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西野 博道¹⁾

Blooming English in Shakespeare's Time

Hiromichi Nishino

Abstract

This article is part of a series of “A History of the English Language” that I am writing for the Tokyo Future University Bulletin. This time, the subject is about Early Modern English (1500-1700), especially regarding Shakespeare's English. First, I will refer to the historical background of that time and give an overview about Early Modern English. Then, summarize the characteristics of Shakespeare's language. Also, I will interpret Shakespeare's message of his works, particularly about *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. Furthermore, I would like to ponder the matter of correlation between Shakespeare's English and present-day English. The English used here is American English, and the level of English is for students in general liberal arts courses at the university. This series, “A History of the English Language” is a record that I want many English learners to have, in order for them to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the historical, linguistic, political, and cultural background of English. In addition, I will mention the future of English, as an ideal form of the global language in the final article of this series.

Keywords : Early Modern English, Renaissance, Shakespeare, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet

Introduction

The Renaissance began in Italy in the 14th century. Suddenly, the revival of classics blossomed as if cutting the weir of a long sleep of art and science. Until then, classics in ancient Greece and Rome (Latin) had been held down for a long time by the Christian view of the

world. The Renaissance means “reproduction” or “revival” in French. But the meaning strongly suggests “human revival.” The main theme was to affirm humanity, that is, humanism. Renaissance humanism was a bold, powerful one, as exemplified by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), who was interested in all elements of humans. Unlike subsequent humanism, Renaissance people

1) 西野 博道 東京未来大学こども心理学部非常勤講師 (Tokyo Future University)

did not focus on human weakness. Italians got out of the pressure of the Christian worldview in the Middle Ages, and they welcomed this sense as a detonator of European civilization. Eventually, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) who was born in Pisa, Italy, appeared. Galileo excelled in mathematics, physics, and astronomy. And also, with a telescope he discovered sunspots, Jupiter's four moons, and Saturn's rings. As a scientist, Galileo argued for Copernicus's heliocentric theory, which caused the repression from the Roman Church. Later, he discovered the fallen law, which led to Newton's law of universal gravitation. The famous "Experiment of the Leaning Tower of Pisa" is one of his experiments at that time. It is a strong human interest and scientific spirit that characterizes Europeans since the 16th century. After that, European countries were transitioning to modernized ones. Man changed his concern from "God" to "himself." People began to have a clear view of things, that is, a scientific spirit. In England, in the 14th century, influenced by European literature, Geoffrey Chaucer (1343?-1400) wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, which composition is the same as *Decameron* written by Boccaccio (1313-1375). Chaucer introduced many interesting English characters, and Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) wrote *Utopia*. Then, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) published many philosophical books, saying "knowledge is power." And then, the playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) appeared like a brilliant star in the dark sky, becoming a representative of the Renaissance in England. Shakespeare has had a profound influence on the world of theater and literature. No great writer exceeding Shakespeare has come out afterwards. In the history of the English language, his English belongs to Early Modern English (EModE).

However, it remains an enduring influence on the subsequent history of English for the future of the global language we are heading for.

EModE Vocabulary

It is worth noting that new words have flowed from the world with the advent of the Age of Discovery (mid-15th to mid-17th). Portuguese and Spaniards began to seek the unknown world and they explored Africa and Asia. Christopher Columbus (1451?-1506) was the first European who landed in America in 1491. After that, English, French, and Dutch explorers stretched out their fingers to North America. Sir Francis Drake (1543?-1596) was the first Englishman (in fact he was Welsh-British) to sail all over the world. Until the 17th century, about 30,000 words came into English from many foreign languages to describe new ideas and concepts. They were also words associated with many new techniques and inventions. It is said that around half of them are even used today. They came from Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Mexican, African, Turkish, Persian, Arabic and also from Japanese. For example, *appropriate*, *atmosphere*, *benefit*, *chaos*, *climax*, *crisis*, *emphasis*, *encyclopedia*, *enthusiasm*, *excursion*, *expensive*, *lunar*, *monopoly*, *relaxation*, *system*, *temperature*, *thermometer*, *virus* came from Latin and Greek. *Battery*, *colonel*, *detail*, *duel*, *entrance*, *grotesque*, *muscle*, *pioneer*, and *volunteer* came from French. *Balcony*, *carnival*, *design*, *lottery*, *opera*, *solo*, *replica*, *studio*, *piano*, and *volcano* from Italian, *tomato* from Mexican, *banana* from African, *coffee* and *kiosk* from Turkish, *caravan* from Persian, and *harem* from Arabic. *Katana*, *tatami*, and *shogun* came from Japanese. Later, Dutch (cruiser, yacht, easel, landscape, sketch) and German (cobalt,

