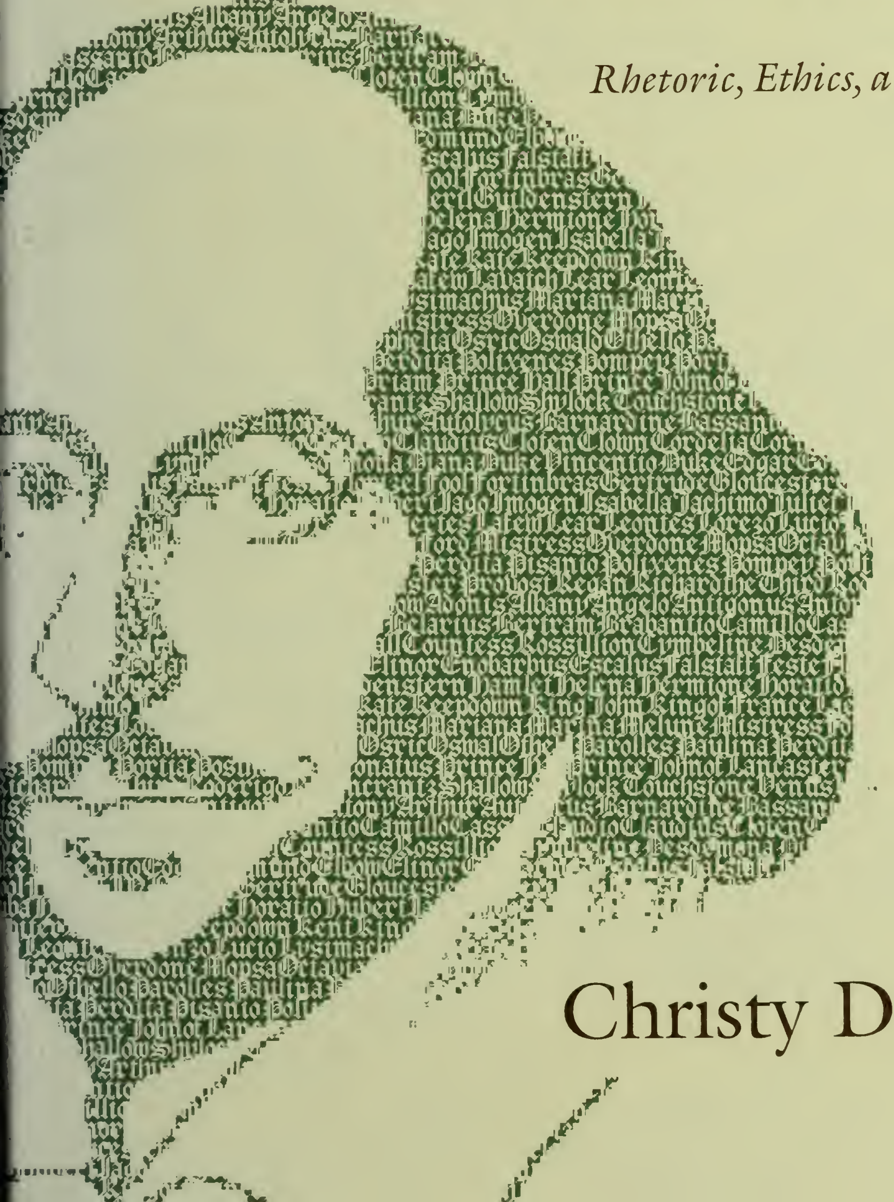
Reading Shakespeare's Characters



Rhetoric, Ethics, and Identity

Christy Desmet

Reading Shakespeare's Characters
Rhetoric, Ethics, and Identity

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Although current theory has discredited the idea of a coherent, transcendent self, Shakespeare's characters still make themselves felt as a presence for readers and viewers alike. Confronting this paradox, Christy Desmet explores the role played by rhetoric in fashioning and representing Shakespearean character. She draws on classical and Renaissance texts, as well as on the work of such twentieth-century critics as Kenneth Burke and Paul de Man, bringing classical, Renaissance, and contemporary rhetoric into fruitful collision.

Desmet redefines the nature of character by analyzing the function of character criticism and by developing a new perspective on Shakespearean character. She shows how rhetoric shapes character within the plays and the way characters are "read." She also examines the relationship between technique and theme by considering the connections between rhetorical representation and dramatic illusion and by discussing the relevance of rhetorical criticism to issues of gender. Works analyzed include *Hamlet, Cymbeline, King John, Othello, The Winter's Tale, King Lear, Venus and Adonis, Measure for Measure,* and *All's Well That Ends Well.*

Reading Shakespeare's Characters

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Reading Shakespeare's Characters

Rhetoric, Ethics, and Identity

CHRISTY DESMET

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For my family,
Rosemary, James, and Clark Desmet
and for my husband,
David Schiller

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Reading Shakespeare's Characters

INTRODUCTION

Recent literary theory has successfully discredited the notion of a transcendent, coherent self, what Richard Lanham has called the "central self." In *Of Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida pursued to its conclusion the ramifications of a Saussurian linguistics, which is based on the nonidentity of signifier and signified. Writing, says Derrida, finally involves a "forgetting of the self."[1] Because Bradleyian criticism of Shakespeare reigned unchallenged for so long, the need to "forget the self" has been felt especially strongly in Shakespearean studies. In *The Subject of Tragedy*, for instance, Catherine Belsey defines for Renaissance scholars the subject's fate under writing's rigorous rule: "To be a subject is to have access to signifying practice, to identify with the 'I' of utterance and the 'I' who speaks. The subject is held in place in a specific discourse, a specific knowledge, by the meanings available there. In so far as signifying practice always precedes the individual, is always learned, the subject is a subjected being, an effect of the meanings it seems to possess."[2] The subject, therefore, is an effect of language, a textual character as much as a person who speaks and acts in the world.

Practical criticism has begun to explore the social construction of Shakespearean identity through the metaphor of "self as cultural text," but the role played by rhetoric in fashioning and representing Shakespearean character has not been explored sufficiently. Richard Lanham, Joel Altman, Marion Trousdale, and Karen Newman have already considered from a historical perspective the uses to which Renaissance drama put its rich rhetorical heritage, but none is concerned specifically with the rhetoric of characterization. Conversely, a book such as Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, though alert to the plays' rhetorical sophistication, never focuses directly on the shaping of identity through rhetorical means.

This book, which attempts to generate a rhetoric of Shakespearean character, draws on classical and Renaissance rhetorical texts but also takes into account the reinterpretation of classical rhetoric by contemporary rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke and Paul de Man, who consider directly the importance of language in shaping the self. The attempt to bring classical, Renaissance, and contemporary rhetoric into fruitful collision seems necessary: Critics steeped in the postmodern tradition sometimes distinguish too vehemently between their own concern with Shakespeare's language and the naive explorations of his characters by earlier critics; less frequently, perhaps, historical explorations of Shakespearean language distinguish too absolutely between Renaissance rhetorical praxis and the responses of later audiences. As literary critics, we have learned to recognize difference: Now perhaps is the time to rediscover the art of finding resemblances.

