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Shakespeare and Warwickshire Dialect

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Abstract

The article investigates whether Shakespeare used Warwickshire, Cotswold or Midlands dialect, focusing on the sources of recent claims by Bate, Kathman and Wood, most of which derive from early dialect dictionaries compiled by 18th and 19th century antiquarians. It determines that all of these claims – frequently used as a defence against the Shakespeare authorship question – fall into four categories: those based on errors of fact, well-known or widely-used words, poetic inventions, and those derived through circular reasoning. Two problems are identified. Firstly, the source texts on which these dialect claims rest were written two- to three-hundred years after the plays, by which time language-use would not only have evolved, but would have been influenced by Shakespeare. Secondly, the continuing academic taboo surrounding the authorship question has meant that these claims, though easily refuted by searching the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the digitized texts of *Early English Books Online*, have gone unchallenged in academia. It demonstrates that querying the validity of arguments derived from an assumed biography can — without in any way disproving that the man from Stratford wrote the body of works we call 'Shakespeare' — lead to a better understanding of the way Shakespeare actually used language, and the meanings he intended.

Key words: Authorship, Biography, Dialect, Shakespeare, Warwickshire
Short Title: Shakespeare and Warwickshire Dialect

1. *Introduction: collaboration, biography and authorship*

When Shakespeare scholars address each other on the subject of authorship, they tend to do so entirely within the framework of the first of the words in the subheading of this special issue: collaboration. From the early work of F.G. Fleay and John Dover Wilson, through Brian Vickers' *Shakespeare: Co-Author* (2002), to the most recent work of McDonald P Jackson and Gary Taylor, the interest is focused upon detecting those parts of the Shakespeare canon which may have been contributed by Middleton, Peele, Fletcher or Wilkins, and whether (and with whom) Shakespeare wrote any part of the Shakespeare apocrypha. These are the internal debates, and they are undoubtedly interesting and valid.

When Shakespeare scholars address the wider world on the subject of authorship, however, it is usually in the context of the Shakespeare authorship question. Until recently these forays were both rare and brief. James Shapiro, whose *Contested Will* (2010) was the first book-length treatment by a professional scholar, explains why: the authorship question remains 'virtually taboo', being the 'one subject walled off from serious study by Shakespeare scholars' (Shapiro 2010, 4). In 2013, this taboo appeared to have been broken with CUP's publication of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt,* the first book published by an academic publisher intended to defend the traditional authorship.[1] Yet the fact that serious study of the authorship question

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[1] Though it is not the first book by an academic publisher to address the authorship question. It is preceded in that

remains a taboo is illustrated by the volume's failure to engage with contemporary research on the issue. At no point did *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* address any 21st century arguments: those forwarded in Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, William Leahy's *Shakespeare and His Authors*, nor the work of Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky, for example (Stritmatter & Kositsky 2007), or myself (Barber 2010). Instead, two chapters were devoted to Delia Bacon, whose book on the authorship question was published in 1857. Chapters such as Carol Chillington Rutter's, which demonstrates that the author of the Shakespeare canon possessed a formal education, or Barbara Everett's, which argues the self-evident proposition that drama is a form of fiction, demonstrate a palpable failure to understand the question that *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* is supposed to address.

A key to both the origin and the continued rise of the authorship question is the third word of this issue's subtitle: biography. Shakespeare doubt was forged in the apparent paucity of biographical material linking the assumed author to his works: according to Price's comparative study of twenty-five Elizabethan and Jacobean writers, the traditional attribution is 'unsupported by the sort of personal literary documentation found for any of his lesser contemporaries' (Price 2001, 150). Shakespeare scholars who engage with the authorship question not only argue that the gaps in Shakespeare's historical record are unexceptional (Edmondson & Wells 2013, 63-72); they argue that biographical links between Shakespeare and his works do in fact exist.

Whereas the internal debate on authorship (centred on collaboration) is critiqued by fellow scholars, the external debate on authorship (centered on biography) is not subjected to the same scrutiny. These arguments are made in an area of research so taboo that they are essentially voiced in an academic vacuum, being peer-reviewed by scholars disinclined to argue against them. However, it is dangerous for orthodox Shakespearean scholars to lean upon arguments that can be easily collapsed, and it is in the spirit of eliminating weaker arguments from the debate that this article is written. Such an argument is the linkage of Shakespeare's works to the traditional author's biography through the claim that Shakespeare's plays contain some two dozen words derived from Warwickshire, Cotswolds or Midlands dialect.

In a lexicon of some 31,500 different words, two dozen is a trifling fraction of a percentage. Nevertheless much has been made of these words by scholars who wish to tie William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon more closely to the works attributed to him. A differentiation must be made here between writing in dialect, and using dialect-derived words. G.L. Brook noted that '[w]hen Shakespeare uses dialect in his plays, he does not use that of his native Warwickshire but is content with the conventional stage Southern dialect' (Brook 1976, 177) and N.F. Blake made similar observations on the absence of dialect in Shakespeare's works, but followed them up by saying that 'Shakespeare used many words from his own Warwickshire dialect in his plays without any implication that they suggested rusticity or lack of sophistication' (Blake 1981, 81). He includes many of these words, noting their possible Warwickshire links, in *Shakespeare's Non-Standard English: A Dictionary of His Informal Language* (Blake 2004). The consensus view that Shakespeare used dialect-derived words has not been seriously challenged.

Yet the general argument 'Shakespeare used words derived from Warwickshire dialect' is problematic from the outset. Firstly, we have no materials from the period when Shakespeare was writing which identify contemporary Warwickshire dialect. Secondly, the usual scholarly provisos relating to the unknown provenance of Shakespeare's printed texts cannot be suspended. This is especially important given that a number of the 'dialect' words appear only in a particular version of the play, and we do not know whether the word emanated from Shakespeare's pen, or from that of a co-author, editor or playhouse scribe; several appear to be errors. Thirdly, the range of Shakespeare's vocabulary in derivation (French, Italian, Spanish, Latin Greek) would suggest a very widely read author with exceptional recall.

Close scrutiny of the most recently repeated two dozen words and phrases argued to be derived from the author's local dialect reveals that they fall roughly into four categories: false claims, well-known or widely-used words, poetic inventions, and circular reasoning.

2. False Claims

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regard both by *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography* (Price 2001) and by *Shakespeare and His Authors* (Leahy 2010).

A fairly typical example of the way such words and phrases are used as ammunition against Shakespeare skeptics comes from two lines from a dirge in *Cymbeline*:

Golden lads and girls all must
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust. (4.2.263-4)[2]

As Jonathan Bate explains:

In Warwickshire vernacular dialect, a dandelion is a "golden lad" when in flower, a "chimney-sweeper" when ready to be blown to the wind. This is no lord's memory. It belongs to a local country boy in a Warwickshire field. (Nolen & Bate 2003, 123).

However, there is no record of 'golden lad' or 'chimney-sweeper' in *The Folk-lore of Shakespeare* (Thiselton-Dyer 1884), or *Plant-lore & Garden-craft of Shakespeare* (Ellacombe 1884). The *English Dialect Dictionary* (J. Wright 1898) and *The Englishman's Flora* (Grigson 1955) contain no entry for 'golden lad', and the latter reveals that 'chimney-sweeper' was the folk-name— in Warwickshire, Wiltshire, and Northamptonshire—for Ribwort: 'the black heads of *Plantago lanceolata*.'

   The source of the idea that these phrases are Warwickshire dialect for the two phases of the dandelion can be traced back to Hugh Kenner. In his 1971 study of Ezra Pound, he recounted the following tale: 'In the mid-20th century a visitor to Shakespeare's Warwickshire met a countryman blowing the grey head off a dandelion: "We call these golden boys chimney-sweepers when they go to seed"' (Kenner 1971, 122). Apparently the story came from Guy Davenport, a friend of Ezra Pound, who claimed to have heard it from the visitor himself, a William Arrowsmith. Kenner's third-hand anecdote has since been widely adopted and now appears in the notes of the RSC edition of *Cymbeline*. (Shakespeare, Bate, Rasmussen, & Sharpe 2011).

