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PSEUDO-ARCHAIC ENGLISH: THE MODERN PERCEPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LINGUISTIC PAST

OLIVER M. TRAXEL

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a new project currently in its planning stages.[1] It is dedicated to pseudo-archaic English, an area in linguistic studies which has so far hardly received any academic attention. After providing some historical examples a brief selection of some present-day occurrences as well as inspirational sources for these is given. Sample cases of pseudo-archaic English from various linguistic categories are presented in order to illustrate the wide range of its usage. Some remarks on modern perceptions of the linguistic past and their role in creating pseudo-archaic forms are provided and followed by suggestions on what still needs to be done in this field.

1. Introduction

When asking the general public about what the English language might have looked like in former times explanations like the following one are usually given:

> Be the tale set in 1300s Scotland or 1840s Cardiff, appropriately "old-fashioned" English in the mind of a TV writer is based on the archaic King James Bible. The formula is simple: addeth "–eth" and "–est" to random verbs, scattereth silent *E*s like the leaves of autumne, bandyeth about the words "thee", "thou", "thine", "doth", "hast", and "forsooth", reverseth every other occasion thine noun-verb order, and strewth, thou doth be the next Billy Shakespeare!
> (http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/YeOldeButcheredeEnglishe)

[1] Some ideas were presented in my habilitation viva at the University of Münster on 14 July 2008. I am grateful to the examiners as well as Walter Sauer for their helpful suggestions concerning this matter.

Some striking observations can be discerned from such commentaries. First, it is assumed that there is no distinction between different language stages, but that there is merely one past language. Secondly, this one past language resembles two main sources, both of which are from the Renaissance period, namely the *King James Bible* (1611) and the works of William Shakespeare (Evans – Tobin 1997). Thirdly, some simple rules regarding inflection, orthography, vocabulary and syntax seem to suffice in order to produce texts that look archaic. The website containing the preceding quotation lists dozens of examples occurring in popular culture, such as television, film, music and video games. But where do such ideas of the linguistic past come from and why are these encountered so frequently?

Although there are innumerable pseudo-archaic English texts found both in print and on the world wide web it is surprising that this subject has been largely neglected by current research. One rare exception is Minugh (1999). This frequent ignorance may be ascribed to the view that the language found in such texts is merely evidence of incorrect English not considered to be of any importance. But they underestimate its potential since the amount of primary material shows an exceptional degree of linguistic creativity deserving of an academic study. Moreover, it may tell us a great deal about modern popular attitudes not only towards the linguistic past but also language in general. For these reasons a larger project is planned to be conducted, some aspects of which are briefly addressed in this paper. Some light is shed on the questions which features of Present-Day English may be changed in order to create an archaic impression, why exactly these features are chosen for alteration, and in what way these are modified. Some commonly consulted older texts are identified and the general understanding and misunderstanding of some linguistic features within these sources and the ensuing emergence of pseudo-archaic forms are examined. Finally, a concise outlook on further aspects of the upcoming project is given.

2. Definition

Archaisms may be defined as linguistic forms that used to be common but then went out of fashion. They frequently refer to vocabulary, but may also comprise other linguistic categories, such as orthography, phonology, morphology or syntax. Some archaic forms may have had a wider distribution before being confined to dialectal usage. In contrast to obsolete forms, archaisms may still be recognised as once being part of the language. For example, younger people may understand the meaning of certain words employed by older people or occurring in older texts, but not use them themselves. In contrast, *pseudo-archaisms* are linguistic forms that never existed but that evoke the impression

as if they could have been part of the language in former times. They are therefore new creations. Pseudo-archaisms may emerge due to a misunderstood perception of the linguistic past or they may be formed deliberately. There are amateur and scholarly pseudo-archaisms depending on the linguistic background and the intentions of their authors. For example, the pseudo-archaisms created by academics in Middle English translations of modern children's books (Görlach 1981; Sauer 2008, 2010) are much more reminiscent of authentic word formation patterns and spellings than the silliness frequently encountered on amateur websites. For this reason, pseudo-archaisms may be subdivided into two major categories: (i) mock-archaisms by authors with no or only limited knowledge of English language history, created mostly for humorous reasons; (ii) neo-Old or neo-Middle English by authors with an educated knowledge of English language history, intended as more serious recreations. Generally, both archaisms and pseudo-archaisms may occur in certain contexts where they serve a specific purpose, such as the creation of an antiquated atmosphere or for reasons of entertainment, parody or comedy. They may also appear alongside each other in one and the same text.

