

The Merry Wives of Windsor and the French-English Dictionary

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In the preface to his English-French dictionary *Lesclaircissement de la langue francoyse*, John Palsgrave employs a nuptial metaphor to describe his lexicographic project: "I have ... assayde so to mary our tongue & the french togider" (Sig. A. iii. r). As the French tutor of Henry VIII's sister Mary, and her companion when she journeyed to France to marry Louis XII in 1514, Palsgrave employs a nuptial metaphor that reflects his intimate knowledge of the sovereign's agenda: to engage, through marriage, in a bid for English political and cultural supremacy over France. By marrying English words with their French equivalents, Palsgrave presents King Henry, neither colonial subject nor conquering ruler, with a linguistic enactment of the political mastery his sovereign wishes to enjoy. By agreeing to Mary's marriage to the French king, Henry VIII, addressed by Palsgrave as "King of England *and* of France," exchanged his claim to the French throne for a million gold crowns. Explaining French grammar *in English* to his English readers, or, as he puts it, bringing "the frenche tong under ... rules" (Sig. A. iii. v), Palsgrave promises its reader the kind of mastery over France that Henry's recent capitulation had temporarily deferred: the reader will be able to "speke any sentence truely and parfitly to endyte any matter in the sayd tong" (Sig. C. vi. r). Language study, in Early Tudor England, is a means through which one can rehearse, through the spoken word, the fantasy of English ascendancy.

As Palsgrave's dictionary reminds us, behind any simple marriage plot there can lurk a complex political agenda. Described by critics as Shakespeare's most "domestic" and "unabashedly English" play (Roberts:xi-xii), and allegedly written at the request of Queen Elizabeth, daughter of the ambitious Henry discussed above, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* engages with the questions raised by the emergence and efflorescence of bilingual dictionaries such as Palsgrave's in the sixteenth century. Despite its rustic English setting, a *dramatis personae* composed primarily of middle-class English men and women, and a plot concerning marriage to a girlish Anne Page who is anything but exotic, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is neither insular, nor provincial. It is deeply concerned with the fluidity of national identities, social hierarchies, and linguistic categories. It explores the presence of European languages and customs in English society at large; it addresses the importance of linguistic ability in class mobility; and it assesses the ascendant (or retrograde?) character of the English language in contrast with other European tongues, most important among these the relationship between English and French. In these ways, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* develops the issues raised by its predecessor, *Henry V*: the history play in which the English conquest of France is characterized as the triumph of Hal's "good English." Yet if *Henry V* dramatizes Palsgrave's desire for conquest, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* performs the other side of the coin: the profound English insecurity concerning the integrity of its own cultural and linguistic identity apart from France.

Considered for centuries to be derivative entertainment, produced hurriedly to indulge the whim of the Queen, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has more recently enjoyed renewed critical attention, particularly among feminist scholars who have located in its incessant wordplay an articulation and exploration of the tensions of gender and class difference. Patricia Parker (1996) and Elizabeth Pittenger (1991) have placed *The Merry Wives of Windsor* against the backdrop of the Latin pedagogy and scholarship of Renaissance humanism. In *Shakespeare from the Margins*, Patricia Parker (:116-148) argues that the play's Latin-English "double translation", often excised in performances and dismissed by critics as tedious or extraneous, offers a subversive commentary on contemporary concerns with translation, print technology and humanist pedagogy [note 1]. Building upon Parker's work on the metaphors of duplication and iteration, Elizabeth Pittenger examines how the humanist traffic in books and the trope of mechanical reproduction underwrite the play's fascination with germination: that is, sexual, textual and ideological reproduction. Situating the play more firmly in its English context, Rosemary Kegl (1994) opens up the play's lexicon of insults to demonstrate how these "abominable terms" function to reinforce class difference, while Peter Erickson (1987) holds the bourgeois wives' victory over Sir John Falstaff in tension with the capitulation of Anne Page, the next female generation, to domination by the noble Fenton.