   Kenner's image relies upon the idea that a dandelion, gone to seed, looks like the brush used to clean chimneys, but the *OED* cites no examples of 'chimney-sweeper' meaning anything but a person who cleans chimneys. What's more, the brush to which Kenner's image alludes was not invented until 1805; chimney-sweeps of the Jacobean era used besoms with brushing ends constructed from holly stems.[3] Though this was pointed out as early as 1979, this appealing but fictitious idea has continued to gain traction (Brooks 1979, 597).

   The true roots of Kenner's story of Warwickshire dandelions were first revealed by Gillian Spraggs (2010). She noted that the idea appeared in Margaret Kennedy's prize-winning historical novel *Troy Chimneys* (1953), set in Regency England, where it was given to be Irish folklore from the character's mother:

She reminded me that our mother had her own names for many wild flowers - not the names common among the country people here. She must have learnt them from her Irish mother. We passed by Ribstone Pit which was full of the weeds which, round here, are called dandelions. Sukey remembered that our mother called them 'golden lads', and the seeds, which are here sometimes called dandelion clocks, she called 'chimney sweepers' on account of their likeness to the brushes which are used for that purpose (Kennedy 1953, 124-125).

Three years later in the novel *For All We Know* (1956), G.B. Stern picked up Kennedy's idea and rewrote its provenance, attributing it to an editor of a fictitious edition of *Cymbeline*:

A note at the end of her school edition had informed her that in Shakespeare's Warwickshire "golden lads and girls" were dandelions, called "chimney-sweepers" when they faded and lost their gold ; and knowing this lent the couplet an enchantment no longer marred by the uncouth image of men with sooty faces and long brushes (Stern 1956, 65).

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[2] Unless otherwise specified, all Shakespeare quotes and corresponding line numbers are from *The Oxford Shakespeare*, 2nd edition (Shakespeare, Wells, Taylor, Jowett and Montgomery 2005).
[3] This is shown in the engraving of famous sweep Mulled Sack opposite the title page of Harper 1908 It is also mentioned in a poem by L. Menton from *Money Masters All Things*, which says 'The Chimney-Sweeper… round about does trudge with's Poles and Holly' (1698, 93).

Having checked all the editions likely to have been used by a (fictional) schoolgirl of the period, Spraggs concluded that this footnote is an invention of Stern's. The novelist's source was Kennedy's earlier novel. Kenner's source, whether he knew it or not, was the fictional footnote in Stern's novel.[4] Kenner either invented the tale he told in *The Pound Era*, or it was invented by one of his sources, perhaps after reading Stern's novel. Botanist E. Nelson, who discovered that Shakespeare's 'golden lads' was first linked to dandelions in a letter to *The Nation and Athenaeum* in 1928, refers to the idea that these phrases were Warwickshire dialect for dandelion as 'a twentieth-century myth, perhaps even a hoax' (Nelson 2015, 2).

Shakespeare's supposed use of Warwickshire dialect is one of the many defences for the traditional attribution of Shakespeare's works. The list of Warwickshire dialect words found in the preface of *A Shakespeare Glossary* (Onions 1911, iv) was perhaps the starting point, since several of these words appear in the dialect lists of Michael Wood (2003) and David Kathman (2013). It is perhaps telling that claims for some of the words first listed by Onions in 1911 have been silently dropped, and that the entire list was dropped from the revised third edition of Onions' glossary revised by Robert Eagleson (Onions & Eagleson 1986). Perhaps also worth noting is that the linguist David Crystal makes no glossary of Warwickshire dialect alongside the glossaries of French, Italian and Spanish words included in Shakespeare's works (Crystal 2002). But do other claims of Warwickshire dialect stand up to scrutiny?

Michael Wood's assertion that Shakespeare used the names of 'Cotswold Apples ("redcoats" and "caraways")' appears to have no more basis than our first botanical example (Wood 2003, 17). There is no record for an apple called 'redcoat' in the National Fruit Collection catalogue[5] or Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*. Wood cannot mean the Redcoat Grieve, as this variety first arose in 1917. But this hardly matters, since the word 'redcoat' doesn't appear in the works of Shakespeare at all. Justice Shallow does mention the second apple: 'we will eat a last year's pippin of mine own grafting, with a dish of caraways' (*2 Henry IV*, 5.3.2-3) and in the same scene, Davy offers Bardolph 'a dish of leather-coats' (5.3.42), which may be what Wood has in mind. The *English Dialect Dictionary* has no entry for 'leather-coat' and the *OED* defines 'leather-coat' as 'a name for russet apples, from the roughness of their skin', giving the Shakespeare quote as the earliest source. The source for the Cotswold dialect claim is *Shakspere: His Birth-place and its Neighbourhood*, which says 'Davy serves Justice Shallow with "leathern-coats," or leatheran coats as they are now called, an apple peculiar to the neighbourhood of Stratford. A very old tree of this species was standing, till recently, at Weston Sands, from which other young trees have been raised' (Wise 1861, 98). He says it is 'sometimes to be met with in the more southern counties, under the forms of "leather-jacket," "buff-coat," and "russetine" ' (99). It is not true that russet apples were only called 'leather-coats' in the Stratford area. Samuel Purchas, raised in Thaxted, Essex, and educated at Cambridge, had no known connection to Stratford. Yet in the sixth book of *Purchas his Pilgrimes: The Fourth Part* (1625), Purchas wrote of a fruit grown in Puerto Rico, 'the colour of a very darke russitting apple, or a leather-coat, of the bignesse of a great Costard' (Purchas 1625, 1172). That leather-coats were an apple peculiar to Stratford is one of a number of false statements made by Wise, as will become apparent.

Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* states that 'carraway' was used as an apple name around the Bath area of Somerset, not the Cotswolds; but the *EDD* is not a source contemporaneous with Shakespeare's works in any case. According to the National Fruit Collection catalogue, 'carraway' is another name for the French apple Fenouillet Gris, first described (at least to the archivist's knowledge) in 1608. Perhaps the author of this scene in *2 Henry IV* had encountered this apple a few years earlier, but it wouldn't link him to the Cotswolds. Again, it is Wise who is the source of the claim, having written of 'the carraway-russet, an apple still well known, both in the midland and southern counties, for its flavour and its good keeping qualities'(Wise 1861, 99). At least he recognizes that this apple is known, by the time he is writing, across most of England.

According to Wood, Shakespeare mentions 'Red Lammas', which he describes as 'the wheat sown in Gloucestershire at the end of August' (Wood 2003, 17). This is incorrect: Justice Shallow uses the term 'red wheat', not 'Red Lammas' (*2 Henry IV*, 5.1.13). More importantly, there is nothing to reinforce Wood's claim that red wheat was particular to Gloucestershire. A search of *Early English Books Online* reveals that 'red wheat' appeared in the following printed source prior to the publication of *2 Henry IV*:

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[4] That the route is reasonably direct is suggested by the shared phrase 'Shakespeare's Warwickshire'.
[5] http://www.nationalfruitcollection.org.uk/search.php accessed 10 April 2014.

- Sir Thomas Eliot, *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Eliot, Knight* (London, 1538)
- Sir Anthony (or John) Fitzherbert, *The Book of Husbandry* (London, 1523)
- Edward VI, *Proclamations as have been set forth by the King's Majesty* (London, 1551)
- Roger Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitful, Godly, and Learned* (London, 1557)
- Conrad Heresbach, *Four Books of Husbandry* (London, 1577)
- Rembert Dodoens, *A New Herbal, or History of Plants* (London, 1578)
- Thomas Newton, *Approved Medicines and Cordial Receipts* (London, 1580)
- Anglicus Bartholomaeus, *Batman upon Bartholome his Book* (London, 1582)

In *The English Husbandman* (1613), Gervase Markham (born in Nottinghamshire, probably educated at Cambridge, and living in London from 1593) refers to 'Organe Wheat (in the south parts called red Wheat)' (Markham 1613, B3v). These publications suggest that the phrase used by Shakespeare, 'red wheat', was well-known in London and throughout the south of England.