3. Some early occurrences

The subject of archaisms was already a matter of scholarly debate during the Renaissance. Ben Jonson acknowledged the quality of these in his *Timber or Discoveries*: "Words borrow'd of Antiquity, doe lend a kind of Majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the Authority of yeares, and out of their intermission doe win to themselves a kind of grace-like newnesse" (Herford et al. 1947: 622). However, he also warned of the excessive use of "Chaucerismes [...], which were better expung'd and banish'd. Some words are to be cull'd out for ornament and colour, as wee gather flowers to straw houses, or make Garlands; but they are better when they grow to our style" (Herford et al. 1947: 622-623). In fact, Jonson seems to prefer linguistic updating rather than preserving older forms. In his *English Grammar* he provides several quotations from Thomas Speght's second edition of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1602), but in a modernised language (Gebhardt 1934; Evans 1989). For example, orthographic updating is found in *dreary heart* for earlier *drery hart*, and in <v> for earlier <u> when it denotes the sound /v/, as seen, for example, in *cave* for earlier *caue* (Gebhardt 1934: 453). However, intervention into an earlier text may also result in obvious errors, as seen, for example, in Jonson's substitution of Chaucer's *foot* with the different word *fate* (Gebhardt 1934: 453).

Though Jonson was certainly no archaiser there were several Renaissance scholars who took a keen interest in employing older linguistic forms. One of

the most famous authors at the time who belongs to this movement is Edmund Spenser (Osselton 1990), of whom Jonson even said that he "writ no language" (Herford et al. 1947: 618). The writer of the preface to *The Shepheardes Calender*, who is known only as "E. K.", remarked with regard to the frequent use of archaisms in this work: "such olde and obsolete wordes are most used of country folke, sure I think, and think I think [sic] not amisse, that they bring great grace and, as one would say, auctoritie to the verse" (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: VII, 8). Spenser used archaisms not only for the depiction of rural characters, but also to create a past atmosphere, as seen in his *The Faerie Queene*, which is devoted to a world of chivalry no longer present during the Renaissance (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: I-VI). Apart from taking genuine words from Chaucer and other Middle English sources, Spenser also created a number of pseudo-archaic forms, which may be attributed to various linguistic categories. With regard to vocabulary, he used *yeed*, the Middle English past form of the verb *go*, as the infinitive (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: II, 43), and employed *dearnly* ('secretly') in a wrong meaning, namely 'dismally' (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: II, 11). Some morphological features of native origin are found in loanwords where they should not appear historically, such the past participle prefix *y–*, as seen, for example, in *yglaunst* (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: II, 72), the infinitive ending *–n*, as seen, for example, in *displeasen* (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: I, 37), or the accusative singular *–n* in nouns that were not part of the *n*-declension, as seen, for example, in *skyen* (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: I, 45). Orthographic hypercorrection is evident in French loanwords like *despight* (Greenlaw et al. 1932-57: I, 51), which should not contain <gh> and was probably influenced by words of Old English origin, such as *night*. Though such pseudo-archaic forms may be the result of misunderstanding, many of them were probably created on purpose, not only for atmospheric, but also for metrical reasons.

Before moving on to the Present-Day English period, one more early example case needs to be mentioned, since it provides a vast amount of material for the study of pseudo-archaisms. Thomas Chatterton's eighteenth-century poems were a deliberate attempt at deception; he presented these as the works of an unknown author from the fifteenth century with the name of Thomas Rowley (Skeat 1872). His main sources for the *Rowley Poems* were Speght's glossary to his Chaucer edition (1602) as well as the dictionaries by John Kersey (1708) and Nathan Bailey (1721). Besides literally adopting words from these works, Chatterton also used them as a basis for his own creations by changing their spelling, as seen, for example, in *anere* meaning 'another' (Skeat 1872: II, 23). Such instances may be attributed to reasons of rhyme, as seen, for example, in *be goe* ('be gone') to rhyme with *woe* (Skeat 1872: II, 54). Wrong meanings are also found, for example, in *houton* in the sense 'hollow' instead of correct 'hallow', an error he reproduced from his sources (Skeat 1872: II, xvii). But there are also new lexical crea-