Discussion of the self's ambiguous status in the drama originates with Aristotle's *Poetics*. The *Poetics* is a crucial text in the history of Shakespearean character criticism; through its connection with the *Rhetoric* and Aristotle's writings on ethics, it is also relevant to classical and Renaissance representations of ethical character. According to Gerald Else's careful explication of Aristotle's text, the *Poetics* offers two fundamentally opposed accounts of character's nature and dramatic function. These antithetical views of character can be articulated by exploring the relationship in drama between plot and character. Aristotle begins by subordinating character to plot. Discussing imitation in general in chapter 2, he says that "the objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad—the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since it is by badness and excellence [that] men differ in character. It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are; in the same way as, with the painters, the personages of Polygnotus are better than we are, those of Pauson worse, and those of Dionysius just like ourselves."[3]

Action, the subject of imitation, is performed by agents who exhibit ethical tendencies that place them somewhere along a continuum of virtue and vice. By privileging tragedy over comedy in chapter 6, Aristotle confirms that character is dependent on plot. Tragedy, he says, "is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life. [All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions that we are happy or the reverse.] In a play accordingly they do not act in order to portray the characters; they include the characters for the sake of the action."[4] This dense and (according to Else) generally misunderstood passage fuses ethical and aesthetic criteria. The end or goal of a play's action, like that of human life, is either happiness or misery, which is accomplished by participation in politics and public affairs; for this reason heroes are characterized by *arête*, which could be defined more as a nobility of blood than as moral virtue. Men in action, as men *of* public action, will be either taken seriously or dismissed as people of "no account," falling toward either end of the spectrum.

According to Else, character emerges from plot because "the fundamental principle of Aristotle's theory of character-development is that *we become what we do*, that our acts harden into character."[5] In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, we acquire virtues as we do crafts. We become builders by building, and harpists by playing the harp; in the same way, "we become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage."[6] Since character emerges from action, virtue, which is defined as a tendency to act virtuously, becomes habitual through repeated action. But if virtue is like craftsmanship—if good people act ethically in the same way that good builders produce good buildings and competent harpists produce good music—Aristotle risks falling into tautology. The *Nicomachean Ethics* addresses the problem of origins by limiting the analogy to crafts. In the case of crafts or the arts, "excellence lies in the result itself." In other words, in craftsmanship excellence is self-evident, since crafts are defined by production: "But in the case of the virtues an act is not performed justly or with self-control if the act itself is of a certain kind, but only if in addition the agent has certain characteristics as he performs it."[7] The agent must have knowledge that he acts virtuously (the least important of Aristotle's three criteria), choose to act virtuously, and behave not accidentally but from a settled disposition toward virtue. When character is considered as a by-product of plot, drama is closely related to ethics: Dramatic agents have ethical character so that we may judge their actions as we judge men at the end of their public lives.

In the second half of Aristotle's *Poetics*, by contrast, character seems to become a source for action and calls for a different kind of response from audiences. In chapter 13, Aristotle locates the source of tragic catharsis in the hero: Pity is aroused by "undeserved misfortune," fear by the misfortune of "one like ourselves."[8] Aristotle works out a formula for this good but recognizably human hero: He is an "intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some fault." The hero must also enjoy "great reputation and prosperity."[9] Plot is still central to audience response, since the hero falls not because he is inherently flawed but because of a bad choice or "error of judgement" (*hamartia*). Responding properly to the imitation of his "action" depends on apprehending the concatenation of events leading to and proceeding from that choice.

Having the action depend on the *hero's* mistake, as opposed to the hero's *mistake*, however, makes his individuating qualities less peripheral to dramatic experience. Chapter 15 of the *Poetics* lists four requirements for character: goodness or badness, appropriateness or decorum, verisimilitude (being "like the reality"), and consistency. "Appropriateness," an insistence that the character conform to social expectations, and "goodness" maintain Aristotle's emphasis on plot. But the addition of verisimilitude and consistency complicates matters. Reintroducing the analogy to portraiture, Aristotle suggests that, "as tragedy is an imitation of personages better than the ordinary man, we should follow the example of good portrait-painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is. The poet in like manner, in portraying men quick or slow to anger, or with similar infirmities of character, must know how to represent them as such, and at the same time as good men."[10]

In his painstaking analysis of the *Poetics* and its problems, Else argues that Aristotle, by reinvoking the portrait analogy, alters his notion of tragic character. Earlier Aristotle imagined that the poet takes the "good man" and then makes him "like," since dramatic agents generally seem to be "better" or "worse" than us.[11] In this passage, however, the poet starts with a faithful picture of reality and improves on it: "The difference is considerable. In the first case the good man is the existing object which the poet imitates and to which he may add traits of 'likeness'; in the second case ordinary reality is the basic object, which the poet subsequently 'beautifies' in order to make it suitable for tragedy."[12] The hero's imperfections, in the second case, are necessary to the mechanism of catharsis: Neither a hyperbolically virtuous hero nor an unjustly successful villain would encourage catharsis. Aristotle's new tragic hero, both good and imperfect—like us—begins to free himself from the restrictions of his plot and to call for psychological identification rather than ethical judgment.

The *Poetics'* second, more familiar account of character and catharsis underlies the readings of traditional character critics from Samuel Johnson to A. C. Bradley. But the first account, in which ethical character emerges from an agent's actions and solidifies through practice into habit, is also crucial to understanding Shakespearean character. The creation of ethical character in Shakespeare's plays and the practice of ethical criticism by his critics are the subjects of this book. Chapter 1 suggests ways of reading ethical character by examining theories of identification against the practice of identification in *Hamlet*. Chapter 2, which traces the motives of early character criticism, suggests that we have underestimated the extent to which Shakespeare's early critics practiced "ethical criticism" and so provides a link between Shakespearean characters and their reception by later readers. Chapters 3 and 4 construct a rhetoric of Shakespearean character based on classical and Renaissance rhetoric. Chapter 3 analyzes the construction of character through rhetorical forms such as the *controversiae* and *progymnasmata*, and chapter 4 considers the function of tropes, particularly hyperbole, in making and unmaking Shakespearean character. Chapter 5 extends the discussion of how rhetoric shapes the self from the plays to their readers and auditors by redefining dramatic illusion in rhetorical terms. Finally, chapter 6, which examines the relationship between rhetoric and gender in several problematic Shakespearean works, outlines the benefits and limitations of identification with the Other.

In this book, I use the term "character" specifically in four ways: to refer to written characters or alphabetical letters; to refer to

Shakespeare's dramatis personae; to refer to the ethical identity or *ethos* of those dramatic persons; and to refer to the Renaissance genre of the Character. In the last case, I make the distinction clear by capitalizing the word "Character." But I do not want to limit the term's historically rich range of associations with a too rigid terminology. In her elegant anatomy of terms for literary agents, Amélie Oksenberg Rorty defines figures "by their place in an unfolding drama." "Figures" are agents who are identified by their occupation or by their actions, as in Aristotelian drama. "Characters," on the other hand, are "by nature defined and delineated. If they change, they do so because it is in their character to do so under specific circumstances. Their natures form their responses to experiences, rather than being formed by them." A "person," who can be found in court and in drama, "comes to stand behind his roles, to select them and to be judged by his choices and his capacities to act out his personae in a total structure that is the unfolding of his drama."[13] In an Aristotelian ethics, however, these three kinds of agents can be versions of one another. Depending on circumstances, anyone who acts in the public arena can become a figure, a character, or a person. As qualities are reinforced by habitually repeated action, one necessarily becomes a character, in Rorty's sense of the term. When an agent dies or when his play is over, by definition he becomes a person submitted to judgment. Finding himself in the midst of an action, particularly one with archetypal overtones, the agent may well be a figure. In this book, I use the common term "character" with a sense of the range of meanings outlined above.