Another false claim is the claim that Shakespeare used the word 'twit' to mean 'blab' (Wood 2003, 18), which was Cotswolds dialect, according to the *EDD*. In the *Henry VI* plays Shakespeare uses the verb 'twit' three times. In *1 Henry VI*, Lord Talbot says:

Becomes it thee to taunt his valiant age
And twit with cowardice a man half dead? (3.5.14-15)

In *2 Henry VI*, the Earl of Suffolk says:

Hath he not twit our sovereign lady here
With ignominious words, though clerkly couch'd,
As if she had suborned some to swear
False allegations to o'erthrow his state? (3.1.178-81)

In *3 Henry VI*, the Duke of Clarence says 'And there's for twitting me with perjury' (5.5.40). Additionally, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus says:

When I protest true loyalty to her,
She twits me with my falsehood to my friend; (4.2.7-8)

From reading these quotations, it is clear that *twit* cannot be substituted with 'blab'. Shakespeare is using *twit* in the sense of '1.a. trans. To blame, find fault with, censure, reproach, upbraid (a person), esp. in a light or annoying way; to cast an imputation upon; to taunt.' (*OED*). Indeed, the quote from *2 Henry VI* is given as an example under this entry. This is not marked as dialect but a word in general use from about 1530. According to the *OED*, it was used by Gabriel Harvey in a letter of 1573. Gabriel Harvey was not from the Cotswolds; he was a southerner, living in Saffron Walden, Cambridge, and London. The *EDD* shows the use of this first sense of 'twit' ('to tease') to be common in Scotland, Cumbria, West Yorkshire, Lancashire and Sussex. Only the second sense ('to blab') was common in Warwickshire (and also Northamptonshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire) (J. Wright 1898, 6:288).[6] In other words, Shakespeare used the verb twit in its *non*-Warwickshire form.

More perplexing is Wood's statement that in the village of Compton Abdale in the 1930s 'one seventy-five year-old farmer still used 'on a line' for in a rage' (Wood 2003, 18). The phrase 'on a line' does not appear anywhere in the Shakespeare canon. It transpires Wood is referring to the seventh entry for 'line' in C.T. Onions' *A Shakespeare Glossary*, where Onions concludes that 'your husband is in his old lines again' (*MWW* 4.2.17) and 'His pettish lunes' (*Troilus and Cressida* 2.3.129)[7] – both printed as 'lines' in the 1623 Folio - are using 'lines' to mean 'fits of temper', postulating that this usage is 'perhaps to be connected with the

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[6] 'TWIT Sc. Cum. Yks. Lan. Nhp. War. Glo. Oxf. Hnt. e.An, Sus. 1.v To tease; to sneer at. (Sc. Cum. w.Yks. Lan. Sus.) 2. To repeat confidences; to tell tales; to blab. (Nhp. War. Glo. Oxf)'

[7] Both are sometimes given as 'lunes' by modern editors, though they were printed as 'lines' in the 1623 Folio.

mod[ern] Warwickshire 'on a line' = in a rage' (Onions 1975, 130). Onions' speculative suggestion is undoubtedly based on the fact that he believes the author of these lines to hail from Warwickshire, so for Wood to obliquely refer to it as evidence of the author's Warwickshire roots is circular reasoning. But how can we be certain that Shakespeare even wrote the word 'lines' into these speeches, which only appeared in this form in the posthumously edited First Folio? The 1609 quarto text of *Troilus and Cressida* reads not 'His pettish lines', but 'His course, and time', and 'lines' is also absent from the 1602 and 1619 quartos of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which both used 'vaine': 'your husband is in his old vaine againe'.

Even where claims for Shakespeare's use of Warwickshire dialect are not entirely spurious, they are built on unreliable foundations. The chief difficulty is that the sources on which Wood and other scholars rest their claims are not contemporaneous with the texts under consideration. If words used in Shakespeare's plays were being spoken in Warwickshire in the 1930s, that does not mean that they were spoken there in the 1600s, or if they were, that they were specifically local dialect. G.L. Brook, giving the examples of the now exclusively Northern 'lass', observes that words and phrases we now think of as dialect have effectively been preserved in certain localities, but were nevertheless once widely used (Brook 1976, 179).

The earliest of the sources for Warwickshire dialect claims, Francis Grose's *A Provincial Glossary* (1790), was compiled two centuries after the first Shakespeare plays were written. Four other works to which scholars are presumably referring (but generally without citation) are 'A Glossary of Words still used in Warwickshire to be found in Shakspere' in John Richard de Capel Wise's *Shakspere: his birthplace and its neighbourhood* (1861), R.W. Huntley's *A Glossary of the Cotswold Dialect* (1868), G.F. Northall's *A Warwickshire Word Book* (1896) and Joseph Wright's 6-volume *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898). These works are even further removed from the author's lifetime. One problem with using them as evidence, as we shall see, is the pervasive nature of Shakespeare's influence. Barring Francis Grose, all these of these authors and editors show a clear awareness of Shakespeare's works, and there is evidence that some words were included as Cotswolds or Warwickshire dialect *because* of their use by Shakespeare (and the general belief that he was from the locale). Additionally, these works do not even claim to list words peculiar to the Midlands. If a word was used in Warwickshire, but was not peculiar to Warwickshire, it is of limited usefulness as evidence of the author's home county. With the advent of searchable digitized texts, words designated as Cotswold dialect by these amateur compilers and antiquarians can now be shown to be widely used.

3. *Well-Known or Widely-Used*

The majority of Warwickshire dialect claims fall into this category: the well-known word. 'Mazzard', for the head, is used in both *Hamlet* and *Othello*. In the fight that will cost him his reputation, Cassio exclaims 'Let me go, sir, / Or I'll knock you o'er the maz[z]ard' (2.3.147). In the graveyard scene, Hamlet says a skull is 'now my lady Worm's, chapless, and knock'd about the maz[z]ard with a sexton's spade' (5.1.87). Wood tells us that 'As late as the 1930s in the Cotswolds, you could still hear Shakespeare's 'mazzard' for 'head' (Wood 2003, 18).[8] Even if that were true (and the basis for this statement is not clear), 'mazzard' was never confined to the Cotswolds. A search of *EEBO* reveals that 'mazzard' (for 'head') was used by the following playwrights of Shakespeare's era:

- Anthony Munday, *The first book of Primaleon of Greece* (1595)
- Thomas Middleton, *The Black Book* (1604)
- Nathan Field, *A Woman Is a Weather-Cock* (1612)
- Francis Beaumont, *Philaster* (1620).

The earliest of these publications, Anthony Munday's, precedes the presumed composition dates of both *Hamlet* and *Othello*. There is no reason to believe his usage derives from a familiarity with Cotswolds dialect. Munday was born in London and, barring a sojourn in Rome, appears to have lived there for most of his life. 'Mazzard' is given as a variety of cherry in the *OED* and in Grose's *Provincial Glossary*. It would be fair to say

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[8] Although Wood's immediate source is not clear, the earliest source text which claims 'mazzard' as Cotswold dialect is Huntley (1868), 50.

that 'mazzard' to mean head could be characterized as general sixteenth-century slang. It cannot be used as evidence that an author hailed from the Cotswolds.

In *Anthony and Cleopatra*, the Egyptian queen's flight from the battle of Actium is described as follows:

Yon riband-red nag of Egypt,—
Whom leprosy o'ertake!—i'th' midst o'th' fight—
When vantage like a pair of twins appeared,
Both as the same, or rather ours the elder—
The breeze upon her, like a cow in June,
Hoists sails and flies. (3.10.10-15)

Explicitly using this example as an authorship question defence, Wood states that

'Breeze here has nothing to do with wind; it is an Anglo-Saxon word that was still used in Midlands dialect in Tudor times. It refers to the gadflies that, in summer, trouble cows, who all at once lift their tails high in the air and stampede away. That's the kind of knowledge you don't get at Oxbridge, or in a rich man's house' (Wood 2003, 18).