tions that do not seem to go back to any source, as seen, for example, in *bayre* meaning 'brow' (Skeat 1872: II, 202). On a morphological level, the occasional wrong use of inflectional endings is evident, as seen, for example, in third person singular *haveth* used for the first person singular (Skeat 1872: II, 201). Many similar pseudo-archaisms are found throughout Chatterton's works and a closer study of these should give interesting insights into the perception of earlier language stages during the eighteenth century.

4. Source material

Today, pseudo-archaic English may be encountered in various formats. The richest resource is no doubt the world wide web, but it is also found in print and even in spoken form. Both academics and non-academics are involved in the creation of such texts with scholarly attempts at neo-Old or neo-Middle English being generally much more successful in providing a near-authentic atmosphere. Significantly, in contrast to later language stages, modern texts resembling Old English are written almost exclusively by academics, as becomes evident, for example, in the list of links provided on the *ENGLISC listserv* website (http://www.rochester.edu/englisc/). The likeliest explanation seems to be that compositions in Old English require a much greater familiarity with this language stage than with Middle or Early Modern English, which despite its difficulties can be more easily understood by the general public. But several compositions by scholars of Middle English also exist, such as *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog* (http://houseoffame.blogspot.com), which was created by Assistant Professor of English Brantley L. Bryant and parodies Chaucerian themes by relating them to current affairs while being written "in a rough approximation of Middle English spelling, vocabulary and syntax" (Bryant 2010: 17). Some of this blog has been published in book form, which also includes information about its background (Bryant 2010). Generally, the amount of websites written in pseudo-archaic English is vast and includes mostly amateur efforts falling into the mock-archaic category, for example private homepages (e.g. http://www.angelfire.com/ny2/ulrickastle/welcome.html), threads within various forums (e.g. http://www.killermovies.com/forums/f61/t298677.html) or (pseudo-)historical images featuring additional text (e.g. http://knowy-ourmeme.com/memes/medieval-macros-bayeux-tapestry/). There are also guides on how to speak at historical fairs, both medieval (e.g. http://www.medieval-faire.com/speak.html) and Renaissance (e.g. http://www.washington-faire.com/speech.html); significantly, despite referring to different periods their language is very similar to one another. Finally, an example for pseudo-archaic English pronunciation is British comedian Bill Bailey's *Chaucer Pubbe Gagge*, which is available on audio CD and tells a humorous story in the poetic style of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Bailey 2003: 14).

It has already been mentioned at the beginning of this study that pseudo-archaic English composed at the present time may be influenced by famous older works, in particular the Early Modern English *King James Bible* or those by William Shakespeare. The preceding paragraph has shown that also the earlier language stages of Old and Middle English may serve as an inspiration, in particular with the aim of creating seemingly authentic texts. But the most frequently encountered perception by non-specialists is in the mock-archaic field and seems to suggest that "'archaic English' is the variety that was spoken around AD 1500, when the language was transitioning from 'Middle English' to 'Modern English'" (http://dan.tobias.name/frivolity/archaic-grammar.html). In fact, the period from ca. 1350-ca. 1650 comprises both the Renaissance and the Late Middle English period and includes such well-known texts as Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (Vinaver 1947) or Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Benson 1987: 3-328). However, not everyone attempting to create pseudo-archaic English may be familiar directly with these primary sources, but may rather be influenced by later conversions of the material, for example film adaptations of Shakespeare's works or modern Arthurian novels inspired by Malory and his language (e.g. White 1958). In fact, as already mentioned, there are two different major ideas about pseudo-archaic English: an undefined past language bearing some features from texts written in Late Middle or Early Modern English, which may be called mock-archaic, and a concept devoted to more specific areas, which may be subdivided into neo-Middle English in the Chaucerian style and the more distant neo-Old English. Since there are some linguistic overlaps between mock-archaic English and neo-Middle English they are both addressed in this brief study, whereas neo-Old English will be discussed on a separate occasion.