Adopting Paul de Man's term, I have called the process of interacting with Shakespeare's characters "reading," but I do not mean to equate reading Shakespeare's plays with reading a novel. De Man's allegories of reading accept as given a complicated relationship between speech and writing, between sound and the written word. Renaissance rhetorical practice also involves an ambiguous relationship between oral and written composition. Formulas for writing letters, for instance, are often modeled on the spoken oration, and oral practice is frequently based on close imitation of written texts. Jonathan Goldberg's book, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*, suggests just how complex the relationship is, both in theory and practice.[14] Finally, although Frank Lentricchia has opposed Kenneth Burke and Paul de Man as rhetoricians, I have identified them with one another, following Burke's dictum that identification presupposes division.[15] In each instance, and throughout the book in general, I have attempted to honor Burke's idea that rhetoric works not by removing, but by "heaping up" different meanings and different perspectives. As Burke says in "The Philosophy of Literary Form," "the main ideal of criticism, as I conceive it, is to use all that is there to use."[16]

ONE

“Th’ Observ’d of All Observers”

Reading Character in Theory and Practice

EXORDIUM

This chapter begins, as orations could, with an exemplum. In *Hamlet*’s nunnery scene, the most histrionic yet most terrifying of the prince’s mad performances, Shakespeare allows Ophelia a concluding soliloquy, in which she anatomizes briefly Hamlet’s condition:

> O, what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!
> The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword,
> Th’ expectation and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> Th’ observ’d of all observers, quite, quite down!
> And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
> That suck’d the honey of his [music] vows,
> Now see [that] noble and most sovereign reason
> Like sweet bells jangled out of time, and harsh;
> That unmatch’d form and stature of blown youth
> Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me
> T’ have seen what I have seen, see what I see!
> (3.1.150–61)[1]

Critics generally read the speech as a passionate outburst, in which feelings that have been running quietly underground surface violently. Another way of stating the issue might be to say that in this speech we hear only Ophelia’s concluding couplet: “O, woe is me / T’ have seen what I have seen, see what I see!” The few readers who listen attentively to her rhetoric have been decidedly unimpressed. Compared with Hamlet’s richly intellectual “To be or not to be” soliloquy, the bulk of Ophelia’s brief speech seems “all surface and starch.”[2]

Performance practice, dramatic convention, and critical bias account partly for the pervasive deafness to Ophelia's voice in the nunnery scene. In performance Ophelia's lines are cut ruthlessly.[3] In this particular speech, the formal expectation that a soliloquy mirrors the mind of its speaker also focuses attention on its heightened intonations.[4] Finally, the critics' lack of interest in Ophelia's rhetorical contribution to the nunnery scene reflects traditional assessments of her character. Ophelia is a cipher, a "plot device" or pawn used by her father, her lover, and Shakespeare himself; at most she seems a "sacrifice to the general meaninglessness and loneliness pervading the play."[5] Critics who do treat Ophelia as a person consider her defective in some way. Those who regard her fondly as a young victim speak as "Laertes critics." To A. C. Bradley, Ophelia is an inexperienced child; to J. M. Nosworthy and Harold Jenkins, she is the image of Jephtha's daughter, unjustly condemned to a virgin's death. All three interpretations stress Ophelia's arrested development. "Hamlet critics," by contrast, adopt Hamlet's own moral revulsion against women. Dame Rebecca West, the most notorious of these skeptics, dismisses as "bizarre" the assumption that Hamlet's "relations with Ophelia were innocent and that Ophelia was a correct and timid virgin of exquisite sensibilities." In the hands of her unscrupulous father, according to West, Ophelia has become a "disreputable young woman"; the proof lies in her willingness to listen to Hamlet's dirty talk during the Mousetrap play.[6] As a person responsible for her own fate, therefore, Ophelia is judged and found lacking.

Interestingly, the most complex assessments of Ophelia's character emerge from iconographic readings that recognize in her the presence of contradictory mythic images. She is both Virgin and repentant Magdalene. Even in her role as Magdalene, she stands both for spiritual succor and for dangerous sexuality. Through her ambiguous flowers, Ophelia is also associated with Flora, who is at once nature goddess and urban prostitute.[7] Significantly, however, Ophelia has complexity only when she is silenced and made an object of sight.[8]

What happens, however, when we listen to rather than look at Ophelia? What happens when we perceive her as using language rather than being constructed by it? If Ophelia is seriously acknowledged as an orator in the nunnery scene, not just as a woman on the verge of madness, her speech seems to have both structure and a rhetorical function. Three-fourths of the soliloquy is an exercise in amplification, ringing changes on the opening statement, "O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!" By evoking "the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword," Ophelia draws on a standard rhetorical scheme, familiar to Shakespeare's culture from Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*.[9] Within this ordered framework, she defines Hamlet first by synecdoche, then by metaphor. Hamlet is both the "expectation" and the "rose" of the Danish state; he is also "the *glass* of fashion and the *mould* of form" (my emphases). Alternating concrete metaphors signifying Hamlet's present value (the rose and mirror) with more abstract metaphors for his future potential (the word "expectation" and the metaphor of Hamlet as an empty "mould" to be filled), Ophelia's speech artfully balances present against future in a chiasmic pattern. Only then does Ophelia attend to her own plight as the "most deject and wretched" of ladies; only then does she abandon herself to emotion.

Ophelia's speech, defining Hamlet's character at the moment when he ceases to be himself, belongs to epideictic rhetoric; epideictic is that branch of classical rhetoric that deals with praise and blame and is particularly appropriate to ceremonial occasions. Long before Fortinbras delivers his judgment over Hamlet's dead body, then, Ophelia has offered her own eulogy. The presence of public rhetoric in the midst of so much passion and confusion raises general questions about the representation and reception of dramatic character. We get access to the inner Hamlet only through his public self, working from the outside in. Ophelia resorts first to the insignia of Hamlet's public roles—the sword, eye, and tongue—all of which stand for the aspiring prince by synecdoche. Less tangible features, the inner qualities that make Hamlet a person rather than a pasteboard courtier like Osric, must be represented by metaphor. Hamlet's character, in other words, appears to be socially constructed. In anthropologist Clifford Geertz's terms, he is a cultural artifact; as Richard Lanham puts it, he is "rhetorical man."[10] Ophelia's soliloquy verifies an important lesson of postmodern Shakespearean criticism: Because direct portrayal of subjectivity is impossible, the self's integrity or self-presence is revealed as a fiction. Hamlet has ethical character only when he has ceased to be himself, first in madness and finally in death. The portrait of Hamlet affirms that the self, if not constructed solely by discourse, becomes comprehensible only through rhetorical representations.