Wood has been misled by either Wise or Huntley, who both list 'breeze' as local dialect. Contrary to his statement, the *OED* reveals that this Old English word for the gadfly was used by Edmund Spenser (who did indeed have an Oxbridge education), in his *Faerie Queen* (1596): 'As doth a Steare…With his long taile the bryzes brush away'. The *OED* also reveals the word was used by Chaucer: ''I wol me venge on loue as doþe a breese On wylde horsse.' If the author of *Anthony and Cleopatra* were not familiar with Spenser and Chaucer (which seems unlikely) this does at least demonstrate that one did not have to be a native of the Midlands to know the word. A search of *EEBO* reveals that 'breeze' for 'gadfly' also occurs in London-born John Webster's *The White Divel* (1612)—'I will put breeze in his tail, set him gadding presently'—and Richard Perceval's *A Dictionary in Spanish and English* (1599) where he defines the Spanish word Moscárda as 'a breeze, a gadbee, a horse flie'. It is therefore safe to conclude that 'breeze' was not Midlands dialect, but was in fact well-known. It is also untrue that 'Breeze here has nothing to do with wind'; by the end of the sixteenth century the modern usage of the term 'breeze' had been introduced, according to the *OED*, in publications by Richard Haklyut (1589) and Sir Walter Raleigh (1596). The playwright, describing sea-faring vessels, is clearly punning on both uses.

Words not well-known in themselves, but used in a well-known text, similarly cannot be attributed to the author's use of local dialect, even if the word originally arose in the Midlands. The 'hade land' of the 1600 quarto of *2 Henry IV* (5.1.12) is said by Wood to be a phrase peculiar to Midlands dialect, describing 'the turn at the top of a furrow made by a plough team' (Wood 2003, 17).[9] The *OED* defines 'hade' as 'a strip of land left unploughed as a boundary line and means of access between two ploughed portions of a field' and gives its earliest printed occurrence as Sir Anthony Fitzherbert's *The Book of Husbandry* (1523; sometimes attributed to his brother John). Neither Onions, Grose, Wise, Huntley or Northall mention 'hade land' and Wood's claim is probably based on the fact that the Fitzherbert family seat was at Norbury, Derbyshire, in the Midlands. But the book had become a classic of English agriculture before the end of the sixteenth century, widely read for its wit and wisdom, as well as its prose style. Published in at least twenty editions before 1598, the book gained 'a substantial, steady, even an avid readership' (Hellinga 1999, 491). There's no reason why the author of *2 Henry IV* might not have read *The Book of Husbandry*, as he clearly read numerous other printed sources of all kinds. But in any case, the word intended may have been 'headland', the First Folio version popular with most editors. It makes little sense for Robert Shallow to instruct his servant Davy to 'sow the hade land with wheat', when hade land is a strip of land deliberately left unploughed.

The word 'ballow', which featured in Onions' list, is another case where the word is in dispute. In *King Lear* (4.5.230-232), Edgar says: 'Nay, come not near th'old man. Keep out, che vor'ye, or I s' try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder'.[10] David Kathman states that 'ballow' (for cudgel) is a dialect word 'from

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[9] Wells and Taylor, like many modern editors, have corrected 'hade land' to headland; the word Wood argues is a Midlands dialect word is 'hade land' only in *The Second Part of Henrie the Fourth* (1600, I3r).

[10] Wells and Taylor have 'baton'); 'ballow' is found in other editions including *The Tragedy of King Lear* (Shakespeare and Halio 1992), from which this version of the text, and line number references, are taken.

Warwickshire and the West Midlands' (2013, 129). The *OED*, however declares 'ballow' (only in the Folio text) is 'probably a misprint from baton', pointing out that the word in Quarto versions of the play reads 'battero' (which the *OED*'s editors also regard as spurious). This points to the difficulty of knowing how the texts have been transmitted to us, and whether 'ballow' was the word originally written by Shakespeare, or inserted by someone else (for example, the printer or editor of the *First Folio*). The *EDD*, however, does include an entry for 'ballow' meaning 'cudgel, stick or pole' and gives an example of its use in Nottingham legal records that pre-dates King Lear: 'John Bult Sherriff's Seargeant at Mace sues Thomas Hewett cobbler for assulting him with a staff beaked with iron called "a ballowe staff" - Not. Rec (1504)' (J. Wright 1898, 1:145). It gives the word's usage as being in the North Country, Nottingham and Kent.

Another word that Wood tells us could be heard in the Cotswolds '[a]s late as the 1930s' was the word 'orts', which Shakespeare uses to mean the leftovers of food in *The Rape of Lucrece, Julius Caesar* and *Troilus and Cressida*. As with other words Wood lists under this sentence construction, the use of 'orts' in the Cotswolds does not argue for it being a Warwickshire word. The *OED* does not mark 'orts' as dialect, but as a word in general use from around 1300. A contemporaneous use listed in the *OED* is Thomas Bastard's *Chrestoleros* (1598). Bastard was not from the Cotswolds; he was born in Blandford, Dorset, and attended Winchester College and Oxford University. The *EDD* confirms the universal usage of the word in describing 'ort' as 'leavings of any description… especially of food' is 'in gen[eral] dial[ect] use in Sc[otland], Irel[and], Eng[land} and Am[erica]' (J. Wright 1898, 4:360).

'Kecksies', which Wood claims in a similar manner as 'a word still known in Warwickshire' has similarly wide usage. It is one of the weeds listed by the Duke of Burgundy in the Folio version of *Henry V*: 'hateful docks, rough thistles, keksyes, burs' (5.2.52). The *OED* defines 'kecksy' as a hollow plant stem, the word derived from *keck*: 'any of the large Umbelliferæ, or their hollow stems', giving examples of cow parsnip and wild angelica. *Henry V* is given as the first use of 'kecksy' in print. 'Kecksy' is certainly a dialect word, but not unique to Warwickshire or even to the Midlands. 'Keck' appears to have come into the language via the Vikings (whose incursions covered most of the country), from the Old Norse word 'kjot'. It is listed as an Isle of Wight word in *The Salamanca Corpus: A Dictionary of the Isle of Wight Dialect* (Long 1886): 'A dry stalk of hemlock or cow-parsley, sometimes pronounced "kecksy;" also, wild plums or sloes. "'Tes as dry as kex, you."' It is listed as Wiltshire dialect in *The Beauties of Wiltshire* (Britton 1825): 'Kecks, Kecksy, the dry stalks of hemlock … "as dry as kecks" is a common phrase'. The *EDD* confirms that 'kecks' is 'in general dialectical use in England' listing dozens of counties including Yorkshire, Shropshire and Essex. Of variants it notes 'kexy' in Somerset, 'kexes' in Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Surrrey and Dorset and 'kiskey' in Cornwall. The *Warwickshire Word-Book* lists 'keck' and 'kex', quoting *Henry V* and an old ballad collected by Bishop Percy called 'The Tournament of Tottenham' (Northall 1896). Tottenham is in London. Given the variation in spelling in Shakespeare's texts (and in the era more generally), Warwickshire's claim to 'kecksies' looks weak.

Troilus and Cressida's 'pash' (meaning smash), which featured in Onions' list and which David Kathman claims is a dialect word 'from Warwickshire and the West Midlands', is even more widely used (Kathman 2013, 129).[11] The *OED* lists earlier uses of this word by John Fox (1570) and Thomas Heywood (1602), neither of whom hailed from the Midlands. A search of *EEBO* gives numerous examples of 'pash' to mean 'smash' including two translations of Seneca's tragedies (1566, 1581), a translation of Homer's *Iliad* by Arthur Hall (1581), Richard Mulcaster's *Elementarie* (1582), a translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* by Richard Stanyhurst (1582), two works by Robert Greene (1584, 1585), Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* (1590), Thomas Nashe's *Strange News* (1592) and *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), and many others.

Kathman makes the same claim for 'potch' (meaning 'poke'), used in *Coriolanus*. His source, perhaps via the list compiled by Onions, is probably Francis Grose's *A Provincial Glossary* which lists 'POTCH. To poke or push suddenly. Glouc.' (Grose 1790, G3V) and a similar definition is found in Huntley 1869. Northall 1896 contains this definition too, illustrated by quotations not only from *Coriolanus* but from Joshua Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (1611). Sylvester was a poet raised in Kent and Southampton with no connection to the Midlands, suggesting that 'potch' was widely used. The *OED* confirms this, offering Shakespeare's specific example as a variant spelling of the verb 'poach'— 'To shove, poke, thrust'— and gives several earlier examples of this verb usage (1528, 1536, 1542, 1602, 1608), again, not confined to the Midlands. This demonstrates that

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[11] Kathman is probably following Wise and Northall. It is given as Cotwolds/Warwickshire dialect in both Wise's *Shakspere* and Northall's *Warwickshire Word Book*, though Wise (who has heard it in use) seems confused about the definition.