zinc) also increased loanwords in English. After the 17th century, *raccoons*, *tomahawks*, and *totem* came from America. *Curry* and *jungle* came from India. Chinese *tea* (or *cha*) came from Hirado, Japan via the Dutch East India Company. English has thus taken in words from all over the world and enriched its vocabulary.

It is said that 60% of the loan-words that came in during EModE period are from Latin and Greek. The number of words is approximately 17,000, although there are various theories. Of course, after the fall of the ancient Roman Empire in 476, Latin became Romance languages (Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Romanian). Therefore, at that time, the classical language was no longer in use in their daily life. However, Latin or the words derived from Greek origin were still widely used such as in the fields of dogma, medicine, science, the humanities, and philosophy. In this process, English people didn't just import and borrow Latin, but they changed its spelling a bit. For example, *divide* originates from *diviere*, but loses ending *re*. On the other hand, the following phenomenon related to spelling also appeared. That is, because influenced by the spelling of Latin, the words, such as *det* or *receite* became *debt* and *receipt*, based on the etymological Latin spellings, *debitum* and *recepta*. This is one of the reasons why the unpronounced alphabet was spelled.

As Latin, the classical language, began to be used as an academic term since the 16th century, many scientists and scholars such as More and Bacon used Latin. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) also wrote most of his important papers and books in Latin. For example, the book, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* dealing with the law of universal gravitation was

published in Latin in 1687.ⁱ

It is worth noting that there are many words derived from Latin that we still use on a daily basis today. *Album*, *animal*, *barometer*, *bonus*, *camera*, *chemistry*, *curriculum*, *fiction*, *focus*, *genius*, *orchestra*, *peninsula*, *poem*, *species* are originally from Latin.

New words were also added to the English language in other ways. People in those days were adventurous with language, and they were free to start using verbs as nouns, or nouns as verbs, or made adjectives from nouns such as *shady* from the word *shade*. They started making new words by adding prefixes and suffixes, such as *forename*, *uncomfortable*, *straightness*, and *investment*. They made new compounds by putting two words together such as *chairman* and *Frenchwoman*. And the genius who coined many new words was, unmistakably, the great Shakespeare.

EModE Pronunciation

The most important pronunciation change during this period was the large variation in long vowels since the 15th century, which is called Great Vowel Shift. That is, for example, *find* was [fɪ:nd] in the Middle English (ME) period, but in the days of EModE it was pronounced like [fɛɪnd], and the pronunciation of the word, *divine* changed in the same way. The pronunciation of ME *see* [sé:] changed to [sí:] in EModE, and the words, like *feet* and *deep* changed as well. The pronunciation of ME *move* [mó:və] changed to [mú:v] when it came to EModE. *Cool*, *food*, *do*, *moon*, and *tooth* also changed from [o:] to [u:] as well. ME *stone* [stó:n] became [stó:n] (or [stóun]) in EModE, and *goat*, *home*, *oath*, *old*, and *note* also changed as well. The word, *child* was pronounced [tʃí:ld] in ME, but in the 17th century it became [tʃóild]

or [tʃáild], and it has been [tʃáild] since the 18th century, continuing to this day. The pronunciation of ME *hous* [hú:s] became [háus] in the 16th century, and it became *house* [háus] after the 18th century. Likewise, *about*, *now*, *down*, and *ground* have changed that way. ME *name* [ná:mə] turned into [næ:mə], [né:m], and [né:m] during EModE, and then changed to [néim] during Late Modern English (LModE) period; likewise, *fame*, *hate*, *take*, *shame*, *table*, etc. that way. The pronunciation-change from [a] to [æ] was completed by the end of the 16th century.