Like Parker and Pittenger, my interest in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* stems from its irrepressible linguistic playfulness; however, where their analysis of the play's sexual politics hinges upon classical humanist methods and texts, I am concerned with the play's investment in French education enabled by bilingual vernacular dictionaries. Moreover, I shall apply the question of cultural capital represented by proficiency in French to the investigations of class difference by Kegl and Erickson, in order to consider the role played by this linguistic knowledge in the subversion, as well as maintenance, of class boundaries. Finally, I would like to propose that the multilingual culture fostered by the dictionary, which gives rise to the kind of polyglot punning that permeates *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, cannot be understood simply as opening windows of polyvalent possibility. Instead, it gives voice to the linguistic vertigo represented by the dictionary: a vertigo that arises throughout the play, when words (like wives) cannot necessarily be depended upon the remain married to their meanings, and verbal testimony (like an engagement vow) may not reflect a genuine relationship. The methodological and rhetorical conventions of the dictionary are employed to articulate the following question: what happens to a language when it is invaded by another language, broken down into its component parts, and joined with its synonyms in another language? Is it marriage? Or is it adultery?

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As vernacular languages competed with and overtook Latin as a vehicle for international commercial, cultural and political transactions, the English language's increasing imperial powers in the sixteenth century earned it a place alongside other vernaculars in the developing genre of the bilingual dictionary. Bilingual vernacular dictionaries were produced in the intensely international atmosphere of London, where European Protestant refugees found work composing language manuals for their students

which were then printed as wordbooks and lexicons. At the same time that these texts codified the status of English as a powerful European vernacular, they provided middle-class English men and women with access to continental languages: in the case of French, dictionaries enabled a kind of upward-mobility by allowing the English reader access to a tongue that had been the *lingua franca* of the literati, the landed and the religious, in the Middle Ages [note 2].

Taking their cue from Erasmus' discussion of copiousness in *De duplici copia rerum ac verborum* (1511), lexicographers sought to achieve copiousness as the constitutive feature of the dictionary. This resulted in an ever-increasing attention to the detailed definition of words, their exposition in synonyms, and their illustration through extensive quotation from textual authorities, proverbs and *sententiae*. In the first scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shallow, Slender and Parson Evans reproduce these lexicographic conventions. Parson Evans provides an English equivalent for the Latin *pauca verba*, "good worts" (I. i. 120) [note 3]; Shallow defines "luce": "the luce is the fresh fish" (21); Slender supplies a list of synonyms that constitute a typical definition: "any bill, warrant, quittance or obligation" (10); and Evans, described later by the Host as he who gives "the proverbs and the no-verbs," chimes in: "The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love" (18-20). But immediately here we have a misunderstanding: Evans' Welsh accent makes "worts" out of "words," and transforms Shallow's "luce" to "louse." Shallow proceeds, then, to intentionally confuse Evans' pronunciation of "cod" as "coat" (hence, "the salt fish is an old coat" 21). In a play that is concerned with loves both appropriate, and less-than-appropriate, this opening scene questions the extent to which signs can be relied upon to remain faithful to their signifiers, and, more specifically, the tendency of English terms to swerve into French if left unattended. For in fact the "luce," (or, for Evans, "louse") which becomes the "old coat," is the English form of an Old French word for "pike," *lucel*. "Luce" is also the anglicization of *lis*, as in *fleur de lis* (which, in Elizabethan English, is "flower de luce") [note 4]: a rather more likely image to appear on a coat-of-arms, and for the upwardly-mobile Justice Shallow, interested in "old coats" because he is in fact the proud possessor of a new coat-of-arms, a felicitous affiliation with an emblem of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy.

While this scene delights in the kind of polylinguistic punning that might indicate a successful marriage between languages, it also admits the possibility of the "thousand harms" that can result out of the confusion that develops when a lily in one language is a louse in another. This is, I believe, the sinister underbelly of the Shakespearean quibble. For Evans, the louse (or is it lily? or is it a fish?), like Donne's flea, "signifies love": the motivation behind the suits of marriage and adultery that are the outward plot of the play. As Anne Page's suitors are distinguished from each other in terms of their relationship to French, and as Falstaff's efforts at adultery are described as a programme of translating the wives' "honour" from French into English and back again, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* employs, along with Palsgrave, the trope of marriage in order to "come to terms" with the idea of a single lexicon and national identity, out of English history's legacy of mixed blood and diverse dialects.

As Caius and Slender compete for Anne's hand, they wrangle over the future of the English language, and mangle it so much that it appears to be truly under siege: an

impression confirmed through the play's consistent characterization of English as a rather vulnerable victim: Nym "frights English out of its wits" (II. i. 139), and even harmless Parson Evans makes "fritters of English" (V. v. 143). Mistress Quickly introduces Caius the French Doctor by referring to his "abuse of God's patience and the King's English" (I. iv. 5). Caius' repetitious and inefficient speech contains the conventions of dictionary copiousness: when he demands "une boitine verte – a box, a green a-box" (41) or cries "dépêche, quickly" (51), or "villainy, larron!" (62) his translations pastiche lexicographic structure, and create instability out of the most solid Anglo signifiers: "You are Jean Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby" (53).