But the puzzle with which this chapter began, the critics' unwillingness to acknowledge Ophelia as a rhetor, remains to be solved. If Hamlet is rhetorical man in the nunnery scene, why do we not see Ophelia as rhetorical woman? As I will argue, the practical problem of how to read Ophelia's formal portrait of Hamlet and the critical problem of how to "read" Ophelia's character are connected. Although readers, directors, and critics may regard her through patriarchal stereotypes, the rhetoric available to Ophelia conspires to silence her. Hamlet, speaking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at their first uneasy meeting, deflects their probing with a philosophical aside into man's nature: "What [a] piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me—nor women neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so" (2.2.303–10). This piece of amplification, a simple succession of parallel clauses, moves inexorably to its climax. What must be taken for granted, once the series of phrases has been set in motion, is the definition of "man." The generic term "man" includes woman, although the meaningful looks of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern prompt Hamlet to decline to distinguish woman from man as an origin for his unnamed melancholy. As Catherine Belsey suggests, in Hamlet's speech man is present, while woman is present only as a concluding joke.[11]

Hamlet is constructed through language and Ophelia excluded by it; but our understanding of how rhetoric fashions the self becomes complicated by the fact that both Hamlet and Ophelia are users of language, not just effects of language. To see Hamlet as a typical courtier, we must regard Ophelia momentarily not as a character—as Flora, an innocent child, or even a disreputable young lady—but as a speaking person. If the Hamlet we watch in the nunnery scene is rhetorical man, then Ophelia is rhetorical woman in a much different sense: She is woman as orator.

Regarding Ophelia as a speaking person encourages scrutiny of her own motives in this scene. Because Ophelia is a player in the action she describes, being made the "most deject and wretched" of ladies by Hamlet's antics, her portrait of Hamlet is not a disinterested mirror of his past glory and present degradation. Ophelia contrasts Hamlet's reason with madness by comparing sweet with harsh jangling bells. The same metaphor expresses her own loss, since she is personified as the bee who sucked the "honey music" of Hamlet's vows: Hamlet's status as a "ruined bud" comes from the perspective of the bee denied honey. Ophelia's participation in her own tropological drama therefore affects her portrait of Hamlet, so that our understanding of him is bound up with our evaluation of Ophelia. We read Ophelia reading Hamlet. In this way, the problem of character (Who is Hamlet and what are the sources of his identity?) necessarily entails the question of reading character (How do we interpret what Ophelia tells us about him?).

Hamlet treats selfconsciously the interplay between speaker and rhetorical subject in the Player's speech and in Hamlet's reaction to it; a consideration of this scene can therefore shed light on the relationships among the critic, Ophelia as speaker, and Hamlet. In the Player's speech, Ophelia's exemplary reading of Hamlet's character is complicated by her structural kinship with Hecuba, the "mobled queen," whose clamorous outburst brings tears to the Player's eyes and gives Hamlet his own motive and cue for passion. Though thematically Hecuba's status as a grieving widow invites a comparison between her and Gertrude, Hecuba also resembles Ophelia as a choric figure who can do nothing but mourn her dead. Hecuba, like Ophelia, perceives a mad world where time has frozen and men have solidified as "characters." Pyrrhus, "horridly trick'd / With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons" and covered with "coagulate gore," is hyperbolically evil (2.2.457–58, 462). "Reverent Priam," with his milky head and weak arm, stands for all that is good and soon to be destroyed. Once Pyrrhus rouses himself from his abstraction and his sword descends on Priam's head, their action is over; Hecuba, again like Ophelia, solemnizes the end with an outburst of grief.

As Harry Levin notes in his well-known explication of the Player's speech, Hecuba is embedded in a complex chain of relationships, extending from the gods down to Shakespeare's own audience. Within this hierarchical chain, actors and audiences interact differently. At the chain's bottom, the theater audience merely "reacts" to the actor representing the Player; at the top, the gods actively show "compassion" for Hecuba. For Levin, the gods' compassion toward Hecuba epitomizes vicarious participation in another's plight. Empathy, as the highest form of response, cultivates harmony and cosmic community.[12] Levin's symmetrical Great Chain of Oratory, although compelling, ignores two facts. First, the conventions of performance forestall a sympathetic union of its various speakers and actors. If the gods saw Hecuba, the Player claims, they "would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven." The Player's own audience is exhorted to pronounce treason against Fortune with a tongue steeped in venom (2.2.517, 510–11). In fact, neither response is expected: By the laws of narrative and history Hecuba's cry must go unheeded; by the rule of decorum the Player's auditors must hold their tongues. For dramatic performances are always in the subjunctive mood.

Second, Hamlet's reaction raises the possibility that audience response can be quixotic or colored by extraneous factors. Although the story of Priam's death and Pyrrhus's revenge resembles Hamlet's own situation in several ways, he responds to the speech selfconsciously; Hamlet asks not what lesson he can learn from Pyrrhus's vengeance or from Hecuba's grief but about the Player's kinship with Hecuba: "What's Hecuba to him, or he to {Hecuba,} / That he should weep for her?" (2.2.559–60). Speculating on the Player's tie with Hecuba, which brings tears to his eyes, Hamlet imagines what the Player would do in his own situation:

> drown the stage with tears,
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
> Make mad the guilty, and appall the free,
> Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
> The very faculties of eyes and ears. (2.2.562–66)

Hamlet, in other words, observes himself by observing the Player—that is, by reading or interpreting the Player's imagined link to Hecuba. The character in the Player's speech who speaks most directly to Hamlet's dilemma is Pyrrhus, who in killing Priam avenges his own father Achilles. Pyrrhus seems to spark Hamlet's interest in this particular speech, since Hamlet prompts the Player by beginning with Pyrrhus's entry "like th' Hyrcanian beast," a false formula that he immediately corrects. Yet although specific points of comparison between their situations can be listed, this most obvious and pragmatic of identifications is never realized.

Critics tend to define Hamlet's failure to act in this scene rhetorically. Lawrence Danson thinks that the Player's old-fashioned declamation, although effective in its context, cannot provide Hamlet with words suitable for his revenge; as a consequence, Hamlet can only unpack his heart with words and "fall a-cursing like a very drab" (2.2.586). Howard Felperin, on the other hand, thinks that Hamlet, not the rhetoric available to him, is at fault. Trying to recast his experience as a morality play, Hamlet attempts to make himself a two-dimensional character in a three-dimensional world; he mistakenly strives for the simplicity that characterizes Pyrrhus.[13] Both positions, however, assume that *Hamlet*'s self-referential moments undermine mimesis; both therefore imply that histrionics blunt serious purpose and that heavy-handed rhetoric interferes with identification and action.[14] Richard Lanham comes closer to the mark by recognizing that in *Hamlet* histrionic oratory is both pervasive and functional. Hamlet's response to the Player's speech is to go him one better.[15] The agonistic dimension of the "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I" speech proves Hamlet's general identification with the Player's fiction; but in Hamlet's case identification, although not arbitrary, is neither complete nor directly purposeful. The speaker's mediation between Hamlet and Hecuba and between Hamlet and Pyrrhus defers and deflects identification by calling attention to his formal rhetoric. Rather than emulate Pyrrhus directly as an example of filial piety, Hamlet analyzes himself by meditating on the Player's demonstration of emotion.[16]

The Player's speech represents in magnified form the always expanding but unstable network of identifications put into motion by rhetorical performance; it can therefore provide a model for the critical reception and evaluation of Ophelia's rhetoric, the topic with which this chapter began. Observing Ophelia reading Hamlet's behavior, I entered the play's chain of relationships by identifying *with* Ophelia as speaker in order to revise critical conceptions of her. Then, by reflecting on Ophelia's participation in her own drama, I asked more selfconsciously, "What's Hamlet to her, and she to him?" I "read" her first as a person, then as a character much like the Player's grief-driven Hecuba. Ophelia and Hamlet themselves provide emblems of the extremes of identification: At one end of the spectrum is Ophelia's agonized cry, at the other Hamlet's coolly speculative question. These extremes mark as well a range for critical response.