Another vowel change is that some long vowels were shortened. For example, *head*, *sweat*, *breath*, etc. were pronounced [e:] in ME, but in the 16th century they pronounced [e]. It became a short note. The words such as *good*, *foot*, *look*, etc. were also pronounced [o:] and [u:] in ME. In the 17th century, their pronunciations changed, and were shortened to [u].

There was also a change in the pronunciation of consonants, and [s] such as *dessért* and *posséss* became [z] as a voiced consonant. In ME, [k] and [w] such as *knight* and *write* were pronounced, but they disappeared in the 17th century.

The great change in pronunciation during this period is probably related to the development of printing technology and the fixation of spelling. Since William Caxton (1422?-1491) established a printing house in Westminster, London in 1476 and started publishing, his successors, such as Wynkyn de Worde (-1534), Richard Pynson (1449-1529), and John Lettou (-1483), published numerous printed publications. Then, John Tate (1473?-1507?) built a paper mill at Hertfordshire to support publishers in London. It was the first paper mill in England, and the demand for books in London dramatically increased. The expanding

printing business not only popularized the English vocabulary, but also stabilized its pronunciation. It is also worth mentioning that *Authorized* King James Version of the Bible was published in 1611.

EModE Grammar

Old English was an inflection-dependent language (synthetic language), close to modern German. Middle English was a word order and preposition dependent language (analytic language). Since the Norman Conquest (1066-1074), Normans brought a large amount of French into English, simplifying word-endings and replacing its role with word order and using prepositions to express the meaning of the sentence. By the 17th century, English had become almost identical to modern English. Still, there were various small differences and characteristics, if we compare EmodE to present-day English. In the following, the characteristics of EmodE will be described in bullet points.

First, second-person pronouns consisted of not only *you* (nominative case), *your* (possessive case), *you* (objective case), *yours* (possessive pronoun), and *yourself* (reflexive pronoun) but also *thou* (nominative case), *thy* (possessive case), *thee* (objective case), *thine* (possessive pronoun), and *thyself* (reflexive pronoun). *Thou* was singular and *ye* or *you* were plural, and they were used in conversations between ordinary persons. If the person who spoke the word *thou* was of a high status, he or she used this only when the conversation partner was very close to each other. Or a person of noble status used *thou* against those below him or her. *You* (*ye*) was not only plural but also singular, and it was also used by upper-class people. Or used by everyone as a polite and clever way of saying, or a way

of saying *you (ye)* to a superior person. This is because of the influence of the French language: the French second-person had two expressions, friendly and honorific. After the Norman Conquest, ordinary people (Anglo-Saxons) began to use the honorific word, *you (ye)*, for the Normans of the upper classes, and the Anglo-Saxon people used the friendly word, *thou*, one another. Using *thou* and *you (ye)* often changed according to context. For example, Shakespeare used *you* for the first time when the characters started conversation. Then, *you* became *thou* when they got close. One turned to the other due to a change of heart. A father used *thou* when talking to his son, and the son used *you* against his father. A wife used *thou* to her husband, but sometimes it could be *you*. *Ye* was originally the nominative of the second person plural pronoun “gē” used in Old English (OE). And it was a remnant of the accusative “ēow.” By the middle of the 16th century, *you* was more commonly used than *ye*.

As for the *be* verb, if the subject was *thou* the *be* verb was *art* in the present tense, and *wast* or *wert* in the past tense.