5. Orthography

"There is an 'e' on a lot of words. Be inventive, and have fune!" (http://www.killermovies.com/forums/f61/t298677.html). This introductory remark by user "Smallville" in the first post of a thread called *Speak in Ye Olde Englsih* [sic] sums up three major points regarding the modern popular attitude towards the linguistic past: final *–e* where it does not occur in Present-Day English is seen as an indicator for archaisms, one is encouraged to create such forms without any claim to historical accuracy, and the entire subject serves entertainment purposes. Moreover, the name of the thread itself reveals the general non-academic idea about archaic English: it is equated with *Olde*, though, with the exception of "Seija-Ihana", none of the users in the thread posts commentaries resembling Old English; once more the aforementioned one past language based on Late Middle or Early Modern English is imitated. In fact, internet forums

like these are rich resources for the study of mock-archaic forms, in particular with regard to orthographical features no longer in common use today, but encountered in earlier primary sources.

Interestingly, the frequent modern lack of understanding concerning final *–e* shows some remarkable parallels to the linguistic situation during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The loss of [–ə] in disyllabic words ending in *–e* towards the end of the fourteenth century resulted in spellings where this ending seemed redundant (Görlach 1991: 47). Its original meaning was no longer obvious and, after a short period of random usage, silent *–e* came to be employed for specific purposes, for example as an indicator for a long vowel in the preceding syllable or in order to fill a line in printed books (Görlach 1991: 47). However, in order to avoid misunderstandings this usage could also lead to the doubling of consonants, namely if the vowel in the syllable preceding *–e* was short (Görlach 1991: 47). Spellings like *fune* do not follow these rules as they imply a long vowel in the main syllable, for which reason *funne* would be closer in its resemblance to archaic English. Nevertheless, both spellings are pseudo-archaic rather than authentic as there is no evidence for *–e* in this word at all, which is first attested in 1699 (OED *fun*, n.). This convention may also be used for humorous reasons, for example when *–e* is attached to *pub* without doubling the consonant, which results in *pube* rather than *pubbe*, as posted by user "SeptemberRain", who adds a smiley icon to his phrase *Ye olde pube* (http://www.killermovies.com/forums/f61/t298677.html).

There are certain letters that were part of the English alphabet in former times, but that were ultimately lost and replaced by others. One example is <æ> ('ash'), or <Æ> in its capitalised form, which was originally a ligature of <a> and <e> and represented the sounds [æ:] or [æ] during the Old English period (Scragg 1974: 8). Following the loss of this sound the grapheme was last used during the early thirteenth century, but reintroduced during the sixteenth century in words adopted from Latin (OED *ae*, n.). However, it was ultimately replaced by <ae> or <e>, probably for reasons of simplification and due to the absence of this grapheme on typewriters and keyboards with the English QWERTY-distribution. Authentic archaic spellings with <æ> may be used in modern contexts, but there is also evidence for pseudo-archaic usage, namely in words that never contained this letter. An example for both occurrences is the orthographic representation of the band logo of British music group *Mediæval Bæbes* (http://www.mediaevalbaebes.com). The word *medieval* is first attested in 1821 where it still contained <æ> (OED *medieval*, adj.), in contrast to pseudo-archaic *bæbes*, which never had this letter (OED *babe*, n.). The band name is certainly a deliberate representation involving graphemic play for atmospheric reasons, which is even taken further in the small picture of a crown put on both instances of <æ>. Though the shape of the logo found on the CDs of this band varies, the

letter <æ> is always used there, though spellings on the website show simplification to <ae>. This example case was certainly inspired by post-medieval Latin loanwords rather than the original Old English letter.

There is, however, one Old English letter that has survived until the modern day, but is no longer recognisable as such and appears in pseudo-archaic contexts. Originally of runic origin, <þ> ('thorn'), or <Þ> in its capitalised form, was used for the sounds [θ] or [ð] in Old and Middle English (Scragg 1974: 2). From the fourteenth century onwards its shape became very similar to that of <y> and it was ultimately replaced by the digraph <th> during the fifteenth century though it could be retained in some small words like *the* or *that* spelled y^e and y^t respectively (OED *Y*, n., def. I.1.3). In particular, the article *the* is still found as *ye* in such phrases as *ye olde shoppe* or similar combinations (cf. OED *ye olde*, adj.). Due to the modern unfamiliarity with <þ> it became confused with <y> and also adopted its phonetic value. Therefore instead of [ðə] it is now pronounced [jə] with the same initial sound as the archaic personal pronoun for the second person plural *ye* (cf. Twomey 2011). Strikingly, the other two words in the phrase *ye olde shoppe* are originally obsolete spellings that were revived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively in order to provide an archaic impression (OED *olde*, adj. (and n.); OED *shoppe*, n.). The article *ye*, however, may be classified as pseudo-archaic due to its unhistorical pronunciation.