NARRATIO

If the critic, reader, or spectator of *Hamlet* participates in the process of identification, observing herself by analyzing Ophelia, Hamlet, Hecuba, and the Player, character criticism can function, in Kenneth Burke's phrase, as "equipment for living."[17] But exactly how reading character functions as equipment for living has been debated since the time of Plato's dialogues. Because contemporary critics, in their effort to read rigorously and carefully, have denied critical readers the pleasures of identification, we have lost sight of what some rhetoricians now call the "ethics of reading." Before attempting to define the kind of "identification" that takes place in reading Shakespearean character, therefore, I will trace historically the discussion of identification's moral and political effect, a debate that links the rhetorical and theatrical traditions.

Ambivalence toward identification's rhetorical function can be traced back at least to Plato's war against the sophists and rhetors; it appears historically in different guises but generally involves a fear of impersonation that is grounded in a conservative ideology. In Plato's *Gorgias*, Socrates builds his case against the rhetors on Gorgias's boast that he can more successfully persuade a patient to take medicine or submit to surgery than can the patient's own physician. Building his counterattack on the rhetor's lack of knowledge about the subjects on which he speaks, Socrates ignores Gorgias's more daring claim that a rhetorician could not only surpass the doctor at his own job but also be mistaken for a doctor: "I claim too," Gorgias continues, that "if a rhetorician and a doctor visited any city you like to name and they had to contend in argument before the Assembly or any other gathering as to which of the two should be chosen as doctor, the doctor would be nowhere, but the man who could speak would be chosen, if he so wished." There is "no subject on which a rhetorician would not speak more persuasively than any other craftsman, before a crowd. Such then is the scope and character of rhetoric."[18] Socrates, arguing in response that the rhetorician has no “art” but merely a bag of tricks, rules out of bounds the dangerous possibility that a rhetor can successfully impersonate another man. In the dialogue’s concluding myth, the souls of the dead await Rhadamanthus’s judgment: Because they are stripped of their bodies and bear for the first time visible marks of their spiritual ugliness or beauty, they will be judged correctly. Thus the myth reiterates Plato’s hope that a man’s true nature ultimately will show itself.

As Jonas Barish suggests in *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, Plato generally dislikes poetry as a form of mimesis because it invites men to try on multiple roles and therefore to transgress social boundaries.[19] One man, one role is the *Republic*’s recipe for a stable and just society. Eric Havelock argues that in the course of the *Republic* mimesis comes to mean not simply a poetic technique of communication—speaking with the voice of another character rather than *in propria persona*—but the whole poetic act, in which spectators identify with a speaker’s impersonation of a character. By encouraging an irrational and pathological identification of both poet and spectator with new identities, poetry covertly indoctrinates its audience with dubious values; at the same time, poetry disables the reason.[20]

Plato’s *Ion* rehearses economically the consequences that follow from identifying with poetic impersonations. Socrates maneuvers Ion, a rhapsode, into accepting the premise that when he recites Homer he is “carried out” of himself; his soul, “in an ecstasy,” seems to “be engaged in the actions” of which he speaks. Ion, flattered, confesses that his eyes fill with tears when he tells a piteous tale and that his hair stands on end when he speaks of horrors. What disturbs Socrates here is the rhapsode’s manipulation of his audience. A rhapsode must watch spectators carefully, Ion admits, registering the changes of emotion on their faces, because “if I set them weeping, I myself shall laugh when I get my money, but if they laugh, it is I who have to weep at losing it.” Although Homer presumably *was* inspired when he composed his more striking passages—“out of his mind” in a positive sense—the rhapsode, like the rhetor of Plato’s *Gorgias* and like *Hamlet*’s Player, feigns emotion for money. Impersonating the true poet, who has both inspiration and art, the rhapsode is a dangerous impostor.[21]

Distrust of a speaker's power of impersonation, which continues to inform Platonic attacks on rhetoric, also fuels a later but related dispute about drama's ethical influence. Attacks on and defenses of the English Renaissance stage debate the Platonic assumption that fictions are falsehoods, and its Christian variation, that plays are the devil's invention. As Jean Howard has shown, however, the attacks tend to lump together groups who pose a danger to established gender and class hierarchies; these threatening groups—women, Jesuits, and actors—are defined by their Protean ability to change shape and to fool the unwary eye by their metamorphoses.[22] Thus the attack on the theaters frames its covert political agenda in terms of the dangers of impersonation and identification.

The issues discussed in pamphlets defending or attacking the stage are not new; but the hyperbolic quality of their anecdotal evidence brings the issue of identification to the foreground better than do more intellectual discussions of the drama. Richard Baker's *Theatrum Redivivum* (1662), which Barish calls the first adequate defense of the stage, denies the problematic nature of identification by making a standard distinction between vices acted out in real life and vices represented on stage: "When vices are *really acted*, they stand as *Copies*, and *Examples*, which men are apt to follow; but when they are only *feigned* on a *Stage*, they stand as *Rocks*, shewed onely to be shunned."[23] "Puritan" opponents of the stage, by contrast, dwell on the seductive power of mimetic fictions and on the actors' power over their audiences.[24] *A Refutation of the Apologie for Actors* (1615), I.G.'s response to Thomas Heywood's better-known *Apology for Actors* (1612), offers a standard list of crimes and sins that can be learned at the playhouse:

> If you will learne falshood, if you will learne cosenage, if you will learne indirect dealing, if you will learne to deceive, if you will learne to play the hippocrite, sicophant, Parasite and flatterer; if you will learne to cogge, lye, and falsifie, if you will learne to iest, laugh and fleere, to grinne, nodde, and mow: if you will learne to play the Vice, to curse, sweare, teare, and blaspheme both heaven and earth, in all kindes and diversities of othes; if you will learne to play the Baud or courtesan, to polute your selfe, to devirginate maides, to defloure wives, or to ravish widowes by inticing them to lust, if you will learne to drabbe and stabbe, to murther, kill, and slay, if you will learne to picke, steale, rob,

> and rove, if you will learne to rebell against Princes, closely to carry treasons, to consume treasures, to practise idlenesse, to sing and talke of filthy love and venery, if you will learne to deride, quippe, scorne, scoffe, mock, and flout, to flatter and smoth [*sic*], if you will learne to play the Divell, the swaggerer, the whoremaster, the glutton, the drunkard, the iniurious or incestuous person, if you will learne to become proud, haughty, and arrogant: Finally if you wil learn to contemne God & all his lawes, to care neither for heaven nor hell, and to commit all kind of sinne and mischeefe with secresie and art, you need not goe to any other Schoole, for all these good examples may you see painted before your eyes in enterludes and playes.[25]