Since ME, the second-person singular was suffixed with *(e)st* to the end of the word. For example, “Thou *singest*.” Third-person singular endings were suffixed with *(e)th* or *(e)s*. The former, *(e)th* was Southern English since OE. For example, “He *singeth*.” The latter, *(e)s* was a dialect of the northern and west-central regions. But rhyming and literary expressions used mainly the former, and colloquial expressions tended to use the latter. Now, the latter style remains. By the 17th century, “I *singe*” became “I *sing*,” “Thou *singest*” became “Thou *sing*,” and “We *singen*” became “We *sing*.”

As for relative pronouns, *who* and *which* that

came into use around the 16th century, had no distinction in usage until the 18th century. So, whether the antecedent was a person (organism) or a thing (inanimate object), they could use both *who* and *which*. They said, “He is my father which art ...” However, in Shakespeare’s case, when the antecedent of *who* was animal or inanimate, the word was often anthropomorphized. Also, when the antecedent of *which* was a person, it often referred to occupation, which is the same as modern usage.

As for using *do*, in EModE people expressed sentences like this, “He sees not her,” or “Sees he her?” By the end of the 17th century, however, the negative form using *do* had become widely used, and expressions such as “He does not see her,” and “Does he see her?” had been established. In Shakespeare’s time, these two types of expression were performed side by side.

As for functional shift, EModE was sometimes to use one part of speech as another. Adjectives were freely used as verbs. Generally, an adjective used as a verb had the sense to make that adjective. For example, *happy* meant *to make happy*, (*he happies you* meant *he makes you happy*) and *pale* meant *to make pale*.

The word *will* etymologically expresses the meaning of *human will*, and it is now used as an auxiliary verb, but in Shakespeare’s time it was also used as a verb. For example, *he wills death* (he is going to die).

Regarding the comparative degree of adjectives, *-e* and *-est* were used in many adjectives that should use *more* and *most* in present English. On the contrary, *more* and *most* were used in adjectives that should use *-er* and *-est* currently. People at that time sometimes expressed more proper as *properer*, and sweeter as *more sweete*.

We can notice that they used the double comparative degree and the double superlative degree. For example, they expressed *more better*, or *the most unkindest*.

Regarding articles, the word starting *h* was preceded by *an*, but by the 18th century, it was out of use. They once used *an* like this: *an hair*, or *an hospital*. This may also be the influence of French pronunciation because they don't pronounce the *h* sound at the beginning of words in France. For example, hélicoptère [elikɔptɛr], héros ['ero], and hôtel [otɛl].

It is said that the noun-adjective order was also influenced by French. It was much more than it is now. They might say, "I saw roses white."

As for plural forms of nouns, many nouns were expressed by adding *-(e)s* to the end of the word, but the words such as *children* and *oxen* remained. And also, the words that had the same form both in the singular and in the plural such as *deer* and *sheep*, remained.

As for the numeral: when reciting numbers, they said 33 such as "three and thirty" or "three-thirty" in the same way as OE. Also, "twenty" was not necessarily used to mean exactly a clear number of 20, but also used to mean just a lot, or in the sense of "many."

The alphabets *u* and *v* were not distinctly different letters, with *v* at the beginning of the word and *u* used elsewhere. Love was written like *loue*.

Nouns beginning with a consonant used *my* and *thy* before them, and nouns beginning with a vowel used *mine* and *thine* to indicate the possessive case.

As for a double negative, the negation of negation was not an affirmation, but an emphasis on negation.

There was no distinction between *i* and *j*. Often, *joy* was spelled as *ioy*, and *just* as *iust*. So was Shakespeare's English.

