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David Crystal. *The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp 704.

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This unique book, the result of more than a decade of research, offers a careful, nuanced account of the sounds and rhythms of individual words, as they might have sounded to the audiences of Shakespeare's day, revealing rhymes and puns that are often lost or unclear in many varieties of Present Day English (PDE). In doing so, it provides fresh insights into Shakespeare's work for a wide range of readers.

The book's two main components are a detailed 42-page introductory section setting out the parameters of the 'original pronunciation' (OP) project, followed by the 645 pages of dictionary itself. The introduction maps out the basis and scope of the dictionary, beginning by sketching out the applied linguistic landscape in which the study is situated — the application of historical phonology to the works of Shakespeare. Crystal follows this with a description of the structure of the dictionary entries and the nature of the evidence used to arrive at the pronunciation choices made. A consideration of the use of OP locates the dictionary within developments in the field, both past and present. The final section of the introduction provides a clear and accessible account of the transcription conventions used in the dictionary. In addition to explaining how the OP insights in the dictionary are arrived at, Crystal also provides answers to questions as to how these insights might be usefully applied at various points throughout the introduction. This review will consider these issues of discovery and application.

Crystal acknowledges at the outset that, despite a century of scholarly historical phonological research, scant evidence informs us as to what early modern English actually sounded like, and that what he offers here are recommendations that are 'plausible, and (in a situation such as a theatrical setting) usable and effective' (ix). Indeed, in a study that is anchored throughout with careful reminders, nuances, and caveats, Crystal is alert to the possibilities for over-interpretation and reminds the reader that what he presents here is not to be thought of as 'Shakespeare's accent', for which there exists no definitive evidence.

In order to elucidate how he compiled the dictionary, Crystal sets out the evidence he used to arrive at decisions about pronunciation. Having compiled a list of all the words found in the dialogue and stage directions of the 36 plays

contained in an electronic version of the First Folio, including all spelling variations, he carefully cross-referenced the list with evidence from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) on etymology and suggested pronunciation (xii–xiii). The dictionary entries note the frequency of use of the variant spellings (with a reminder about early modern typesetting practices in which no two editions are identical). Actors and directors in particular will enjoy this beneficial feature, priming them as to which words will demand more attention and preparation.

Crystal then compared this list with a list of rhymes for each headword and its inflections, collated from the complete Shakespearean canon including the poems. This material provides some of the most startling examples of the differences between OP and PDE: for example, *war* is found to rhyme with *scar* (*The Rape of Lucrece* 831) and *jar* (*Venus and Adonis* 98), but never with PDE rhymes such as *more*; so *wars* rhymes with *stars* in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (3.2.408) (xxi). Similarly, lines which appear troublesome on the page, such as Friar Lawrence's rhyme of *prove* and *love,* are resolved when *prove* is shown to have had the same vowel sound here as *glove* (xx): 'For this alliance may so happy prove, / To turn your households' rancour to pure love' (*Romeo and Juliet* 2.3.86–7). As always, Crystal is careful to nuance this process to avoid criticisms of earlier studies that attempted to stretch claims for likely rhymes too far. He is equally careful with the use of puns and wordplay to support decisions about pronunciation. He triangulated these deductions about sounds and rhymes with the final source of evidence, that which comes from observations about language use made by other writers of the period (see, for example, xxi, xxiv).

The dictionary entries themselves are similar in several ways to those of standard dictionaries. Each headword includes morphological inflections, indicating word class, much as in a standard dictionary. Crystal notes that the part of speech can sometimes correlate usefully with spelling and pronunciation, such as the distinction between the adjective and past participle of *curse* (the adjective *cursed,* pronounced as two syllables; the past participle, typically spelled *curs't,* pronounced as a monosyllable) (xiv). The use of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcription to signal pronunciation might initially appear daunting to the uninitiated. However, Crystal offers a clear explanation, with examples, in the introduction (xl–xlviii). With a little practice, and access to the accompanying online sound files, it is possible to quickly recognize differences in pronunciation and resolve doubts about scansion and rhymes that are not clear in PDE.

The sound files, part of the online resources on the OUP website, give Crystal's own pronunciation for each entry (including any suggested possible variations). The sound files are searchable, which makes precise queries easy to pin

down, although many insights arise just by browsing — such as the clarification that in the name of *Titus Andronicus*'s Tamora, the stress falls on the first syllable, not the penultimate one (551); the rhyming of *juice* with *voice* or *boy* (304); or the prevalence of the post-vocalic /r/ that an accent such as the Shakespeare-on-stage 'standard' Received Pronunciation (RP) has little trace of today (unlike accents such as General American or Hiberno-English which still retain the rhoticity).

Crystal is keen to reassure the reader that the phonology of the spoken English that Shakespeare and his contemporaries would have been accustomed to is not entirely alien to present day ears, as a significant proportion of sounds remain much the same. However, the sounds that have changed, particularly vowel sounds and word stress, produce a soundscape that is 'distinctive, fresh, and intriguing, opening up new directions for linguistic, literary, and theatrical enquiry' (ix). In relation to such an 'opening up', Crystal notes two particular advantages to working with OP in approaching Shakespeare's work which at first sight seem somewhat contradictory, both its unfamiliarity and its familiarity.

On one hand, he suggests the very unfamiliarity of OP opens up new possibilities for understanding characters, in that as an accent it carries few of the preconceptions about aspects of identity that modern actors and audiences may hold in relation to PDE accents. According to Crystal, the early modern period had no prestige accent with associations equivalent to the elite, class-laden baggage of RP today (xxviii). Crystal notes, however, that this question of accent might be problematic for a modern audience unable to entirely disassociate themselves from the unintended 'interference' of their own evaluations about accent and identity when hearing a character who 'drops their h's', for example (xxix). Yet, Crystal argues, when used knowingly, the number of alternative pronunciations offered in the dictionary might elicit different characterizations and interactions to consider in rehearsal (x).

On the other hand, Crystal suggests that those accustomed to PDE accents beyond the boundaries of RP will find a degree of familiarity that can create a point of contact for actors and audiences who recognize something of their own regional accent in the OP (x). Bearing in mind the perennial issue of 'alienation' for many people approaching Shakespeare, the sense of familiarity with the sounds of early modern English might be of enormous benefit for teachers, students, and theatre makers trying to push beyond approaches to Shakespeare that rely on 'prestige' RP interpretations of Shakespeare. To assist with these aims, the material offered here would benefit from an accompanying detachable 'cribsheet' of the IPA transcription conventions and from downloadable sound files to allow for more immediate reference, and to render the book more dynamically

useful than a somewhat cumbersome volume, particularly in the rehearsal room or classroom.

On the whole, this book is an accessible, useable account of early modern phonology, particularly impressive when bearing in mind the particular demands and expectations of producing a major scholarly reference work for a publisher such as OUP. Crystal presents his robust, careful research, drawing together insights from linguistics, Shakespearean studies, and theatre practice, with his typical clarity and user-friendly style, repaying both targeted queries and meandering browsing. Each query as to how or why the dictionary was compiled is answered within a few paragraphs of it coming to mind, often with pertinent and arresting examples. Crystal certainly achieves his stated aim, to aid those wishing to 'present' Shakespeare from the perspective of OP. As he declares in the preface, this study is 'not just an academic exercise, but something that actually worked onstage' (vi). However, this distinctive resource will also provide insights for a wide range of users beyond theatre makers, including scholars, teachers, and students, the wider early modern heritage industry, as well as linguists with an interest in phonology, sociolinguistics, or stylistics.