I.G.'s documentation of vice's progress, in which deception leads inexorably to treason, blasphemy and damnation, aims more at melodramatic effect than at psychological accuracy. Nevertheless, I.G. does answer Heywood's defense point by point. Refuting Heywood's argument that universities use plays for educational purposes, I.G. paints a grim picture in which plays encourage hapless spectators to "play the Vice" in direct imitation of the actors; drama teaches audiences hypocrisy, parasitism, and flattery, which are vices that supposedly characterize actors themselves.[26] How such vanities lead one "to devirginate maides, to defloure wives, or to ravish widowes," presumably in imitation of dramatic characters rather than the actors, is less clear. Possibly the author refers to Heywood's point that Romulus's theater, built after he made peace with the Sabines, is the first sign of Rome's future glory. Heywood uses this anecdote to prove the antiquity of the acting profession, but Romulus's theater was also cited by the opposition; Stephen Gosson, paraphrasing Ovid in the *Schoole of Abuse*, writes that Romulus built his theater not as a monument to peace or military glory but as a "horsfaire for hoores" where he "made triumphes and set out playes to gather the faire women together, that every one of his souldiers might take where hee liked a snatch for his share."[27] In Gosson's domesticated version of the rape of the Sabine women, the theater is both cause and effect of sexual violation.

Both defenses of and attacks on the Renaissance English stage offer copious examples of identification at dramatic performances, which are designed to prove that representations either encourage or uncover crime. Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, defending the stage, tells two stories of women who watch murder performed on stage, then confess to having killed their husbands. The first woman, mimicking her stage sister exactly, sees the ghost of her own husband when the fictional wife is haunted by the ghost of the husband she has murdered. With the Mousetrap play, Hamlet hopes to cultivate in Claudius exactly this kind of direct identification. In the second play, envious laborers kill a disguised nobleman by driving a nail through his head. A woman in the audience, becoming distracted, calls out "Oh my husband, my husband!" A few days later she confesses to having slain her husband in just this fashion twelve years before. The discovery of a skull with a nail driven through it confirms the confession of this latter-day Jael (Judges 4:21); the repetition of her own act on stage, despite the difference in situation, apparently moved the murderess to reveal herself.

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For Heywood, the innocent respond with their reason, the guilty with their emotions.[28] Arguing that stage plays corrupt even the innocent, I.G.'s *Refutation of the Apologie for Actors* offers a counterexample to Heywood's pious stories of identification. A "Christian woman" enters a theater in sound mind but leaves possessed by the devil: "Whereupon certaine Godly brethren demanded Sathan how he durst be so bould, as to enter into her a Christian. Whereto he answered, that *hee found her in his owne house,* and therefore tooke possession of her as his owne."[29] Here dramatic performance is an active agent of evil.

The mixture of frivolity and heavy-handed morality in these stories serves as a reminder that exempla in a rhetorical debate are malleable; they serve the motive of the moment. But as Barish notes, defenses of the stage are most shaky when they glorify the actor's, and by implication the spectator's, absorption in his role. Heywood, as part of his argument for the "ancient dignity of actors," recounts how Julius Caesar, "for his pleasure," became an actor and played *Hercules furens*. Faced with "Lichas," who in the play had just given him Deianeira's poisoned shirt, Caesar was so carried away with his feigned fury that he stabbed and killed the servant who played Lichas, then swung him around his head. Next Heywood blandly tells of the Roman tradition of using condemned criminals as tragic actors, so that the criminal died in a fiction by the emperor's knife rather than suffer a less dignified end. I.G. has no trouble revealing the self-contradictions in this praise for actors. He responds first by denouncing the tyranny of Roman emperors generally, noting particularly that Nero's addiction to plays gradually led him to perpetrate "beastliness" and to murder innocents in the street. Nero, like Heywood's first guilty wife, identifies so strongly with what he sees on stage that he imitates staged horrors directly.[30] In this way, I.G. underscores the gruesome practice behind Heywood's hyperbole. The connection I.G. makes between identification and tyranny reestablishes the Platonic equation of ethics and social stability, and so I.G. provides a skeptical perspective on Heywood's dramatic politics. Depending on the dynamics of his identification, the spectator of Heywood's Roman drama must either share the criminal-actor's lack of power or be implicated in the emperor's tyranny. In either case, he acts by compulsion rather than choice; whether a play moves criminals to confess or entices ordinary citizens to murder their fellow man "in a dream of passion" then becomes a matter of pure chance.

From the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, the issue of drama's moral effect surfaces in anecdotes sprinkled throughout more technical discussions of dramatic illusion. Successive variations on one stock anecdote exemplify the way in which ethical standards can be resurrected to counter the dangerous possibility that an actor's impersonation will go undetected by a credulous audience. In *Tom Jones*, Henry Fielding had flattered David Garrick by describing how an ignorant man mistook Garrick's "Hamlet" for a real person. Sir Joshua Reynold's thirteenth *Discourse* takes issue with Fielding. An ignorant man would recognize but not accept the differences between object and representation, Reynolds argues; he would never mistake *Hamlet* for life. Erasmus Darwin, whose discussions of dramatic illusion in *The Botanic Garden* probably influenced Samuel Taylor Coleridge, offers the opposite argument: Because ignorant rustics believe in ghosts, this particular man would believe in the play's fiction more readily than would someone with more experience and stronger powers of reason.[31]

Reynolds and Darwin draw opposite conclusions but address the same issue. They measure the rustic's susceptibility by his experience, education, and familiarity with dramatic conventions. Neither takes seriously the possibility of total delusion, for even in *Tom Jones* the foolish Partridge is caught up in Garrick's feigned terror because he himself is frightened of the ghost. For Fielding, the spectator's delusion is the stuff of low comedy. In *Biographia Literaria*, however, Samuel Taylor Coleridge offers a version of the anecdote that shows identification to be more intimate and, at the same time, more cerebral than do his predecessors. Watching *Bertram*, a sentimental drama that is both illogical and reprehensible, Coleridge sinks into a depressed reverie, until a "plain elderly man" beside him interrupts his thoughts; touching Coleridge's elbow, the old man says, with surprise and disgust: "Do you see that little fellow there? he has just been committing adultery!"[32] Coleridge's old man acts ignorantly, but like Coleridge himself he abandons all effort to sustain his "waking dream" when the play offends his sense of decency.

Masking Coleridge's intermittent terror of illusion, this anecdote represents identification as a rational process guided by moral considerations. Coleridge also simplifies the process by eliminating the actor from his dramatic formula. Because he usually does not distinguish between watching and reading plays, Coleridge often compares Shakespeare himself, rather than the actor who represents his characters, to Proteus. As a genius, Shakespeare lives "in the universal" and has "no self but that which is reflected not only from the faces of all around us, our fellow creatures, but reflected from the flowers, the trees, the beasts, yea from the very surface of the [*waters and the*] sands of the desert."[33] Shakespeare's characters, however, are not abstractions derived from mere observation of men and nature but are produced organically from his own substance, which itself is "capable of endless modification."[34] Thus Shakespeare, according to Coleridge, works as Imagination does in chapter 13 of *Biographia Literaria*, repeating in the finite mind the "eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."[35]

Throughout his lectures, Coleridge compares Shakespeare to Proteus but also stresses that Shakespeare remains "*master* of himself and his subject." Shakespeare's representations are like "images in a calm lake, most distinct, most accurate,—only more splendid, more glorified" than those in life.[36] By distinguishing Shakespeare from ordinary mortals and his "images" from objects in the world, Coleridge circumscribes the reader or spectator's range of response to his characters and plays. On the one hand, encountering Shakespeare's characters is like meeting people in life: As acquaintances, they interest you differently and may or may not develop into friends. On the other, the reader is always in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis Shakespeare. He can only aspire to replicate the genius's act of imagination. By removing from consideration the actor-impostor who mediates between audience and fiction, Coleridge circumvents the possibility of random or improper identification. By treating Shakespeare as a genius, he denies the possibility of complete identification with Shakespearean characters.