Grose's *Glossary,* though the earliest source, is not necessarily reliable; it is neither thoroughly researched or comprehensive, rather being something of a gentleman's curiosity. Though the *EDD* is too late a source to be relied upon for sixteenth- and early seventeenth- century dialect, it lists 'potch' only as North Yorkshire dialect for the verb 'throw' and catalogues Shakespeare's example, as in the *OED*, under *poach*, giving this word as 'in general dialect use in Scotland and England'.

'Tarre' for 'provoke'—as used in *Hamlet, King John*, and *Troilus and Cressida*—is another of the Onions/Kathman words that is not specifically Warwickshire dialect. The *OED* lists the word as derived from Old English, arising around 900AD. Earlier uses than Shakespeare's include *Wycliff's Bible* (1382) and *Three 15th Century Chronicles* by William Camden (1561). The *EDD* lists the word as having wide dialect usage 300 years later, in places including Ireland, Worcestershire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Surrey. The Shakespeare line from *King John* is quoted, but the word is not listed as being used in Warwickshire.

The dialect word 'geck' (meaning fool), used in both *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline*, is also sometimes claimed for the West Midlands (perhaps beginning with Onions), though its first recorded use according to the *OED* was by Alexander Barclay, who is believed to have been Scottish. According to the *EDD*, 'geck' as a verb was widely used in Scotland, and elsewhere. Northall's *A Warwickshire Word-Book* (1896) makes no mention of the word. The *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898) records the use of the noun in Yorkshire, Cornwall, Staffordshire, Leicestershire; the latter two presumably being responsible for the 'West Midlands' tag. However, a search of *EEBO* reveals it appeared in *A Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1584) by Clement Robinson; a book that has 'long interested scholars… [b]ecause of Shakespeare's familiarity with it' (Robinson & Rollins 1924, v). Ophelia alludes to the first poem of the collection when she says 'There's Rosemary, that's for remembrance' (4.5.175). The word 'geck' appears in a poem facing 'A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie' and since the source is familiar to the author, there is little need to argue he heard it anywhere else.

The Taming of the Shrew's 'plash' (meaning 'pool'), claimed by Wood to be Cotswold dialect (seemingly following Huntley), is another widely used word. Arising in Middle English around 1425, the *OED* says it is a word from Middle English and classifies it as 'Eng[lish] regional (chiefly north. and north midl[ands) in later use'. 'In later use' — which likely means the nineteenth and twentieth century rather than the sixteenth — indicates that it survived longer in the north of England and north midlands, not that it originated there. This is confirmed by the *OED*'s own citations: uses of 'plash' contemporaneous with Shakespeare's in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* (1595) and Francis Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning* (1605). 'Plash' was therefore in general use by writers in the sixteenth century, and is not evidence that the writer hailed from the Cotswolds.

Nor is the use of the adjective 'pleached' for 'entwined', as used in *Anthony and Cleopatra, Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Lover's Complaint*. Though it certainly derived from the practice of 'pleaching' (laying hedges) and though '[a]s late as the 1930s in the Cotswolds…. farming people still used 'pleaching' or 'plushing' [sic] for laying a hedge' (Wood 2003, 18) this does not constitute evidence that the author hailed from the area. Though Shakespeare invented the adjective 'pleached', the verb from which it was derived*, *'pleaching', is listed by the *OED* as a word originating c.1400 from Middle English via Anglo-Norman and old French. Fitzherbert's *The Book of Husbandry* (1523) mentions both 'pleaching' and 'plashing' as interchangeable forms of the verb. Though Shakespeare clearly preferred 'pleaching' to 'plashing', the latter form of the verb was published in books including at least one identified by scholars as a major Shakespeare source, *The Second Volume of Chronicles* (1586) by Raphael Holinshed. It was also used in *The Eight Books of Caius Julius Caesar* (1565), translated from Latin by Arthur Golding. Once a word has been published in such widely read books as Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandry*, an author's use of it is not evidence that, as Wood argues, their 'forebears were of farming stock' (2003, 18), let alone that they were raised in a specific county. Similarly, though farming people in the Cotswolds might use reeds for thatch (in the early twentieth century or indeed in the sixteenth), so did people all across the country. So when Ariel in *The Tempest* uses 'eaves of reeds' in a simile, it tells us nothing about the author's place of birth or even social status; an author would not need to be of farming stock, as Wood implies, to know that thatched roofs were made of reeds.

4. *Poetic Inventions*

Some words claimed as Warwickshire dialect fall, on closer inspection, into the category of poetic inventions. Such, I would argue, is the word 'gallow' (Kathman 2013, 129). In *King Lear*, the Earl of Kent says:

Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night
Love not such nights as these. The wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark
And make them keep their caves. (3.2.42-45)[12]

'Gallow' here means 'terrify', and Kathman claims that its use in this manner is a dialect usage 'from Warwickshire and the West Midlands' (2013, 129). Though he does not cite a source, the word appears both in Onions' list and in Huntley's *A Glossary of the Cotswold Dialect* (1868).

Huntley (1868) is a key source of many of the claims that Shakespeare used local dialect; it includes kecksies, lush, mazzard, plash, pleach, potch and many others. Richard Wilbur Huntley was, according to the title page, 'of Boxwell Court, Gloucestershire; formerly fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford; Rector of Boxwell and Leighterton, and Vicar of Alberbury'. The full title of his book was *A Glossary of the Cotswold (Gloucestershire) Dialect*, *Illustrated By Examples from Ancient Authors*; and herein lies the problem. The 'ancient authors' he quotes include Samuel Butler, John Donne, John Dryden, John Ford, Ben Jonson, John Milton, Sir Walter Scott, and Edmund Spenser; none having any significant connections with the Cotswolds. In essence he proves that many of these words are used not only in the Cotswolds, but by writers across England and beyond. Under 'kex'*,* for example, he quotes not only from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, but also from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Coxcomb*. His list of 'Cotswold words' includes words that might barely be considered dialect at all: anneal, beholden, cleave, clout, heft, smack, snuggle, and sliver, all employing their primary *OED* definitions.

But one of the writers he quotes most frequently is Shakespeare. From the introduction onwards, Huntley is constantly referencing Shakespeare. Having been swayed by an argument that Shakespeare may have stayed in Dursley during his 'lost years', Huntley is clearly keen to illustrate Shakespeare's connection to Gloucestershire. He quotes Shakespeare whenever he can to illustrate usage of the words he includes, but this is no more proof that Shakespeare used Gloucestershire dialect than that Edmund Spenser or John Milton did.

Huntley defines 'gallow' as 'to alarm, to frighten', quoting its use in *King Lear* and suggesting a derivation from the Saxon word *agaelan*. But a search of the Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon dictionary defines *agaelan* as 'To hinder, occupy, detain, delay, neglect'[13] making it unlikely that 'gallow' was derived from this word. Huntley has merely ascertained the meaning from its context in *Lear*. So is this a case of genuine Cotswolds dialect?

The word is at least rare. There is no entry for 'gallow' in the *EDD*, and no entry for 'gallow' as 'terrify' in the *OED*. However, 'gallow' for 'terrify' appears in *A learned and very eloquent treatise* (1568) by John Fenn, a translation (out of Latin) of the public letter of Bishop Jeronimo Osorio to Walter Haddon. The Osorio-Haddon controversy (1563-83) began with Osorio's 1563 argument for Queen Elizabeth to return to Catholicism, and was therefore, unsurprisingly, a somewhat high profile affair (Ryan 1953). John Fenn was born in Somerset, attended Winchester College and New College, Oxford, subsequently becoming master of the grammar school at Bury St Edmunds (Harris 2004). When Elizabeth ascended the throne, he was removed from his post for his beliefs, and fled to Flanders, where he became a Catholic priest. Osorio, whom he translated, had a commanding reputation as a Latin stylist. The following extract from Fenn's translation of Osorio's book-length letter to Haddon uses 'gallow' to mean 'terrify'.

And as we reade in Euripedes, that Venus tooke great displesure, bicause she was despised of Hippolitus, and therfore deuised craftily, to sende certaine monstruous seacalues out of the sea, to gallowe his chariot horses by the whiche traine Hippolitus was for the onlie loue of chastitie, torne al in peeces and cruelly slaine (Fenn 1568, 82).