6. Phonology

With regard to pseudo-archaic English pronunciation it is necessary to consult sound files. The aforementioned *Chaucer Pubbe Gagge* by British comedian Bill Bailey was issued on CD in 2003 and there are also some video versions available on the world wide web (e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btDkHi2uo_s). Besides phonology, it also offers a large amount of material for examination within other linguistic categories, such as vocabulary. The following first ten lines of the forty-four line poem are reproduced in my own transcription and should suffice to make some points:

> Three fellows wenten into a pubbe
> And gleefully their hands did rubbe
> In expectacion of revelrie
> For 'twas the hour known as happie.
> Great botels of wine did they quaff
> And had a really goode laugh,
> 'Til drunkenness held full dominion,
> For 'twas two for the price of one.
> Yet after wine and mead and sack
> Man must have a massive snack.

Though Bailey's pronunciation is mostly modern, some strategies are used to make the text sound archaic. Chaucer's rhyming couplets and iambic meter, employed in most poems of the *Canterbury Tales*, is retained, but reduced from penta- to tetrameter, as found in Chaucer's earlier works *The Book of the Duchess* and *The House of Fame* (Benson 1987: xxxix). Metrical reasons may also account for stressed [e] in *botels* rather than [ə], as well as unstressed [ə] in *goode* rather than no sound. Two words that had not occurred in Middle English yet, namely *quaff* (OED *quaff*, v., dated 1521) and *laugh* as a noun rather than a verb (OED *laugh*, n., dated 1592), rhyme with one another. For this reason the modern pronunciations [kwɒf] and [lɑ:f] are changed to [kwaf] and [laf]. Whereas modern [ɒ] after [w] in *quaff* is correctly represented as Middle English [a] (Sauer 1998: 30), *laugh* should be [laux] with changes in both main vowel and final consonant (Sauer 1998: 31). The archaic effect is achieved by pronouncing these words not according to Modern English Received Pronunciation, but with conservative dialectal sounds, as encountered, for example, in northern England (cf. Kolb 1966: 27-29). The word *expectacion*, which in fact had not been adopted in Chaucer's time yet (OED *expectation*, n., dated 1536), represents a striking mixture of archaic and pseudo-archaic pronunciation. It combines the Middle English sound [s] for <c> in *–cion*, encountered in words like *condicioun* or *nacions* in the *Canterbury Tales* (Sauer 1998: 43, l.38; 45, l.53), with modern [eɪ] rather than pre-Great Vowel Shift [a:] for <a>. This inconsistency may be ascribed to Chaucerian orthography, which suggests a different Middle English sound for the consonant in the use of <c> rather than modern <t>. But since both Middle English and Present-Day English have <a> in this word there seems to be no visible reason for Bailey to change the modern pronunciation of the vowel. There are many more examples of pseudo-archaic English usage in the entire poem, which certainly deserves a closer linguistic investigation.

7. Morphology

Confusion about certain obsolete inflectional endings has already been observed in the introductory quotation as well as in the works of Thomas Chatterton. Indeed it is mainly the verbal endings *–(e)st* for the second person singular and *–(e)th* for the third person singular that are found in various pseudo-archaic forms. They are mostly attached to verbs, where they may appear in all persons, numbers and tenses, as is evident in quotations like *I shouldst*, *I loveth*, *thou speaketh*, *you speakth*, *one canst speaketh* or *I madeth* (http://www.killermovies.com/forums/f61/t298677.html). On the other hand, they may also be omitted where they should occur historically, for example in *thou can* (http://www.angelfire.com/ny2/ulrickastle/welcome.html). In fact, not only verbs are subject to these endings, but all kinds of word classes, as seen, for example, in *browneth*, *thiseth* or *whyeth* (http://www.killermovies.com/forums/f61/t298677.

