

### Activity:

Analyse the following Early Modern English text from the point of view of a Present-day English speaker, and identify differences on the different levels of language (note that spelling has been modernized).

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open  
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?  
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,  
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?  
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee  
So far from home into my deeds to pry,  
To find out shames and idle hours in me,  
The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?  
O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great:  
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake:  
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,  
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:  
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,  
From me far off, with others all too near.

(1609, William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 61*)

- 2nd person singular pronouns *thou/thy/thee*. In EModE there was variation between *thou* and *you* for the 2nd p. sg. *Thou* was used for intimacy (e.g. here, addressee → lover), or social inferiors. MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE (loss of an element of the personal pronoun paradigm); PRAGMATIC CHANGE (intimacy/distance nowadays conveyed by means of titles/first names).
- *thou* had a dedicated verb ending in the present, *-(e)st* (here *dost*, *send'st*). This verb form was lost with the demise of the pronoun. MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE
- 3rd person singular present indicative ending: Shakespeare shows variation between *-(e)th* (*doth*) and *-(e)s* (*keeps*). Both forms go back to OE, but *-(e)s* is a Northern form, which had reached the South by Shakespeare's time. The *-(e)s* inflection was preferred with lexical verbs. It ended up pushing *-(e)th* out of the system. MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE
- *mine* could be used as a possessive adjective (*mine eye*, *mine own true love*), when the following word started with a vowel (cf. PDE *a/an*). Nowadays it can only be used as a pronoun. The paradigm of possessives has split into two different paradigms: that of adjectives (*my*, *your*, *his*, *our*, etc.), and that of pronouns (*mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs*) MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE
- The auxiliary verb *do* could be used in EModE in affirmative statements without any implications of emphasis (*do mock*; *dost wake*). This is no longer possible. Moreover, for Shakespeare *do* support is not obligatory, but optional. SYNTACTIC CHANGE.
- V2 order in *for thee watch I*, SV inversion if an element other than the subject occurs in initial position. In PDE the default order is SV. SYNTACTIC CHANGE
- End-rhyme does not work in PDE in the pairs *pry/jealousy*; *great/defeat*. This indicates PHONOLOGICAL CHANGE, more precisely, the Great Vowel Shift,

which affected only one of the words in the pair. The GVS moved long vowels upwards, and, if they could not move upwards any more, they became diphthongs (*pry* /prai/). In Shakespeare's time, *jealousy* was stressed the French way, on the last syllable /dʒelou'si:/. The stress moved to the initial syllable in agreement with the Germanic Stress Rule, and the unstressed /i:/ became shorter under weak stress. *Great* is not affected by the GVS, it is one of the exceptions. In *defeat*: /ɛ:/ > /e:/ > /i:/ (the vowel moved upwards).