Shakespeare's Language

If we are to list the characteristics of Shakespeare's English, we realize Shakespeare emphasized, as N. F. Blake states, "the sound, rhythm, rhetoric, and the general drift of a passage more than the precise meaning of individual words or grammatically correct word order."ⁱⁱ First, we'd like to mention the richness of his vocabulary. Also, contrasts are often used. Old words are mixed with new words. Words with a negative image and words with a positive image appear repeatedly; in particular, such kind of skill appears frequently in his sonnets. In addition, linguistically, words that appeared in Shakespeare's works appeared for the first time in those days. It means Shakespeare coined so many new words and expressions. There are many examples of EModE, many compound words in those days. There is a great possibility that Shakespeare created new words, or he just happened to use them. Then the expression became widely known. There are many words and phrases that are still used today, and some of them have become proverbs.ⁱⁱⁱ

There are spelling differences in Shakespeare's editions of Quarto, Folio (1623) and Globe (1864). Even the same Quarto edition has different spellings between in the first edition of First Quarto (1597) and in the Second Quarto (1599). His works are interspersed with the spoken language of the time, full of informal and natural phrases. In those days, the spelling of the word was not standardized, and each playwright spelled words freely. No manuscript signed by Shakespeare survives, but probably he also wrote the

manuscript in his own way. As for the stress of each word, it was volatile and sometimes moved to another syllable in order to adjust the tone of the sentence.

Regarding rhyme, Shakespeare used the iambic pentameter which is called Blank Verse (non-rhyming poetry). That is, there were five combinations of weak syllables and strong syllables making one line. Therefore, one line consisted of 10 syllables. For this reason, Shakespeare's word order of the line sometimes changes, moving back and forth.

In Shakespeare's English, the genitive *-s* is commonly used, although in present-day English, inanimate nouns use *of*-phrase. In *Julius Caesar* Act III, Scene 1, we can notice two successive genitive *-ses*, like "Caesars deaths houre."^{iv} With regard to the progressive form, Shakespeare did not make a clear distinction between *be -ing* and simple form to describe the progressive form. He just used them differently depending on the context.

As for the imperative, "verb + thou" was generally the basic form at that time. For example, they said, "*Go thou to her.*" But in Shakespeare's English, *thou* was also expressed using *thee* where it should be expected. For example, "*Go thee to her.*" However, this form was the old expression used in Modern English (ME). In addition, the same usage in ME without the personal pronouns *thou* or *thee* also appeared in Shakespeare's English.

The word *ought* was originally the past tense of *owe*, but Shakespeare used it to mean "*owe.*" We notice "You ought him a thousand pounds," in *Henry IV Part I*, Act III, Scene 3.^v

In present-day German, all the nouns use capital letters at the beginning of words, but in

ME, capital letters are not used. However, in Shakespeare, the capital letters at the beginning of words were used not only in the case of proper nouns, but also when they had a special meaning in their context.

Many verbs, which are now intransitive verbs, were used as transitive verbs in Shakespeare's days. On rare occasions, Shakespeare also used transitive verbs as intransitive verbs.

Shakespeare expressed in the present tense what should be expressed in the past tense, and made the sentence come alive. Shakespeare used the present tense or the past perfect tense to represent what should be used today in the present perfect tense. Shakespeare sometimes used the present tense in sentences that clearly represent the past, in order to express past events more vividly. For example, "He tooke me by the wrist, and held me hard; Then goes he to the length of all his arme;" in *Hamlet* Act II, Scene 1.^{vi} The definite article *the* was frequently omitted before a noun already defined by another noun, and the personal pronoun *she* was sometimes used instead of *her*. "Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together," in *Othello*, Act IV, Scene 2.^{vii} Some English expressions might be not necessarily original to Shakespeare, but there is no doubt that the fountain of words magician used those expressions intentionally.

We can see that Shakespeare had many of his works set in Italy or they were deeply related to Italy. For example, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale*, etc. It is clear that Shakespeare was conscious that Italy was the cultural center of Europe, which was the