html). The latter occurrences are obviously just plain silly and it is doubtful whether the posters in this thread really believed that such forms could have existed. Nevertheless, they are evidence that *–eth* may be seen as a typical archaic feature not occurring in Present-Day English texts. However, verbal instances are much more frequent and show that although the word class may be correctly identified, the endings cannot be matched with certainty. This confusion may be ascribed to a general awareness of three different persons in both singular and plural, which, however, lack corresponding verbal endings in Present-Day English, with the exception of third person singular *–s*. The appearance of two endings no longer in use today in archaic texts as well as the obsolete distinction in number for the second person pronoun may make the correct attribution difficult, for which reason *–(e)st* and *–(e)th* are reduced to merely archaic verbal features. As a result they may appear randomly in mock-archaic English.

8. Syntax

Present-Day English use of a mostly fixed word order within sentences may make divergences from this pattern seem unusual and suggest archaism, as implied in the introductory quotation. One example case relevant for this study concerns word order within questions: during the Early Modern English period we can observe a gradual shift from the previously used VSO or OVS pattern to the modern usage of SVO or OSV, which is achieved with the help of auxiliaries or modals occurring before the subject (Görlach 1991: 117-120). In particular, the auxiliary *do* in this context causes confusion to the modern reader as its usage had not become fully systemised until the eighteenth century, for which reason word order in Early Modern English questions may appear arbitrary (Görlach 1991: 117-120). Therefore guides on how to speak archaic English may contain both VS questions without this auxiliary and SV questions preceded by *do*, such as *What say you?* and *Dost thou knowest the time?* (http://www.medieval-faire.com/speak.html). However, whereas the first example is clearly archaic, the second one is grammatically not possible due to the unnecessary *–est* ending in the infinitive *knowest*. Archaic alternatives could be *Dost thou know the time?* or *Knowest thou the time?*. Uncertainty about the correct historical usage of *do* becomes also evident in sentences like *His Royal Majesty doth to recommend the following Royal Innkeepers* (http://www.coloradorenaissance.com/Directions.html). In this case we may assume influence from a modern linguistic form that is no longer historically transparent and therefore considered to be irregular, namely *ought to*. Originally a past form of *owe*, it is used only as a modal in Present-Day English, mostly in combination with the preposition *to* (OED *ought*, v., def. II.7), which could have inspired similar-looking mock-archaic creations, such as *doth to*

Usunięto:

9. Vocabulary

One of the largest and most productive categories in the field of pseudo-archaic English is vocabulary. In many cases, such texts employ words that are still in use today, but not as frequently as in former times. One reason is cultural change, for example everyday objects, such as *beaker* and *hosen*, were once very common, but due to developments in kitchenware and fashion respectively they lost importance and are now associated mostly with outmoded lifestyle. Other reasons are of a semantic nature, for example pejorative words, such as *harlot* or *strumpet*, which denote female prostitutes, are now archaic though they were regular terms in the *King James Bible* and Shakespeare's works respectively. None of these words are pseudo-archaic as they are attested in historical sources, which shows that texts that may be classified as pseudo-archaic may contain a mixture of both archaic and pseudo-archaic forms. Some occurrences of pseudo-archaic usage in such texts are the result of semantic change, namely in cases where a modern meaning is applied to an older word. One example is *gagge* in *Chaucer Pubbe Gagge*, which is first attested in 1553, also in this particular spelling, where it denoted 'something thrust into the mouth to keep it open' (OED *gag*, n.[1], def. 1a). Later this word underwent semantic widening, and the meaning 'joke, humorous remark', as implied in the title of Bailey's poem, did not occur until 1863, when the spelling had already been simplified to *gag* (OED *gag*, n.[1], def. 3c). Similarly, the word *snack* in line 10 of the text is used in the meaning 'light or incidental repast' (OED *snack*, n.[2], def. 4b), which first occurs in 1757 though the word is first attested in 1402, namely in the meaning 'a snap, a bite, esp. that of a dog' (OED *snack*, n.[2], def. 1a).