In this way, Caius is a kind of walking bilingual dictionary; in fact, his status as a French expatriate recalls their producers: Protestant refugees from Europe, whose performance of various services, among them language instruction, ensured them a prominent role at court, and preferential treatment over their English counterparts. A case in point is the Huguenot Claude Desainliens, who left his home in the Bourbonnais and set up life in London under the name Claudius Hollyband (he was also known as Claudius a Sancto Vinculo). About five years before *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he published a popular successor to Palsgrave: *A Dictionary French and English* (1593) which expresses strongly anti-Catholic sentiments in its choice of French words and definitions: "un Gobe-quinault," refers to "the Priest swallowing his god made of wafer" (Sig. P. vii. v) and "lan le blanc, or l'oiseau Saint Marin, a rauening birde or a kinde of Hauke killing hennes in the countrey houses: the Protestants doe call the God of the papists made of paste, lan le blanc" (Sig. R. i. v). When Caius hurls at Parson Evans furious, albeit misdirected, anti-Catholic epithets such as "scurvy jack-a-nape priest" (I. iv. 104), he recalls Desainliens' inscription of the terms of religious dissidence directly into the cultural phenomenon of the bilingual vernacular dictionary.

The recollection of Desainliens through Caius also implies an important development in the English bilingual dictionary: where Palsgrave's courtly reader partakes of Henry's aim to control France by seeking out French equivalents in which to express his English thoughts, Desainliens speaks as a French subject, presenting a proudly self-contained system that his London pupils must learn to negotiate on its own terms. As he assists the reader in "the attaining of our French tongue" he throws out some cultural tidbits along the way: "Griotes, sweete Cherries: there bee none in England: we have of diverse sorts in France" (Sig. Q. ii. v). Caius' pleasure in pointing out the differences between French and English culture, "'tis no the fashion of France" (III. iii. 159); his imperious boasting: "je m'en vais voir à la court la grande affair" (IV. iv. 47); and his officious attitude to his English servant, to whom he barks "come after my heel to the court" (54), manifest an attitude to the French that is entirely different from Palsgrave: no longer the imagined conquered, Caius symbolizes a culture of well-connected and sophisticated expatriates, notorious for their privileged access to aristocrats and royalty: "I shall procurea you de good guest: de earl de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients" (II. iii. 83-85).

The threat that French Huguenots posed to aspiring English professionals is amusingly figured as castration anxiety when Caius, who "hath good skill in his rapier" (II. i. 211) threatens Simple: "I will cut all this two stones" (I. iv. 106). The jealousy and suspicion they aroused also supports some of the readings of the duel scene in the Quarto,

in which the Host taunts Caius by asking "is he dead, my francoyes" (II. iii. 26) and refers to him as "Cardalian" (31) which casts the doctor as a ridiculous parody of Richard Coeur de Lion (Cordelion, if you're English). The joke of the location for the duel, Frogmore, and references to Caius' proverbially dark Gallic eyes and hair, "my Ethiopian" (25), constitute further attempts, at the level of blatant xenophobia, to undermine Caius and minimize his threat to middle-class English livelihood. Thus, when the Host interferes with the duel that is to be fought between Evans (on behalf of Slender) and Caius, he is seeking to establish concord between two aliens who "hack our English" (III. i. 71) [note 5].

Caius' opponent, the inauspiciously-named Slender, represents rather weak fortification against Caius' linguistic and amorous assaults. Mistress Quickly's description of Slender's proud way of walking – "does he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?" (I. iv. 27-8), encapsulates the ascendancy of the English language envisioned by Richard Tottel, for whose "book of *Songs and Sonettes*" Slender longs when he runs out of original things to say. Slender is dependent upon *Tottel's Miscellany* – a book comprised largely of translations of French and Italian sonnets, formerly circulated in manuscript by an upper-class coterie described by Tottel as "ungentle horders up of treasure." He printed his book with the intention of improving the reputation of English letters and the general quality of English discourse through replicating continental forms: he insists, in his preface, that "our tong is able in that kynde to do as praiseworthy as the rest." Slender's exposure to these poetic pearls, however, results only in his mindless reproduction of the discursive markers of the privileged – polysyllabic inkhorn terms such as "I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely" (I. i. 231) – without any accompanying signficatory substance. Mistress Quickly's confusion about the size of Slender's beard – is he a man with "a great round beard?" (I. iv. 18), or does he have "but a wee little face, with a little yellow beard?" (21) – is a distillation of a far-reaching uncertainty concerning the identity and coherence of the English literary and cultural tradition.