birthplace of the Renaissance. On the other hand, even though belonging to the Renaissance period in England, Shakespeare's English had little Latin and less Greek. As N.F. Blake said, "Classical Latin was a dead language in which only outstanding literary works had survived; these were regarded as the highest form of human expression. English literature and language could not compete with Latin."^{viii} But Shakespeare, who paid attention to sounds and rhythms, used Latin only when it sounds more pleasant. He had no interest in the meaning of Latin words, only the sound. Why didn't he want to use Latin or Greek in his play to convey the meaning of the words? Maybe he disliked the trend at the time that Latin and Greek were almighty, and although many of the background of his works adopted Italy, Shakespeare deliberately avoided classical languages. Perhaps it was also because Latin and Greek were not very familiar to the ordinary people at that time. In the theater, the audience could not read anything, and the lines spoken by the actors could be understood by sound alone, which could not always convey its meaning. The plays of Shakespeare's time were more of a play to be heard than a play to be seen. It was a play for the general public. Shakespeare's dialogue, which emphasized the rhythm of sounds, was difficult to understand in a foreign language. It was impossible for English people to enjoy the superb flavor of Shakespeare's play. The process of creating modern words with new meanings by combining one English word with another eventually enriched the English language. Anyone listening could understand the meaning, and it was easy to get an image of the story.

Shakespeare was particular about expressing in English, and continued to challenge himself

to express another literary world as much as possible by a simple way. It is said that he created about 1700 new words. Just as Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* in English without using French or Italian in the Middle Ages, Shakespeare used English only. As a result, Shakespeare greatly improved the possibilities of the English language and thereafter increased its value as a language of literary expression well accepted all over the world. Shakespeare's English made British literature special. He created many new words and concepts, just as people abused classical words when they needed to express new concepts.

The essence of Shakespeare's literature

Since the modern period, the age of faith has ended and rationalism has risen. The world, which had been under the strong influence of Christianity, was revived to think logically and to study freely, as in the ancient Greek era, and shifted from believing in the teachings of the church to scientific and rational thinking. The obscene expressions of Shakespeare, especially in "Romeo and Juliet," are clearly a reaction to the oppressed period of the Middle Ages. This is a testament to the fact that sexual expression, which was considered taboo, became freely expressed. The Renaissance period was richer, compared to any other period in English on human liberation and diversity. It is often pointed out that Shakespeare's expressions are sometimes sexual word games (especially *Romeo and Juliet*). Shakespeare also made upper-class women speak obscene language. However, it should be noted that it is a characteristic of the Renaissance era in Europe. Obscene expressions were blatant in some Elizabethan plays, and in

some cases, they were set in brothels.^{ix} Such kind of attitude of Shakespeare was the reflection of the time of that period. But the important thing is that Shakespeare's expression is indirect and cannot be done directly. Some audience may not have understood his intentions. Of course, there were very few religious themes in Shakespeare's dramas. Othello's jealousy, King Lear's anger and disappointment, and Macbeth's ambitions are also full of human touch and would not be appreciated correctly without this context.

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?

...

Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties: or if love be blind,
It best agrees with night.

Romeo and Juliet (1595)

Shakespeare coined many new words and idioms. One of them is "love is blind." The term itself has since come into common use by people, but the great talent of Shakespeare is that it carries an important theme of *Romeo and Juliet* itself. It seems that the title, *Romeo and Juliet* was originally not Shakespeare's idea, but somehow used a poem by Arthur Brooke called *The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet* (1562).^x However, like *Hamlet*, Shakespeare could skillfully create his unique view of the human from the old story that already existed. In *Romeo and Juliet*, in the first scene of Act II, Benvolio, a nephew to the Montague, and a friend to Romeo, says the line, "love is blind." This phrase permeates the whole work like a song motif. *Romeo and Juliet* is a true tragedy that expresses "love is blind" in which Romeo meets Juliet for the first time at a ball and they even

