a causal manner. One can understand it like this: 'Young man, since your father is dead, what indeed are you going to do now [you are fatherless]?' Once again *and* reinforces an adverb like *now* in a clause.

Further features of the language of the play, which need some comment, include the heavy use of ellipsis. I have already suggested that the line 'And the very Ports they blow' contains the omission of a preposition before *the*, which could be *at*. Elsewhere in the witches' speeches there are many examples of ellipsis, though more often of a verb, especially a part of the verb 'to be'. In the opening scene the phrases *Where the place?* and *Vpon the Heath* are highly elliptical. Indeed, *Where the place* is unusual in that a sentence like 'Where is the place?' which might be thought to be the right expansion sounds forced in Modern English and unnatural even in Elizabethan English. Even an expansion like 'The place is upon the heath' is somewhat clumsy. These sentences are elliptical in a way which makes their expansion difficult to recognise. *There to meet with Macbeth* falls into the same pattern. We have also seen that in the final couplet of this scene, there is a problem with *Houer* which might be interpreted as a noun with the verb omitted. This omission, if it is one, leads to some ambiguity in the resulting sentence.

There are many other examples of ellipsis. In the second meeting of the witches, in a passage I did not consider before, we find:

> Wearie Seu'nights, nine times nine,
> Shall he dwindle, peake, and pine: (1.3.21-22).

Here one may understand the omission of a preposition like *for* or *during* in front of the *Wearie Seu'nights,* though omissions of this kind were not unusual. A similar ellipsis of preposition is found in *Listning their feare* (2.2.31), where a missing *to* is needed. Another interesting example is:

> Is execution done on *Cawdor*?
> Or not those in Commission yet return'd? (1.4.1-2)

Here modern editors put the *Or not* at the end of the first line and they replace that line's question mark with a comma. To arrange the text that way suggests a reading 'Is execution done on Cawdor or not? Have those on the commission returned yet?'

In Elizabethan times verbs of motion like *return* could take a part of the verb 'to be' in compound tenses and so the *Is* of the first sentence could be thought to extend to the second, though a plural would be more normal with *those*. In that case the sense would be 'Is execution done on Cawdor? Or are those of the Commission not yet returned?' Generally speaking, one can say that ellipsis is a

familiar feature of this play and so its occurrence in difficult passages may well be one solution that should be actively considered.

There are instances where editors insert or imply stage directions which have a particular implication for the pragmatics of the passage. At 1.4.33-43 Duncan is speaking first to Banquo and then to the assembled court. This speech ends without any break or stage direction in the Folio with the sentence:

> From hence to Envernes,
> And binde vs further to you. (1.4.42-43)

Here Braunmuller 1997 and Wells/Taylor 1986 insert the stage direction [*To Macbeth*], though other editors have nothing or simply a dash to suggest a change of addressee. Braunmuller 1997:121 justifies his insertion with 'Keighley is apparently the first editor to have realised that "you" (43) stipulated a change of those addressed'. But one may question whether this interpretation is justified. In the first place Duncan addresses Macbeth with *thou/thee* forms in this scene and consequently *you* is hardly likely to refer to Macbeth alone. Secondly, Duncan previously addresses 'you whose places are the nearest' [i.e. the nobles in the court] with the news that Malcolm will be Prince of Cumberland and there seems no reason why he should not wish to bind himself even more closely to these people in future. There is no need to think of a change of addressee here and even less to claim that the use of *you* justifies this assumed change of addressee. The editorial stage direction is unnecessary. Later, when Macbeth has left, Duncan addresses Banquo with the words:

> True, worthy *Banquo*: he is full so valiant, (1.4.54),

where the *he* refers to Macbeth. Braunmuller 1997:122 notes 'Duncan agrees with Banquo's (unheard) remark. Macbeth is just as brave ... as Banquo has said'. This indicates that Braunmuller 1997 believes *True* must introduce a response to some other remark and cannot be used to initiate a speech exchange. But *true* like *truly* is used adverbially with the sense 'indeed, in truth' to refer to what is to come and without any necessary antecedent. There is no need to assume that Banquo has made a statement praising Macbeth, and one should remember that the nobles do not usually initiate speech exchanges.

There is an interrelationship between pragmatics and punctuation as well. In this same scene Duncan announces that in future his son Malcolm will be Prince of Cumberland. This naturally sends a signal to Macbeth that he is further away from the throne than ever. The Folio here reads:

> The Prince of Cumberland: that is a step,
> On which I must fall downe, or else o're-leape (1.4.48-49)

and this is essentially what many editors have except for the omission of the comma after *step*. though some replace the colon with a dash. None comments on it. The Folio does not italicise this title either here or earlier in the scene. But it must surely be a title, for it is the creation of this position as signified by the title which distresses Macbeth. It would surely be better to have the title either in

inverted commas or italics and followed by a comma. It is not unusual in Shakespeare and Elizabethan English to find the subject (in this case *The Prince of Cumberland*) followed by a personal or demonstrative pronoun (in this case *that*). The punctuation should make the sense clearer to the reader.