If the violence done to the English language by each of the suitors disqualifies their suits for the burgess' daughter, is there a model for "good English"? Fenton, who eventually elopes with Anne, is a reasonable choice, in many ways less for what he *does* to the English language than for what he does *not* do to it. Fenton is barely noticed until Act Four, because his brief speeches are a miracle of unadornment: "Well, I shall see her today" (I. iv. 149) can be counted among his longer sentences. When the Host sketches out his characteristics, one would imagine the ubiquitous, if unimaginative, nice young man, but for the fact that Fenton is known to have "kept company with the wild Prince and Poin" (III. ii. 61-2). This connection is less important for the implication that Fenton enjoyed a rambunctious youth, than it is for the development of Fenton's relationship to English and French through the deliberate echoing of *Henry V*. For example, Fenton's complaint about Page's resistance to him "other bars he lays before me – / My riots past, my wild societies" (III. iv. 10) recalls the difficulty experienced by the young King in gaining respect from the Cardinal, who complains about his "hours filled with riots, banquets, sports" (I. i. 56) [note 6] and the French Dauphin, who "comes o'er us with our wilder days, / Not measuring what use we made of them" (I. ii. 268). The significance of these intertextual links is their recollection of Hal's conquest of France and

wooing in "good English" of the French Katherine – a scene as famous for its anti-artificialism: "I speak to thee plain soldier" (V. i. 149), as it is for its jingoistic politics. Fenton's confession to Anne, "'tis a thing impossible / I should love thee but as a property" (III. iv. 9-10) recalls Hal's "I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it" (V. ii. 174) and his admission of interest in Anne Page's money, her "legion of angels" (I. iii. 50), wonderfully literalizes Hal's best line: "an angel is like you, Kate" (V. ii. 109). Editors are always quick to point out that the "angels" are gold coins stamped with the face of Michael the Archangel, but they often forget how close "angels" are to Angles: in a famous story by the Venerable Bede, Pope Gregory admires the flax-haired English slave boys at an auction, remarking that they must be called "Angles," because they have an "Angels face" [note 7]. As a plain speaker in the manner of Hal, Fenton's bid for Anne's hand proposes a version of the English tongue that is unadulterated by foreign terms, *au contraire*, it stands to conquer them.

The trouble is, Fenton doesn't have that much to say. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* would be a very short play indeed if it were devoted entirely to Fenton's love affair with Anne. Where other characters employ dictionary discourse, despite its instabilities or inefficiencies, to make themselves understood, to announce their identity, Fenton, as a member of a class that is more secure in its social position, and one that does not stand to gain from an increase in general access to foreign tongues, keeps his words to himself. He withholds his linguistic currency, saving it up, like money. His clarity and good sense prevent him from becoming caught up in the confusions that follow Caius' discovery of Simple in his closet – confusions over the identity of Anne's other suitors; confusions over the appointed location of the duel; and, throughout the play, consistent confusions over words and their meanings. Assiduously avoiding these muddles, Fenton speaks only when he is assured of Anne's love, and his diffidence vanishes as plans to elope. Here, Fenton makes a formal speech, comprised largely of monosyllabic, Anglo-Saxon words, and utterly free from the excesses of definition, synonym, and proverb that flow from the mouths of his rivals. In a play predominantly written in prose, Fenton's speech stands out as blank verse: the meter which English poets used to fashion itself as the poetic and cultural heir to the quantitative poetics of classical Rome. Here is the play at its most conservatively nationalistic: a plain-speaking hero emerges to claim once more for Brutus, the England that was conquered by William.

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As with many things Shakespearean, all would be certain were it not for Sir John Falstaff. Like Caius and Slender, Falstaff is defined through his relationship to French and to dictionary discourse: Mistress Page first describes him as a "Herod of Jewry" (II. i. 20), a figure that frequently lapses into French in medieval English mystery plays [note 8]. If Fenton represents language gaining status through scarcity, Falstaff's "French thrift" (I. iii. 80) gluts the market, exposing the linguistic adultery that has produced the English language, and rejoicing in the diminishing value of semantic return.