promises to get married that day, and Mercutio (friend to Romeo) and Tybalt (nephew to Lady Capulet) are killed in just five days, and finally, Romeo commits suicide after misunderstanding that Juliet died of drinking poison. Juliet, who wakes up from her deep sleep, follows Romeo to suicide. This tragedy is exactly because of "love is blind." Another theme of *Romeo and Juliet* is the prejudice of the two opposing families, the house of Montague and the house of Capulet. Romeo and Juliet, who love each other, are unable to bond because of the bad relationship between the Montague and the Capulet. Their love affair ends with an ironical ending, but in the end, the patriarchs of both families abandoned their hatred, abandoned prejudice, and reconciled. If we pay attention to this part, we can read that love is an irreplaceable concept that can transcend the barriers of different groups or races of culture, common sense, and way of thinking. Love can eliminate evil prejudices, and ultimately unite the world. The meaning of the phrase "love is blind" is that with love, prejudice becomes invisible to our eyes. But while it is certain that prejudice should disappear from this world, it has not been born for absolutely no reason. There will always be prejudice for some reason. It is thought that some kind of trouble arose between the Montague and Capulet families, which could not be resolved, and that they became enemies.

While the ultimate goal remains to completely remove prejudice and to get along with each other, it is dangerous to try to abruptly eliminate the prejudices that originally arose inevitably for each other. What can be interpreted from the phrase "love is blind" is that love is a trigger to abandon prejudice, but at the same time, we sometimes cannot see even the aspect of prejudice

that must be firmly faced and resolved. The two, the young boy and girl, who had abandoned prejudice, should not only have made a case for their reconciliation, but also, they should have listened more to the arguments of the prejudiced Montague and Capulet families. I think that's the real tragedy of this story.

To be, or not to be, — that is the question:—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? —To die, —to
sleep,—
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural
shocks
The flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, — to sleep:—
To sleep! Perchance to dream:

Hamlet (1603)

Hamlet is the play 'which may be said to offer the fullest exhibition of Shakespeare's powers.'^{xi} "To be, or not to be" was pronounced like: [tə] [bɪ:] [ɔr] [nɒt] [tə] [bɪ:]. With this famous line, a long Hamlet's monologue begins, followed by lines of worries about the death of human. However, the content is "To die (is) to sleep" or "in that sleep of death what dreams may come," So it means, "What kind of dreams do we have when we are dead?" And the important thing here is that Hamlet makes no mention of the heaven and hell that Christianity insists. This can be interpreted as an indication of the intention to think for oneself rather than entrusting oneself to Almighty God, answering philosophical questions such as "who one is", "why one was born", and

"what one lives for." A glimpse into the genealogy of existentialism in the history of Western philosophy shows that the German philosopher, Nietzsche, at the end of the 19th century said that "Gott starb (God is dead)."^{xii} And the 20th-century French philosopher, Sartre, proclaimed humanism proudly by claiming that "l'existence précède l'essence (existence precedes essence)."^{xiii} The essence of their argument is that "the meaning or purpose of human life is not something that has been given to us in advance by God, but we make it ourselves." It can be said that the idea in Shakespeare's monologue of Hamlet, written in England in the 17th century, has something in common with the concept of Nietzsche and Sartre that blossomed in the 20th century.

The world of tragedy depicted by Shakespeare is very human. Hamlet does not seek salvation from God and worries for himself. Hamlet does not rely on God. "To be or not to be" is a symbolic phrase for the suffering of one man himself, in which he does not rely on God for the answer, and the answer must be found by oneself. A man who has lost the Christian spirit eventually comes to a tragic end. They are Othello, King Lear, Macbeth at the mercy of witches, and ambitious Lady Macbeth. They all die tragic deaths. Is there salvation there? Shakespeare warns that human beings have been liberated from oppression and have freedom, and at the same time they will face a tragic end.

The way for modern people to face themselves is having a rational spirit, called reason. Reason objectifies and represents the world, and at the same time it objectifies itself. Modern rationality objectifies the world and measures everything. The important thing is the ability of correct analysis and reflection. By objectifying ourselves

internally and in the external world, we must protect ourselves from the risks that befall us. Without this modern way of thinking and scientific spirit, we cannot avoid the human tragedy portrayed by Shakespeare's works.