Following on from the section on orthography, specifically modern words can be modified in spelling in order to make them look archaic. There are innumerable examples for this process, such as *pubbe*. Though predecessors of this word existed in the form of *public* or *public house*, the clipping *pub* itself is not attested until 1800 (OED *pub*, n.[1]). It becomes pseudo-archaic by adding redundant *–e* and doubling the preceding consonant, a process which has already been mentioned. Incidentally, the word *gagge* may also be evidence of this method, namely if it is interpreted as a different word than the aforementioned one (OED *gag*, n.[1]). A homonymic but possibly related word, which never had final *–e* and a double consonant, is first attested in 1805 in the meaning 'made-up story' (OED *gag*, n.[2]). *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog* (http://houseoffame.blogspot.com, Bryant 2010) has several examples for such modifications and shows that there are also other conventions for changing modern words into pseudo-archaic ones. In Middle English manuscripts as well as in early printings, <y> is often used where in Present-Day English we find <i>, for example in order to provide better legibility in the vicinity of letters

consisting of minims, such as <u>, <n> or <m> (OED *Y*, n.). Some pseudo-archaic words are created as a result of the apparent interchangeability of <y> and <i>, regardless of their surrounding letters, such as *zombye* (OED *zombie*, n., dated 1819) and *vydeo* (OED *video*, n., dated 1937). The convention of changing modern <i> to <y> is also apparent in *yts*, which is an Early Modern English invention and was never spelled with <y> (OED *its*, adj. and pron.). There are many other pseudo-archaic creations, such as modern compounds which are modified by providing an attested archaic spelling of one of its parts, as seen, for example, in *webmayster*, where the second element appears in this form in Middle and Early Modern English (OED *master*, n.[1] and adj.) though the compound itself is first attested in 1993 (OED *webmaster*, n.). Similar examples from the computer world are *internette* and *emayle*.

10. Perception and implementation

When looking at a text from an older language stage, the general reader will no doubt realise that many features are no longer part of Present-Day English. Indeed, Old English may look so alien to someone not acquainted with language history that it may even be mistaken for a different language. Though Middle English and Early Modern English may still be identified as earlier versions of English, texts from these periods contain many words which look unfamiliar as they have either become extinct or are simply not easily recognisable due to changes in orthography. Some inflectional endings may cause confusion as they were lost or replaced, such as third person singular *–(e)th,* as seen, for example, in *loveth* ('loves'), or nominal plural *–n*, as seen, for example, in *shoon* ('shoes'). Word order may be considered unusual, for example, VS in questions or a noun followed by an adjective rather than vice versa, as seen, for example, in Malory's *table rounde*. On the other hand, there are also features which look familiar, but are interpreted wrongly, in particular with regard to pronunciation. Spellings may contain letters that are no longer pronounced or that were once pronounced differently due to phonological changes. One example is *knight*, where <k> and <gh>, which were pronounced [k] and [ç] in Middle English respectively, have become silent and <i> changed from Middle English [i:] to Present-Day English [aɪ] (Sauer 1998: 16, 20). The conservative and therefore identical orthography suggests the modern pronunciation [naɪt] in all instances of this word, even in older texts. Similarly, modern Shakespeare performances are generally pronounced in Present-Day English rather than Early Modern English, which provides the wrong impression that no sound changes have occurred since they were written.

The process of creating pseudo-archaic forms always relies on the linguistic knowledge of their authors. For example, the neo-Middle English *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog* contains many more authentic spellings than most mock-archaic amateur websites. The latter may also misinterpret certain linguistic

features, such as inflectional *–eth* or redundant *–e*, as being typically archaic, irrespective of word class, and attach them to any word they choose. But even authentic archaic forms may be put in the wrong context as their usage in older texts is no longer transparent to the modern reader. This concerns, for example, quotations containing personal pronouns which display historically incorrect usage of number and case as well as wrong verbal inflections. Two examples are *How fare thee?* instead of *How farest thou?*, which may have been influenced by the archaic phrase *Fare thee well!*, and *Ye art quite handsome!*, where we should expect either *thou* instead of *ye* or *are* instead of *art* (http://www.medieval-faire.com/speak.html). With regard to vocabulary, pseudo-archaic texts often use actual archaic words which can still be understood. These may be of a general nature, such as *mayhap* or *prithee* (http://www.medieval-faire.com/speak.html), or denote concepts no longer current in modern society, such as *gentlefolk* or *knave* (http://know yourmeme.com/memes/medieval-macros-bayeux-tapestry/). On the other hand, specifically modern concepts may be incorporated by adapting them to old orthographic conventions, such as *televisoun* or *cocktayle* (http://house offame.blogspot.com). Generally, obsolete words are avoided, unless they appear in scholarly neo-Old or neo-Middle English texts. In that case they may explained by a glossary or a link, as provided, for example, by *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog*. Obsolete words are always disregarded by creators of mock-archaic English as their unfamiliarity to linguistically untrained authors renders them unproductive. There are therefore remarkable differences between the two major types of pseudo-archaic English.