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Between Hamlet's response to the Player and the response of Coleridge's old man to *Bertram* lies a substantial gap. Identification for Hamlet works by analogy; it is based on a loose similarity in situation that binds spectator, speaker, and fictional subject. What links Hamlet with the Player and the Player with Hecuba—and by extension what links Hamlet and Ophelia—is their participation in a community of mourners. Coleridge's old man, by contrast, is aware of a particular individual, the fictional adulterer, and feels repugnance when confronted with empirical knowledge of *this man*'s adultery rather than from any sense of him as a generic type. Whereas *Hamlet* sketches out a range of possible identifications that Hamlet might find in the Player's account of Troy's fall, Coleridge cuts off the play of signification, so that illusion depends on a personal interaction between one old man and one adulterer and on the spectator's ever-vigilant ethical sense. There is a vast difference between even Fielding's and Coleridge's representative spectators; for while Partridge worked out his harebrained "theory" of dramatic response by holding forth to his own audience, Coleridge and the old man communicate surreptitiously; it is pure accident that two individuals should share the same thought.

CONFIRMATIO

The Coleridgean paradigm, in which fictional characters and spectators (or readers) respond to one another as individuals, makes possible the kind of character studies that culminated in A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*. Bradley's kind of character criticism has long been out of fashion; but critical theory has continued to weigh the benefits and dangers of identification when the ethical impact of reading—that is, its power to shape identity—

becomes an issue. In this section I would like to review the critical fortunes of identification in this century and, by juxtaposing some contemporary rhetorical accounts of reading, to redefine the notion of identification so that it becomes simultaneously a feature of textuality and of human relations. Kenneth Burke, appearing here as an interpreter of Aristotelian rhetoric, makes this rapprochement possible.

In an essay published in *New Literary History* in 1974, Hélène Cixous prophesies the death of character in contemporary fiction; at the same time she casts a suspicious glance at the ideological force of literary character. Because most readers interact with texts only through their characters, Cixous argues, without a principal character there is "no text. He is the major agent of the work, at the center of a stage that is commanded by his presence, his story, his interest. Upon his 'life' depends the life of the text—so they say." To the notion of "character" Cixous opposes the more authentic, more liberating concept of the "subject." Subjectivity belongs to the unconscious; character belongs to the ego. The subject is quixotic, virtually beyond definition: "if 'I'—true subject, subject of the unconscious—am what I can be, 'I' am always on the run."[37] Character, on the other hand, represses subjectivity by reinforcing the established order. For this reason, character encourages bad reading: "By definition, a 'character,' preconceived or created by an author, is to be *figured out*, understood, read: he is presented, offered up to interpretation, with the prospect of a traditional reading that seeks its satisfaction at the level of a potential identification with such and such a 'personage.' "[38] Cixous's straw man, a generalized reader of "pleasure"—to use Roland Barthes's term for passive consumers of writing—responds to the death of the character as to a murder. With "no one to talk to, to recognize, to identify with," this reader quickly withdraws "his investment, since he sees nothing more to be done with a text that has no one in it." The reader withdraws his "investment" because characters, who are meant to be read without difficulty, reinforce the reader's egoism; fictional characters uphold the representation a reader "wishes to have of himself."[39]

Cixous's essay demonstrates the continuing interest narrative theorists have shown in charting the "pleasures of the text." But writers who cross the boundary between literary theory and rhetoric have begun to reconsider the role identification plays in literary experience. For the early Paul de Man as for Cixous, the seductive appeal of identification is dangerous, a barrier to reading. Unraveling the phenomenology of Georges Poulet in "The Literary Self as Origin," de Man writes that in Poulet's later writing "the notion of identification plays a very prominent part. Reading becomes an act of self-immolation in which the initiative passes entirely into the hands of the author. The critic, in Poulet's words, becomes the 'prey' of the author's thought and allows himself to be entirely governed by it. This complete surrender to the movement of another mind is the starting point of the critical process."[40]

In his own deconstruction of Poulet, de Man notes that although for Poulet reading is an intersubjective act, a substitution of one self for another, this whole transaction implicitly depends on a hierarchical language. The critic's self is replaced by a "superior" self in both a spatial and an evaluative sense. Given the differential of power between these two selves and the intervention of language between them, the self-annihilation sought by the critic becomes impossible. Thus his identification with the author becomes symptomatic not of the self's unity but of its inevitable fragmentation.[41] By the end of the essay, de Man's revision of Poulet's concept of subjectivity has been generalized and Poulet's criticism has come to typify literature in general: "The subject that speaks in the criticism of Georges Poulet is a vulnerable and fragile subject whose voice can never become established as a presence. This is the very voice of literature, here incarnated in one of the major works of our time."[42]

In "The Rhetoric of Temporality," de Man defines his own critical strategy, allegory, as putting the romantic dialectic between subject and object back into time. Under allegory's ascetic rule, the possibility of identity or of identification is firmly denied. Renouncing "the nostalgia and the desire to coincide," allegory "prevents the self from an illusory identification with the non-self, which is now fully, though painfully, recognized as a non-self."[43] The reader reproduces not the author's triumphant communication of his intentions, but his error or failure. In an interview published in 1986, de Man comments that, although consciousness of irony may give the reader a sense of power over both text and author, "at that very moment the reader had better beware." In an endless cycle, "at the moment you take a critical stance towards an author, you yourself repeat the gesture you reproach the author for making."[44] Elsewhere de Man imagines a slightly more active role for readers, a role that has become more clearly outlined in posthumous evaluations of de Man's writing. Reading his own criticism in the preface to *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, de Man concludes that his book and the career it documents cannot cohere, and to this extent the book is a monument to failure. Every reading starts from scratch so that, put end to end, the essays are a repetitive stammer.[45]

De Man, as a reader, seems uncannily like the Montaigne he describes in an essay from 1953. In every act of knowledge, according to this reading of Montaigne, there is a "profound flaw" or "blind spot" that produces an insoluble dilemma: The object of the act "can be known only at the price of the existence of the knowing agent." The knowing subject is lost or destroyed because "subjectivity does not know speech; it laughs, groans, shrieks, or weeps; it never describes." Language, which can only describe, therefore provides an inadequate access to the inner self. Because the self is inaccessible and knowledge of the self is not subject to rational analysis, it follows that ethical values are arbitrary and individual: "They are as individual as the shape of our face, and equally intransmissible."[46] Within de Man's work, then, there is an implied ethics of reading, one based on the inevitable failure of reading.