There is the interesting question of what grammatical category a word may occupy in Shakespeare's text. This question was raised earlier in relation to the word *houer* in 1.1.11. This arises from the expansion of vocabulary through functional shift in this period before seventeenth and eighteenth century grammarians tried to restrict this exuberance of lexical invention. One line which has always caused editors a problem is *Shipwracking Stormes, and direfull Thunders:* (1.2.26) because the clause apparently has no main verb. Editors have responded either by inserting a verb like *break* at the end of the line or by assuming that a verb like *come* is understood from the following line. Either of these solutions is possible, but a third might be considered. The word *storm* usually occurs in the singular rather than the plural, and *thunder* frequently occurs as a verb. The nouns *storm* and *thunder* do not appear to be collocates for they rarely occur together in the same immediate sentence or clause. The common pattern of adjective + noun + *and* + adjective may apply here so that *Thunders* could be understood as a verb in the singular instead of the plural as not infrequently at this time. The sense would then be 'Shipwrecking and direful storms thunder'; or if one assumes that, because *storm* usually occurs in the singular, it was here originally a singular and the compositor set it as a plural because of *Thunders*, then the sense would then be 'A shipwrecking and direful storm thunders'. Either reading would both create the necessary verb and provide a more dynamic clause to echo the parallel *Discomfort swells*. A similar feature may be found in 1.4.33-34 which in the Folio reads:

My plenteous Ioyes,
Wanton in fulnesse, seeke to hide themselues.

Here *Wanton* is always understood to be an adjective, but perhaps it might be better thought of as a verb. It makes the *Ioyes* more dynamic and this action is more easily related to the verb *seeke*, which makes *Ioyes* have a personified feel. It was not unusual to omit the conjunction *and* when actions were listed in sequence.

In the second scene with the witches I commented on the line *Ile doe, Ile doe, and Ile doe* in the sense 'I will act'. In this connection it is worth noting how commonly *do* occurs in the play in the sense of 'to act, to commit murder'. I quote just a few examples of this verb, usually spoken by Macbeth or Lady Macbeth.

(a) If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twer well,
It were done quickly: (1.7.1-2)

(b) Why then 'tis time to doo't: (5.1.30-31)

(c) What's done, cannot be vndone. (5.1.57-58).

Of course, *doe* in 1.3.9 is spoken by the First Witch, but I would suggest that it may anticipate the frequent use of the verb in its various parts by Macbeth and

his wife later in the play. It provides a further gloss to the meaning of *doe* in the witch's mouth.

There are a number of other words whose connotations could be stressed. In describing the battle Ross notes that the Norwegian banners *fanne our people cold* (1.2.50). Editors do not comment on this expression. But the common meaning of *fan* at this time was 'to winnow' (OED *Fan v*. 1) and that has relevance for any battle. Equally, the sense of *cold* was often 'depressing, dispiriting' (OED *Cold a*. 9) and that may also be invoked here. A word which might need further looking at is *dis-eate* in the passage quoted earlier (5.3.21) in a different connection. This word is normally modernised as *disseat* 'to unseat', though many editors and lexicographers are somewhat unhappy with this reading. I wonder whether its context should not be given greater weight than it usually is. It is contrasted with *cheere*, which when glossed 'comfort, cheer, gladden' some think may refer to 'chair' as a pun with 'seat'. I would rather think that it is more concerned with good cheer and has the sense 'to feast' with good cheer (OED *Cheer v*. 5). This contrasts naturally with *dis-eate* with the meaning 'to gobble up entirely' (cf. OED *Dis- prefix* 5 with an intensive sense). The coming battle will either lead to Macbeth enjoying life to the full again or else it will lead to his being turned into food for the crows, as it were.

Other words which might need further comment are the phrasal verbs like *meet with* found in 1.1.8 and commented on above. Such verbs often have a subtle difference in meaning compared with the simple verbs on which they are based. When Lady Macbeth says to her husband *Onely looke vp cleare* (1.5.69), the verb *looke vp* means 'to have a cheerful expression, to look glad' (OED *Look, v*. 2) and so strengthens the meaning of *cleare*. At 1.7.79-80 when Macbeth says *I am settled, and bend vp Each corporall Agent*, Braunmuller 1997: 137 glosses *bend vp* as 'brace, tighten, prepare to act'. It might help readers if editors noted that this phrasal verb is used of making bow-strings taut for that underlines the nervous tautness which Macbeth has achieved at this point (OED *Bend v*. 3). It helps to prepare us for his actions in the murder scenes. At 5.3.50 Macbeth commands *Seyton, send out*, though editors have no gloss for this phrasal verb. It has the sense 'to proclaim' (OED *Send, v*. 30) and is usually transitive. It could be understood to mean 'Seyton, issue proclamations' and would be a sign of Macbeth's final defiance. Similarly at 5.5.1 he commands *Hang out our Banners on the outward walls*, but there is never any comment on *Hang out*. But this phrasal verb is used for hanging out signs, which are not always grand, such as urinals and bedding (OED *Hang v*. 26b), and it may be slightly illusory in its defiance because his banners may be equated with these other signs. At 5.9.2 Siward notes that *Some must go off*, where Braunmuller 1997: 236 glosses *go off* as 'die'. The gloss is accurate as far as it goes, though *go off* usually embodies the sense of suddenness, and here the sense is 'be killed' rather than just 'die' (OED *Go v*. 83).

In this paper I have tried to emphasise how much there is still yet to discover about Shakespeare's meaning. Unfortunately modern editions focus too much on the plays' theatrical and cultural background and insufficiently on the language and

its meaning. Until editors pay more attention to the language, readers and translators of Shakespeare will continue to find much of the text puzzling or incomprehensible. Indeed, it is a feature of the Spanish translation I have considered how the translators rely heavily on English editions and rarely make their own proposals as to how the text should be edited and understood, although they are Shakespearian scholars. The translation varies from the 'established' text only when the translators fail to make much sense of what they find in the English edition they are using. Both translators and editors deserve more help from editors of such series as the ones I have considered than they currently receive.

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