11. Conclusion and outlook

"Some people like to speak or write in archaic English because they think it's cute to say something like 'I thinketh thou stinketh!'" (http://dan. tobias.name/frivolity/archaic-grammar.html). This quotation illustrates one of the main reasons why even non-academics may take an interest in the linguistic past. Archaic English can be recognised as being part of our culture, but many of its aspects appear strange and alien to the modern eye, so that it may serve as an ideal resource for entertainment and comedy. The continuous popularity of Chaucer or Shakespeare results in the frequent view that there was basically one past language located somewhere in time between these two writers, which also includes other works, such as Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* or the *King James Bible*. The creation of pseudo-archaic English depends on the perception of linguistic forms within such texts. Both actual archaisms and modern elements are mixed to various degrees. Archaic features, such as specific spellings or inflectional endings, may be applied to new words, while new linguistic fea-

tures, such as modern pronunciation or word order, may also be incorporated into pseudo-archaic texts. Therefore influence on two major levels can be observed: past forms that are linguistically no longer transparent may effect the present creation process, whereas the use of familiar modern elements may result in the emergence of historically incorrect forms. This mutual influence of past and present features is one of the key characteristics that makes the study of pseudo-archaic English so interesting.

With regard to *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog*, *Guardian* columnist Shirley Dent writes: "What the medieval blogger gives us is a welcome reminder of language's delight in itself and its ability to communicate that enchantment." (http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2007/apr/12/theresroomforspicyas well). This statement does not only sum up one of the main reasons for the study of pseudo-archaic English, but it also includes such a form itself: the thirteenth-century French loan *delight* did not contain <gh> until the sixteenth century when it was orthographically remodelled on the basis of native words like *light* and *fight* (OED *delight*, n.). This example shows that pseudo-archaic forms starting off as initial hypercorrections or errors may even replace older historically correct ones, which justifies a closer look at similar processes. It also proves once more that pseudo-archaic English is not confined to the modern era, but may be found throughout the centuries. A detailed examination of this development would be worthwhile.

There are many areas that can be studied as part of the envisaged project. One particularly large field concerns early occurrences of pseudo-archaic English, such as Chatterton's *Rowley Poems* or the use of tushery or Wardour-Street English in historical or fantastical novels written during the nineteenth century (cf. Wisner 2010: 23-99). One aspect worthy of a detailed examination is the creation of neo-Old English and the different methods applied in producing such forms. Besides the aforementioned *ENGLISC listserv* website (http://www.rochester.edu/englisc/) there are further resources available on the world wide web, such as the *New Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (http://larashots.com/appleyard/nasc/nasc.htm) and even an Old English version of *Wikipedia* (http://ang.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heafodside). In fact, there are already some academic studies dealing with the use of Old English elements in modern literature for atmospheric reasons, such as Old English words in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (Tinkler 1968) and poetic diction in the works of Seamus Heaney (Milfull – Sauer 2003), though these do not deal with actual composition in Old English. But this process is evident in a number of modern children's books which were translated into both Old and Middle English, namely Wilhelm Busch's *Max und Moritz* (Görlach 1981, 1992), Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter* (Kemmler 2010a; Sauer 2010) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* (Kemmler 2010b; Sauer 2008; Traxel 2011). A closer analysis

of the scholarly pseudo-archaisms used in these books and the more serious attempts at creating neo-Old and neo-Middle English is currently in preparation and will no doubt shed further light on the intricacies of these language stages as encountered by the modern reader. The amount of primary sources available for the study of pseudo-archaic English is vast and it is time for these to be examined on an academic scale.

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