Here is the Latin original:

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[12] This is based on the Folio text. The 1608 Quarto breaks the iambic pentameter and adds unhelpful punctuation, but the word is still there: 'The wrathfull Skies gallow, the very wanderer of the / Darke, and makes them keepe their caues.'
[13] Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online, http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/001174, accessed 25 Feb 2015.

Ut enim Venus apud Euripidem molestissime tulit, se ab Hippolyto contemni, & ideo fraudes concinnauit, quibus tandem Hipploytus phocis immissis, & equis perterritis dilaceratus, propter studium castitatis interiret (Osorio 1567, F.46, G42v).

The word Fenn has translated to 'gallow' is *perterritis*. The verb *perterreo* translates as 'frighten or terrify thoroughly'. It seems that Osorio's Latin skills obliged Fenn to be creative in order to create the feeling of the original text, and a poetic use of 'gallow' was the result. Shakespeare may have read John Fenn's translation of Osorio and adopted his use of 'gallow' for 'terrify'. Or he may have independently arrived at the poetic use of 'gallow' as a metonym for 'terrify'. Whatever the reason for Shakespeare's use, there is no basis for the statement that 'gallow' is Warwickshire dialect. It appears to be poetry.

A similar conclusion can be drawn in the case of 'honey-stalks', which was claimed to be Warwickshire dialect for clover in the nineteenth century by Wise, in the twentieth by Onions, and recently by Kathman (2013, 129). Closer analysis reveals that this word was coined by Shakespeare and that it does not have the meaning commonly assumed. In *Titus Andronicus*, Tamora says:

I will enchant the old Andronicus
With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous,
Than baits to fish, or honey-stalks to sheep,
When as the one is wounded with the bait,
The other rotted with delicious feed. (4.4.89-93)

According to the *OED* – and confirmed by a search of digitized works on *EEBO* – Shakespeare is the only writer to use the phrase 'honey-stalks' to mean 'clover blossom'. So how was this meaning derived? Bruce Thomas Boehrer has traced its origin to Samuel Johnson's 1765 edition of Shakespeare's plays, where Johnson provides the gloss 'Honey-stalks are clover flowers, which contain a sweet juice. It is common for cattle to overcharge themselves with clover, and so die' (Shakespeare & Johnson 1765, 7:55 n.59). This has been accepted by both the *OED* and Shakespeare's subsequent editors, though Johnson's contemporary, John Monck Mason, objected:

Clover has the effect that Johnson mentions, on black cattle but not on sheep. Besides, these honey-stalks, whatever they may be, are described as rotting the sheep, not as bursting them, whereas clover is the wholesomest food you can give them (Mason 1785, 306).

Boehrer's research into English husbandry manuals of the period reveals that the suspected cause of sheep-rot in Shakespeare's era was the eating of grass laden with a type of dew known then as 'honeydew'. As he puts it, 'honey-stalks' is 'a convenient nonce formulation referring to any vegetation laden with honeydew and therefore noxious to sheep' (Boehrer 2010, 177/178). He proves his case through sixteenth- and seventeenth-century animal husbandry manuals. Edward Topsell, in *The History of Four-Footed Beasts*, specifically states that if sheep eat vegetation that is damp with the type of dew known to the English as honey-dew, 'it is poison unto them and they die therefore' (1607, 611). Gabriel Plattes, in *A Discovery of Infinite Treasure* (1639), states that 'some are of the opinion that Honey-dews cause' sheep to become 'rotten' (Plattes 1639, 70). But clover, according to Shakespeare contemporary Gervase Markham was considered 'most wholesome for sheep' (Markham 1613, 79).

Shakespeare's use of 'nonce compounds' has been noted in other instances (Jonson 2013, 40). That Shakespeare is the only writer to use the phrase 'honey-stalks' is a strong argument for its being his own invention. Its appearance at the end of the nineteenth century in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* as a name for 'the blossoms of white clover', and its designation as Warwickshire dialect, thus stems entirely from its use in *Titus Andronicus*, Samuel Johnson's (mistaken) gloss, and the general presumption that the author hailed from Warwickshire. To refer to the *EDD* as proof that the word is Warwickshire dialect constitutes circular reasoning. 'Honey-stalks' was simply a poetic adaption of existing vocabulary.

The same is true, I would argue, for the peculiar adjective 'unwappered'. In *Two Noble Kinsmen* (5.6.9-11), by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, Palamon says:

… we come toward the gods
Young and unwappered, not halting under crimes
Many and stale …[14]

'Unwappered' (for 'unfatigued', or fresh) is said to be a dialect word 'from Warwickshire and the West Midlands' (Kathman 2013, 129). The only use of 'unwappered' given in the *OED* is Shakespeare's. The first use of *wappered* (fatigued) is also from this same Shakespeare quote (the positive form of the adjective being implied). I am of the opinion (as many other scholars have suggested) that 'wappered' (not 'wappened') is also the word intended in *Timon of Athens*: 'This is it [gold] / That makes the wappered widow wed again' (4.3.38-39).[15] A search of *EEBO* confirms that Shakespeare was the only person in 250 years to use the word '[un]wappered'. The editors of Shakespeare, and of Beaumont and Fletcher (for *Two Noble Kinsmen* was originally published as theirs) struggled with possible meanings of 'wappened'/ 'wappered' through the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, suggesting 'stale' (1785), 'sorrowful or frightened' (1799-1802) and 'weakened or worn' (1825). But it was given as 'fatigued' in Grose's *Provincial Glossary* (1790) and as 'fatigued, beaten' in Huntley's *Glossary* (1868).

It is possible Huntley derived his meaning for Shakespeare's 'wappered' just as the editors of scholarly editions did: by educated guess. Alternatively, he may have been aware of Grose's definition, and added 'beaten' to it from other words he lists: 'wap' (to beat) and 'wapper' (a whip), both of them derived, it seems, from Old Norse *wapen* (weapon). But on the basis of his inclusion of so many words that were widely used, and his leaning so heavily on quotes from Shakespeare among many other writers, Huntley's glossary is not a reliable source for identifying any word as Cotswolds dialect. *A Warwickshire Word-Book* (1896) by G.F. Northall, a somewhat more reliable work—Northall tells us he has personally heard in use all but a dozen— does not feature 'wappered' or 'unwappered'. Indeed, it features barely any of the 'Shakespeare dialect' words in the earlier Huntley, suggesting even more strongly that Huntley included those words because they were in Shakespeare's plays, not because they were generally spoken.

Huntley's work, however, was influential. A thirty-year-old cricketer, Joseph Gibbs, wrote a celebration of his adopted home of Bibury, *A Cotswold Village*, drawing upon Huntley's glossary, which he says 'gives no less than fifty-eight passages from the works of Shakespeare, in which the words and phrases peculiar to the district are made use of' (Gibbs 1898, 249).[16] London-born Gibbs, educated at Eton and Oxford, became the squire of Ablington Manor in Gloucestershire, 40 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. In a chapter called 'The Cotswolds Three Hundred Years Ago' he imagines a fictional scenario whereby Shakespeare finds himself staying overnight in Bibury; a clunky twenty-seven pages of footnoted fiction leaning heavily on quotes from the plays[17] and 'knowledge' gleaned from Huntley, and full of cod-Elizabethan dialogue:

"I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire; these high wild hills and rough, uneven ways draw out our miles and make them wearisome. How far is it to Stratford?"
"Marry, 'tis nigh on forty mile, I warrant. Thou'll not see Stratford to-night, sir; thy horse is wappered out, and that I plainly see." (Gibbs 1898, 258)

In the footnotes for this passage, Gibbs acknowledges the *Richard II* quote, and states 'Wappered = tired. A Cotswold word.' It is clear he has this information from Huntley, for two pages later he marks 'shard', another of Huntley's words, as 'A Cotswold word = breach.' Gibbs is an incomer, and simply accepts Huntley as the authority. Note, however, that Gibbs has expanded the word's compass. By adding 'out' he has dropped the sense of 'beaten' and cannot mean 'fatigued' (an adjective which cannot accommodate 'out'), but rather 'tired', making 'wappered' the past participle of the verb 'wapper'.

