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King Henry VI: **The pragma-stylistics of war discourse**

Treason, internal conflicts between the supporters of the Yorks and the Lancasters, the fratricidal war in England, and a war in France, all make the first tetralogy of Shakespeare's *King Henry VI* plays extremely rich in discourses of power struggle and a good candidate for a pragmatic examination of dramatic text in context. In order to define a successful politician in the plays I will apply pragmatic theories, which have increasingly been used to analyse Shakespearean drama. The theory of politeness (Brown and Gilman 1989) helps investigate the strategic manipulation of language, which expedites our conversational goals by saying what is socially appropriate. Impoliteness (Culpeper 1996, 2011, 2017) in interaction causes social conflict and disharmony, as interlocutors purposefully violate politeness rules to offend one another. The (im)politeness theory has a prominent place in the reading of Shakespearean histories, and serves as a means of characterisation, in particular the characterisation of kings and politicians in their struggle for power. The use of politeness theory with its reliance on "face" (image of self) allows to elucidate the linguistic manipulations of the military discourse of kings and political leaders, as well as the numerous pragmatic strategies used by Shakespeare's politicians to achieve their (conversational) goals. I wish to demonstrate how Henry VI's political inadequacy is reflected in his speech as given to him by Shakespeare (in relation to such pragmatic strategies as hiding one's real intention vs. telling the truth, and positive and negative (im)politeness strategies employed to deal with political conflicts). I will compare Henry VI's "face management" (Spencer-Oatey 2002) in communication with that of Richard, the Duke of York's or Edward's, the future king's. The aim of my pragma-stylistic analysis of war discourse in *King Henry VI* is 1) to provide a deeper insight into power policies of the early modern period, and 2) to demonstrate how the (im)politeness theory can be used as a means of characterisation in fictional communication.

REFERENCES:

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