Falstaff, like Caius and Slender, evokes the dictionary by replicating its rhetorical conventions. Unlike Caius and Slender, however, Falstaff is a masterful and seductive speaker, even if his ignominious bid for adultery looks to be as long a shot as their

horrific, albeit, well-intentioned offers of marriage. He expands terms by supplementing them with proverbs: "A tapster is a good trade; an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a withered serving-man a fresh tapster" (I. iii. 15-17). He also appends needless synonyms to a word, expanding its meanings although delaying the communication of his own message. Falstaff employs this augmentation when he is being particularly disingenuous: when he swears himself to be a plain-dealer who refrains from the devious methods of common thieves: "to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch" (II. ii. 23-4); when he embellishes his account of his experience with Mistress Ford to her husband: "Embraced, kissed, protested" (III. v. 67); and, most fittingly, when he insists to Mistress Ford that he enjoys all of love's dilations, the "accoutrement, compliment, and the ceremony of it" (IV. ii. 5). In none of these cases does Falstaff speak honestly; he did not so much as lay a finger on Mistress Ford; and when it comes to actual lovemaking, he is a plainer speaker than his old chum Hal: "I cannot cog and say thou art this and that" (III. iii. 64-67). But the excess that Falstaff performs reflects English preconceptions concerning the differences between French and English speech: in a fascinating reflection on "the differences of phrasys between our tong and the french tong" the lexicographer Palsgrave points out that the French "have more words in a sentence than we have in the same," insinuating a kind of linguistic polygamy when he asserts "they have *three* words to express the name of a thing which we express by one word alone" (Sig. C. iii. v). When Falstaff pays court, then, he takes on the idiom through which the dictionary presents the language he associates with adultery.

Falstaff's aim is less erotic than fiscal: he wants to gain access to the "angels" that Ford has entrusted to his wife. Or is Angles? If so, Falstaff's desire for Ford's "angels" can be read as an effort to disrupt the wives' specifically Anglophone political and linguistic identity by constructing them as "always, already" adulterated. Thus, when Falstaff begins to woo Mistresses Page and Ford, he transforms Mistress Page's innocent English eyes into French "oeillades" (I. iii. 56). He misreads the wives' physical gestures as a foreign text which he must "English" and describes his efforts as a kind of translation exercise: "I can construe the action of her familiar style, and the hardest voice of her behaviour" (43-44). When Mrs. Page imagines the sorry state of an unfaithful wife, Falstaff says "Let the court of France show me such another" (III. iii. 48), misconstruing the faithful, monolingual English wives for his own fantasy of French adulteresses. However, Pistol confuses Falstaff's project by describing his friend's translation of the wives "out of honesty into *English*" (I. iii. 47) – this mistake disrupts the play's binary oppositions altogether, because it exposes the problem of imagining English, as Fenton does, as a self-contained, that is, faithful tongue that has not been adulterated by the foreign element of French, by suggesting that English cannot be imagined as a firm and fixed cultural or linguistic entity apart from French. Perhaps, then, Falstaff is not so wrong when he misconstrues the honest English wives as, in one respect at least, already adulterated?

Falstaff's best student, paradoxically, is his antagonist Ford, who actually adopts Falstaff's idiom when he disguises himself as Brook. In this respect, Ford fulfills Falstaff's vow "Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style" (II. ii. 272-273): although Falstaff means quite literally to "aggravate" and annoy Ford, "aggravate" also carries with it the meaning of "increase." When he poses as his own wife's suitor, Ford aggravates his style by augmenting his discourse through the employment of dictionary conventions.

Like Falstaff, Ford luxuriates in synonyms: "Her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow" (II.ii. 239-40); "a knot, a ging, a pack" (IV. ii. 109), but he also imagines himself the subject of his own proverb: "let them say of me, 'as jealous as Ford, that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman'" (IV. ii. 150-1). By taking on Falstaff's augmentary (and aggravating) mode, Ford confirms the dictionary's relationship to adultery: to pose as a potential adulterer, one must speak like a dictionary, that is, like Falstaff. This, then, is what Ford means when he complains about having to "stand under the adoption of abominable terms" (II. ii. 284). Ford literalizes this augmentation when he describes his feigned wooing: he has "engrossed opportunities to see her" (190) and he describes her welcome as "she enlargeth her mirth" (215). When Shakespeare uses the principles of Erasmian copiousness as a way of denoting adulterous impulses, he indicates how, like an extra-marital affair, the verbal copiousness of the bilingual dictionary can be seen to add an extra element into a one-to-one relationship between word and meaning, threatening the balance that exists between them, and undermining the possibility of locating the one appropriate *mot juste*.