Though Shakespeare invented the adjective '[un]wappered', the verb 'wapper' was already in existence. The *OED* gives two definitions for the verb 'wapper':
    1. To blink the eyes.

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[14] The original published text says 'Young, and unwapper'd not, halting under Crimes / many and stale'. Moving the comma (the standard emendation) makes more sense, as it removes the double negative.
[15] The Folio text has 'wappen'd'.
[16] He wrongly attributes Huntley's book to another local writer, John Henry Blunt, author of *Dursley and its Neighbourhood*.
[17] Example: 'I know a hawk from a handsaw, or my name's not William Shakespeare', 264.

2. To be tired *out*.

The second of these definitions rests entirely on Gibbs' use of the word (which is given as its only example); a word invented by Gibbs after reading Huntley. However, the first *OED* definition, related to blinking or shaking, was in common use in the period. The *OED* gives its first example from *Mirror for Magistrates* (1575): 'and wappering turnid up his white of eye'. 'Wapper' is frequently but not always connected to eyes: 'I…changed my shape into a litle wapper-eid Constable, to winke and blinke at small faults' says Thomas Middleton's *Blacke Booke'* (1604). Robert Armin describes a 'wapper eye' in *A Nest of Ninnies* (1608). James Mabbe's translation of *The Rogue* describes an old woman as 'toothlesse, chap-falne, hollow-eyed, and wappering withall (1622). Very likely derived from the Dutch *wapperen*—to swing, oscilatte or waver—it seems to be associated with tremulousness in the body, or in the eyes, with blinking.

This makes sense of Francis Grose's 1787 definition of 'wapper'd' *as* 'Restless, or fatigued. Spoken of a sick person. Glouc[estershire].' At first sight, 'restless' and 'fatigued' seem contradictory, but both might be suggested by trembling. We have no source for this definition; Grose himself was not from the area, but was widely travelled and with many contacts. We cannot rule out the possibility that he is correct. On the other hand, he had listed 'potch' with the same designation, 'Glouc.', when it was widely used. We should also bear in mind that the plays had at this point been in the public domain for close to two hundred years, and it is likely that many readers, like the editors, had puzzled over the meaning of 'wappered' and come to their own conclusions, perhaps even adopting the word with their presumed meaning. Grose's definition works adequately for *Timon*'s widow (who may well be tired) and can be stretched to work for Palamon and his friends (though why 'unfatigued' rather than 'fresh' or another positive alternative is puzzling).

But is this correct? Is it not more likely that Shakespeare coined the adjective 'wappered' from the verb 'wapper'? If 'wappering' was blinking when applied to the eyes, trembling or shaking when applied to the body, 'wappered' might be the equivalent of 'shaken'. This definition seems a better fit, both for the shaken widow, and the unshaken warriors. Since we have no record of anyone using 'wappered' before Shakespeare, or after him (except most like *because* of him, as with Huntley's glossary) its categorisation as Warwickshire dialect, as opposed to a Shakespeare neologism, is at best unproven.

5. *Circular Reasoning*

Circular reasoning creates a fourth category of dialect claims. When scholars rely on these late eighteenth-and nineteenth-century sources to support their claim for Shakespeare's Warwickshire dialect, circularity is clearly a danger. As 'honey-stalks' demonstrates, some words are in the *EDD* as Warwickshire dialect because they were used by Shakespeare. Another example of this is 'slobbery', which Michael Wood lists (mistakenly) as 'slobberly (for sloppy)'. The word is spoken by *Henry V*'s Duke of Bourbon in the Folio version of the text:

… but I will sell my Dukedome,
To buy a slobbry and a durtie Farme
In that nooke-shotten Ile of Albion.· (3.5.12-14)[18]

The Warwickshire use listed (among numerous other counties) in the *English Dialect Dictionary* has been derived, it seems, solely on the basis that the word is used by Shakespeare (and the assumption that the author hails from Warwickshire). The source of information listed under 'War.' is Wise's *Shakspere*. After quoting *Henry V*, Wise he tells us 'that "slobberly" or "slobbery" is to this day applied to the wet, dirty, Warwickshire by-roads' (Wise 1861, 109). That may be so, but only because Warwickshire residents of the mid-19th century spoke English. *Slobbery* is not marked as dialect in the *OED*; it is a word in general use, derived from the word 'slobber', with the first recorded usage of 1398: 'An olde hounde is ofte slowe and slobery.' To lean on Wise (via the *EDD*) as proof that Shakespeare used Warwickshire dialect constitutes circular reasoning.

The same seems to be true with 'mobbled'. The following exchange occurs in the Q2 (1603) edition of Hamlet when the player is reciting a speech on Priam's slaughter (2.2.505-7):

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[18] In the 1600 Quarto, the lines read: Ile sell my Dukedome for a foggy farme / In that short nooke Ile of England'.

1st PLAYER: 'But who O who had seen the mobled queen-'
CORAMBIS: Mobled Queene is good, faith very good.

In the First Folio (1623), which inserts a questioning line from Hamlet, the word is 'inobled':

1st PLAYER: 'But who, O who had seen the inobled queen-'
HAMLET: 'The inobled queen?'
POLONIUS: That's good; 'inobled queen' is good.

Kathman states that 'mobbled' (for muffled) is a dialect word 'from Warwickshire and the West Midlands' (Kathman 2013, 129). In truth we can't even be sure what word was intended. The word in Q2 is 'mobled' not 'mobbled', though modern editors tend to choose the latter. 'Mobbled' is an understandable modernisation of spelling which aligns it clearly with its modern definition of 'muffled', but which in doing so obscures the probable root of the word, which may have been 'noble' (as the First Folio correction would suggest). The First Folio's 'inobled' has been defended by several editors as meaning either 'enobled' or 'ignobled'; the spelling preserving the ambiguity (Shakespeare, Thompson, & Taylor 2006).[19] But as Dover Wilson noted, the Folio *Hamlet* is rife with transcription errors, particularly minim errors, such as the kind that transforms 'm' into 'in' (Dover Wilson 1934, 44).[20]

        The origin of the words 'moble' and 'mobled' is this exchange in the 1603 edition of *Hamlet*. The *OED* defines 'mobled' as 'Of a person; muffled, wrapped'; the first recorded use is Shakespeare's. Etymology: 'unknown origin'. The related verb, 'moble' (unknown origin) is defined as 'To muffle (a person, or the head, face etc.)'. Its first recorded use was in a play, *Gentlemen of Venice* by J. Shirley (1655). It is likely this playwright knew 'mobled' from a quarto edition of *Hamlet*, and had deduced the meaning 'wrapped up' from its context; the subsequent section of text reveals that the queen, roused from sleep by the attack, has grabbed a blanket to cover herself. A search of *EEBO* finds no other instances of the word 'moble', 'mobled', 'mobble' or 'mobbled' (other than those that mean mobile or are misprints for noble) before 1670. In his 1765 edition of Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson said it meant 'huddled, grossly covered'. He was clearly guessing from context, as he was with 'honey-stalks'. The *OED* specifically states that the word is '*Now* English regional (Midlands)'; though now adopted as regional dialect it did not arise as such. It is not listed as local dialect in Northall (1896), Wise (1861), Grose (1790) or Huntley (1868). The *EDD* entry was published three hundred years after Q2 *Hamlet* and quotes the Shakespeare line in its definition (J. Wright 1898, 4:139). There is no evidence the word existed in any form before 1603.