Conclusion

Since the 17th century, the English language has been stable and established. Supported by a modern spirit of analysis and reflection, English has developed into a more rational language. After that, English has not changed much and has become connected to English used all over the world now. Shakespeare was a fallen child from heaven of the turning point in the history of the English language, and his imagination contributed greatly to enriching English and making its unique linguistic qualities shine through as English transitioned from ME to EModE.

Shakespeare's works make us well understand the mood of EModE. And we are overwhelmed by its free English expressions. In addition, what is surprising is that some of these minor expressions are now being found in the United States as informal or broken English expressions, and some of them are eventually becoming established as one of the acceptable English expressions again. But I would like to reiterate, some of those expressions were in fact already in use during Shakespeare's time. If we think about Pilgrim Fathers boarded a ship named *Mayflower* and came to the east coast of America in 1620, we could understand that British English in the 17th century has survived in America. Actually, it is said that 17th century British English and modern American English have much in common. Turning nouns into verbs and turning verbs into nouns, and turning pronouns into nouns, can

also be seen in the expressions of Shakespeare's time. Even during EModE period, they generally used *who* which is found in today's colloquial expressions, instead of the relative pronoun *whom*. As for pronunciation, it is no coincidence that there is a recent tendency to pronounce a word exactly as it is spelled in American English. It's a phenomenon of "going back to the old days", isn't it?

For intransitive verbs to represent the perfect tense, not "have + past participle" but "be + past participle" also existed in Shakespeare's English. The definite article was omitted by prosody. So, the same word may or may not have *the* before it. If the subject was obvious, it was sometimes omitted. There were various other omissions: verb, article, relative pronoun, and so on.^{xiv} Native speakers would say, "Come and see me." or "Come to see me." But now in American colloquial parlance, they say "Come see me." However, this expression was already in use in Shakespeare's time.

Shakespeare's 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and two narrative poetries (*Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*) have made great contributions not only in terms of linguistic merit, but also in their content as the literary translation. Shakespeare changed people's way of thinking from the Middle Ages to the modern era, and he also raised the literary world to a level that challenges philosophers. Shakespeare is a model leader for humanism. What is the meaning of Shakespeare's line such as "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 1)? This concept is the true essence of Shakespearean world. This irrational way of thinking is a challenge to a philosophy full of a sense of stagnation, which has a discipline that does not allow for consistencies

and contradictions. Therefore, Shakespeare proclaims the potential of the literary arts with great prowess. Not only did the linguistic features of EModE influence on present-day English, but also the many characters in his dramas, such as Romeo, Juliet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, and Hamlet were ahead of humanism in the Renaissance, in terms of human emotion, affection, and philosophical ideology. And even for modern people in the 21st century, their way of life still continues to influence us because they are what we are. Shakespeare's English world is still eager to see the opportunity to declare its potential.

Notes

- ⁱ On the other hand, Latin words as used by intelligent people in England were sometimes ridiculed as scholarly or pedantic *Inkhorn Terms*.
- ⁱⁱ N. F. Blake, *The Language of Shakespeare* (MacMillan, 1983), p.42, p.118.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Modern English idiomatic expressions often have the origins from Shakespeare, for example, "It's (all) Greek to me" (I have no idea) in *Julius Caesar*, "salad days" (one's younger days) in *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- ^{iv} G. L. Brook, *The Language of Shakespeare* (Andre Deutsch, 1976), p.72.
- ^v *Ibid.*, p.126.
- ^{vi} *Ibid.*, p.106.
- ^{vii} Edwin. A. Abbott, *A Shakespeare Grammar* (MacMillan, 1869), p.26., p.53.
- ^{viii} N. F. Blake, *The Language of Shakespeare* (MacMillan, 1983), p.16, p.48.
- ^{ix} *Ibid.*, p.27.
- ^x Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (Penguin

Books, 2000), p.52.

^{xi} *Ibid.*, p.96.

^{xiii} Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Insel Klassik, 2011), p.315.

^{xiii} Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (Éditions Gallimard, 1996), p.26.

^{xiv} G. L. Brook, *The Language of Shakespeare* (Andre Deutsch, 1976), p.68, p.76.

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