Yet Falstaff's humiliation at the end of the play constitutes a kind of triumph of the "good English" that Anne, Fenton and Mistresses Ford and Page represent, and that throughout the play, is in danger of being besmirched or deformed. Falstaff is humiliated by the very language whose adulteration he relishes. While he has sought to make words (and wives) fly out of control, ultimately, Falstaff is controlled by them: he is repeatedly covered over by various forms of textile (which shares a Latin root with *texte*): hidden behind the arras; buried in dirty linen; and dressed in the clothing of a witch who works through magic language: "she works by charms, by spells, by the figure" (IV. ii. 162-163). Falstaff's immersion in linguistic variety is literalized, while its victory over him is actualized: sent out with the dirty linen for "bucking," and "horned" at Herne's oak, Falstaff is defeated by his bawdy meanings, humiliated by his own *cornucopia* (horn-of-plenty, if you're English). The tripartite structure of Falstaff's punishment (the buck-basket; the Fat Woman; the horns) recalls Falstaff's tendency to render synonyms in triplicate, and his immersion in the Thames contains a fabulous pun on the French pronunciation of "thème" – the starting point of a dictionary definition, which Falstaff himself points out when he says "I am your theme: you have start of me" (V. v. 162).

A lighthearted comedy that once languished as one of Shakespeare's more under-discussed, as well as under-valued plays, the breeziness of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* belies its trenchant investigation of linguistic issues. It reflects upon the emergence of the dictionary by figuring the parallel pursuits of marriage and adultery in terms as a siege on the integrity of the English language, thereby raising questions about the borders and boundaries of language as well as nationhood. As a product of a world rather like Windsor, and having much more in common with Caius, Slender and even Falstaff than with Fenton, Shakespeare is exploring the implications of his own irrepressible quibbling and polylingual punning, reflecting upon the dark side of what Samuel Johnson calls his "fatall Cleopatra." In many ways, Shakespeare's comedy must have pleased the courtly audience that assembled to watch it for an Order of the Garter celebration (the Order's motto, of course, is in French: *honi soit qui mal y pense*) because the play defeats those characters who embody the social and linguistic instabilities presented by the bilingual dictionary. While it raps the knuckles of the suspicious husbands with a motto that both

recalls and reinforces the aristocratic legacy of French in England, the motto also rejects Jack Falstaff's assumption that the English wives are ready adulteresses. Like the wives, who "may be merry and honest too" (IV. ii. 96), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* attempts to have it both ways: to insist upon and celebrate England's unadulterated separateness, while at the same time enjoying the wordplay that a multilingual society allows.

NOTES

1. Parker's elucidation of what she has called the "subterranean networks of wordplay" has greatly influenced my own thinking about linguistic politics in this play.
2. For a general discussion of the development of the dictionary in the Renaissance, see Starnes 1954. For a discussion of the Renaissance dictionary in England as a site for instruction and indoctrination in "royal absolutism" see Foley 1994. For a feminist analysis of a Renaissance model of French instruction, see Fleming 1989.
3. All further references to this text will be to the Oliver (1971) edition.
4. King Henry's description of Kate as a "fair flower de luce" in *Henry V* (V. ii. 210); Sir Philip Sidney's reference to the power of Edward IV over the "flower de luce" in *Astrophil and Stella* (75.9); and Perdita's "flower-de-luce" in *The Winter's Tale* (IV. iv. 127) all associate the flower directly with the royal heraldry of France. I am grateful to Stephen Orgel for leading me to these references.
5. Given so many indicators, it is difficult to see why the play's Arden editor, H. J. Oliver, could insist that Caius does *not* represent "a satire on the fad for foreign doctors" (:2).
6. *Henry V* in Evans, Blakemore, et al. eds. 1974. All further references to this text will be to this edition.
7. Parker (:144-147) discusses this pun in the context of a homoerotic reference toingles: boy favourites. Jeffrey Knapp (1992) also mentions this story.
8. See in particular R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds. In this cycle, Herod greets the Magi in French: "Bien soies venues, royes gent./ Me detes tout vetere entent" (VIII. 157-158).

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