        What follows is speculative, but would explain the changes seen in this passage between Q2 and the Folio text. Let's imagine that 'mobled' was a misprint for the intended 'inobled' in the Q2 text. The printer's error in Q2 then inspired a revision of the original text: Hamlet's querying of the phrase, 'The mobled queen?' was inserted. 'Mobled' became Shakespeare's joke at the ignorance of the First Player, Polonius, and anyone else who would take a printer's error for a real word. The text would then read:

1st PLAYER: 'But who O who had seen the mobled queen-'
HAMLET: 'The mobled queen?'
POLONIUS: That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

This is a wittier exchange than when the word is 'inobled'. The editors of First Folio, recognizing 'mobled' for what it originally was, a typographical error, and missing Shakespeare's joke, changed the word back to 'inobled'. But 'mobled', in the far cleaner Q2 text, was out there.[21] By this method, a word which began as a misprint might find its way into both the *OED* and the *EDD*, and by the latter route, via circular reasoning,

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[19] Thompson and Taylor (Shakespeare 2006, 251) write: '*inobled* This unique word, repeated three times in F, is defended by Capell and Paul (who notes its use in Edwin Booth's second and third acting editions) as meaning "made noble", but by MacDonald as meaning "ignobled" or degraded; we preserve F's spelling so as to retain this ambiguity. Q8, perhaps edited for Thomas Betterton for John Dryden, alters the Q6/7 reading "mobled" to "innobled" among its scattering of F readings (see Thompson, 'Ward', 141-2). Most editors, including Oxf and Hibbard, dismiss it as an error, preferring Q2's "mobled".'
[20] Dover Wilson calls 'inobled' a misprint (73).
[21] '[T]he textual imperfections of the F1 version are "gross as a mountain, open, palpable"; Dover Wilson 1934, 42.

might be claimed as Warwickshire dialect. With an unknown etymology, Shakespeare as the originator, and no reliable contemporaneous source for corroboration, no such claim can be upheld.

Another possibly mistaken word is 'batlet'. In *As You Like It*, Touchstone says

I remember when I was in love I broke my sword upon a stone and bid him take that for coming a-night to Jane Smile, and I remember the kissing of her batlet and the Cow's dugs that her pretty chopped hands had milked… (2.4.42-47)

The First Folio (the earliest known text for *As You Like It*) has 'batler' though modern editors tend to change this to the Second Folio's 'batlet', which Kathman states is a dialect word 'from Warwickshire and the West Midlands'. The wooden implement for beating laundry was more commonly known by other names. A 1683 text says 'the common people … call [it] a Clapper or Bat-staff' (Pettus 1683). A search of *EEBO* gives 'batting staff' in two dictionaries dated 1668 and 1677. *A Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English* gives *batler, batlet, battling-staff, batstaff, batting-staff* as 'The instrument with which washers beat their coarse clothes' (T. Wright 1904, 1:75). 'Batler' and 'batlet' (for laundry paddle) appear to originate with Shakespeare; his is the earliest example of 'batler' in the *OED* and other usages in both the *OED* and *EDD* refer to this scene in *As You Like It*. The *EDD* entry for 'batlet' gives its usage as 'Yorkshire, also Warwickshire' with the additional comment: '[Obs[olete]? Not known to our correspondents in War[wickshire]]' (J. Wright 1898, 1:186). Wise's 1861 *Shakspere* is cited for the Warwickshire usage. Wise, having listed 'honey-stalks', 'kecks' and 'breeze', can hardly be considered a reliable source, and the word is most unlikely to have become obsolete in the thirty years between the two volumes. The idea that this might be Warwickshire dialect, therefore, is very likely derived only from its usage by Shakespeare (as with 'slobbery', 'honey-stalks' and 'mobbled').

A similar situation appears to have arisen with 'lush' (Wood 2003, 18). In *The Tempest* Gonzalo exclaims 'How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!' (2.1.57). The *OED* gives Shakespeare's usage of 'lush' (for verdant, succulent, luxuriant in growth) as the first. Previously it most often meant soft and tender in the sense of 'weak'. The next usage of 'lush' in this Shakespeare's sense, at least noted by the *OED*, is by John Keats two hundred years later (1817). It is possible that Shakespeare intended the word to mean 'soft and tender' without the additional implication of 'weak', rather than the meaning it has since attained; language, after all, is constantly evolving. Arthur Golding uses it both in his translations of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (1567) and Julius Solinus' *Polyhistor* (1587) and the second of these would allow one to imagine 'lush' as having its modern (post-*Tempest*) meaning, although in fact it means soft and tender.[22] 'Lush' is not present in Northall 1896, Wise 1861 or Grose 1790. The dialectical use of 'lush' as given in Wright's *EDD* is not the same usage, being concerned with beating.[23] Wood's claim appears to derive from Huntley's *Cotswold Dialect,* which uses this quote from *The Tempest* in its definition of the word. On the basis of its inclusion of so many words that were widely used, and of leaning so heavily on quotes from Shakespeare among many other writers who were not from the area, Huntley's glossary is not a sound source for identifying any word as Cotswold dialect.

A similarly circular path is probable for Wood's claim for the phrase 'speak within door'. This is an instruction that Iago gives Emilia in *Othello*. 'Speak within door' (4.2.148) is not listed as dialect in Wright's *EDD*, in Northall (1896), Wise (1861), Grose (1790) or Huntley (1868). Wood tells us 'At the village of Compton Abdale at this time [the 1930s] one seventy-five-year-old farmer still used 'speak within door' for 'speaking softly'. The source of Wood's information is not supplied, but what is there to suggest that this elderly farmer was not, in fact, quoting Shakespeare? *Othello* is a widely-known play, as accessible to this farmer as to anyone else, and it is often the case that people adopt for their own speech particular lines of Shakespeare they enjoyed. Unless better evidence is forwarded, this would seem to be another case of circular reasoning.

6. *Conclusion*

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[22] 'The *Lygusticke* Sea bringeth foorth shrubbes, which so soone as they be in the déepes of the water, are lushe and almost like a grystle to touch. But as soone as they come aboue the water, by and by degenerating from theyr naturall sappe, they become stones.' from Cap VII: 'Of Italy and the prayse therof: and of many peculiar thinges that are founde therein'. (Golding 1587, Gr)

[23] 'LUSH - Wor. Hrf. Glo. Dev. - 1) A green bough for beating down wasps, or for bird-catching. 2) A twig for thatching. 3) To beat down with green boughs. Hence Lushing, a beating (Glo.)' – *EDD* III, 696.

In summary, not a single claim that Shakespeare used Warwickshire, Midlands or Cotswold dialect can be upheld. The claim for two related phrases, 'golden lads' and 'chimney-sweepers', arises from mid-twentieth-century fabrication. 'Redcoats', 'carraways', 'Red Lammas', 'twit', and 'on a line' are either not present in the Shakespeare canon or were not used in the sense claimed. Many of the words claimed as Cotswold dialect were widely used across the country: 'mazzard', 'breeze', 'hade-land', 'ballow', 'orts', 'keckies', 'pash', 'potch', 'tarre', 'geck', 'plash', 'pleaching' and 'reeds'. Two of these, 'hade-land' and 'ballow', may not be the words the author intended. The same is true of 'batlet', which along with 'slobbery', 'mobled', 'lush' and 'speak within door' appear to have been categorized as Warwickshire dialect via circular reasoning. 'Honey-stalks' is the author's poetic conflation; 'gallow' an instance of metonymy used elsewhere, and 'unwappered' adapted from an existing verb.

Modern scholars should be wary of relying upon dialect lists compiled by early antiquarians, who did not have access to a wide range of texts, used Shakespeare as a key source, and did not in any case claim that such words were not used elsewhere; Wise, for example, explicitly states 'I by no means wish to say that the following words are to be found nowhere but in Shakspere and in Warwickshire' (Wise 1861, 149). Searches of the *OED* and digitized texts on *EEBO* demonstrate that many words used in the Cotswolds could also be heard in other places — London, Bath, Yorkshire, the Isle of Wight — and read in the works of famous authors like Chaucer, Spenser and Bacon. The grammatical constructions used by Wood, in particular, suggests that he knows this. In other words, though much of this error originated with modern scholars relying upon the work of early antiquarians, it has been compounded by a strong need to defend against the Shakespeare authorship question.

What is important about Shakespeare's use (or not) of Warwickshire dialect is not so much the issue itself but its illustration of the effect of the authorship question remaining an academic taboo. These errors of etymology and reasoning in the argument for Shakespeare's use of Warwickshire dialect demonstrate the dangers of maintaining such a taboo. Since no professional Shakespeare scholar can safely query any defence of the orthodox position without risking their professional reputation, arguments supporting the traditional attribution go unchallenged. It also demonstrates that querying the validity of arguments derived from an assumed biography can — without in any way disproving that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare — lead to a better understanding of the way Shakespeare actually used language, and the meanings he intended.

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