De Man's critical method has been called "ascetic," "severe," "rigorous," and intellectually "pure." This view of de Man is prompted largely by his acceptance of a moral imperative in writing that is complicated by his belief in the arbitrary, intransmissible quality in ethics. It remained for J. Hillis Miller, however, to tease out the implications of de Man's ethics of reading. Following de Man, Hillis Miller contends that "allegories are always ethical" and that all exemplify the "law of unreadability." One paradox that emerges from Hillis Miller's chapter on de Man is the anamorphic relationship between truth and falsehood. The "ethical moment" caps a series of activities: First, the text asserts an "unjustified and aberrant metaphor," which is unveiled by the deconstruction of that metaphor; then comes allegory, "the expression in a veiled form of the impossibility of reading that revelation of aberrancy."[47]

If allegories are always ethical, however, at some point reading must involve both a "descent to the referential" and an "ascent to value judgments." Ethical judgments—"You should do so and so"—are a necessary consequence of reading. But paradoxically, understanding the falsehood in the text's metaphor should lead to an understanding that those ethical judgments are false. Ethical judgments that follow from reading are therefore both true and false. They are true "in the special sense of being true to an implacable law of language, that is, the law of the failure to read." De Man, says Hillis Miller, "makes it sound as if reading is a game in which we cannot lose, since we are bound to get it right, however limited we are as readers or however much our presuppositions about what the text is going to mean" may doom us "to get it wrong." The careful reader of de Man, however, "will know that what is bound to take place in each act of reading is another exemplification of the law of unreadability. The failure to read takes place inexorably within the text itself. The reader must reenact this failure in his or her own reading. Getting it right always means being forced to reenact once more the necessity of getting it wrong. Each reader must repeat the error the text denounces and then commits again."[48]

Hillis Miller points out that in order to argue that "ethicity" derives strictly from "linguistic necessity," de Man must reject any idea that ethics has to do with subjectivity, with freedom as a feature of selfhood, and with interpersonal relations. Whereas de Man tends toward skepticism, Wayne Booth offers an opposed, humanist "ethics of reading" in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*. Booth complains that Hillis Miller's book teaches repeatedly a single, monotonous lesson—the impossibility of reading. This "lesson" bothers Booth because he sees in it a symptom of critical solipsism and bad faith. Ethical criticism, as defined by Booth in a related essay, is "criticism that looks both at the ethos implied by or discerned in any human construction and the ethos of the person who receives and recreates that construction, and then tries to find language first to describe and then perhaps to evaluate the ethical relation between them."[49] By focusing on the ethos of both "reader" and "writer," Booth privileges communication over textuality and interpersonal relations over the reader's solitary grappling with a text; for without these two conditions evaluation is impossible. In other words, for Booth identification is both inevitable and beneficial.

Booth's favored metaphor for reading is the conversation between friends. A friend is a fictional person who is both similar to and different from us, since total familiarity makes for boredom and total alienation renders a text unintelligible.[50] Nevertheless, the values the "friend" invites us to identify with, and the roles we are offered to embrace or reject, tend to be traditional. Booth, then, is de Man's alter ego. Whereas de Man stresses the proliferation of selves in reading—there is the self that reads, that judges, that writes, and that reads itself—Booth ranks those selves in a hierarchy.[51] The chain of being that links author, implied author, and narrators of varying reliability in Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* still haunts *The Company We Keep*. The ethical effect of a piece of writing depends on the use a reader makes of that work, but that in turn depends on the reader's interaction with an implied author, whose "patterns of desire" become his temporarily while he reads.[52] Borrowing from Kenneth Burke his psychology of literary form as the arousal and satisfaction of desire, Booth exchanges Burke's emphasis on form for an emphasis on the *persons* who desire. Gesturing toward an implied author (if not the flesh-and-blood author), Booth assigns to the text an origin and so circumscribes the reader's range of response.

Between these "mighty opposites" comes Kenneth Burke, whose work is acknowledged by Booth and who is mentioned approvingly, if sparingly, by de Man. Burke gives identification a prominent role in his account of rhetorical transactions. But he does not eradicate the language separating the consciousness of reader and writer (as Booth tends to do); and he does not insist on the absolute loss of selfhood (as de Man tends to do). Burke's social rhetoric is also congenial to Shakespeare's rhetorical practice and therefore provides a corrective to de Man's skeptical version of reading the self.

Burke's emphasis on form is the key to his vision of rhetoric as social action. Burke became interested in the psychology of form early in his career: *Counter-Statement*, first published in 1931, constructs a lexicon of forms as patterns of experience.[53] In "The Philosophy of Literary Form" and in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke explores more fully the connection between form and identification. Identification, as his umbrella term for both the means and ends of persuasion, is simultaneously active and passive. Discussing *Samson Agonistes* in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke infers Milton's identification with Samson from the poem's structural alignments, which themselves suggest an identification between Puritans and Israelites and between Royalists and Philistines. As Burke describes it in "The Philosophy of Literary Form," the affective relationship between author and character or literary work is mediated through the poem's equations or "associational clusters"; Burke characterizes these equations as "chords" created from linear narrative "arpeggios" by "dramatic alignment."[54] The intervention of those equations is crucial to Burke's notion of identification, for they prevent the kinship between Milton and Samson from becoming merely a matter of interpersonal relations. Through his structural identifications, Milton presents a "motive" in a "magnified and perfected" form. As "ritualistic historiography," his poem foretells wistfully the triumph of Milton's own vanquished faction: Milton and Samson are aligned dramatically because their situations are analogous.[55]

At this point Burke turns Milton's hyperbolically simplified account of Samson into what he would call a "representative anecdote" and perhaps what de Man would call an allegory, one that dramatizes the paradoxes of identification. *Samson*'s pervasive imagery of killing can be considered "as a special case of identification in general." In a typical move, Burke renames the imagery of slaying as "transformation"; transformation, in turn, "involves the ideas and imagery of *identification*. That is: the *killing* of something is the *changing* of it, and the statement of the thing's nature before and after the change is an *identifying* of it."[56] However, for Burke the "identifying of" something also involves "identifying with it"; the dialectic involving these two forms of identification is central to the rhetorical practice of both authors and readers. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke writes that all "critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose. They are not merely answers, they are *strategic* answers, *stylized* answers." The situations they deal with are "real; the strategies for handling them have public content; and in so far as situations overlap from individual to individual, or from one historical period to another, the strategies possess universal relevance."[57] Thus, to the extent that Samson's, Milton's, Burke's, and our situations overlap, we identify *with* Samson as we identify thematically Milton's literary equations. Burke as well as Milton simplifies and magnifies the meaning of Samson's slaughter, so that the string of partial identifications between authors and subjects is extended and altered. The biblical account of Samson, Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, Burke's *Rhetoric of Motives*, and our own unwritten tragedy therefore relate to one another by synecdoche.

In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke argues more broadly that all persuasive rhetoric, including literary rhetoric, works through identification.[58] "It is not hard," says Burke, quoting Aristotle quoting Socrates, "to praise Athenians among Athenians." It is much more difficult, however, "to praise Athenians when you are talking to Lacedaemonians." Identification, then, is not a kind of friendship or a union of consciousness. The most basic form of persuasion, according to Burke, is the act of courting another person by making yourself as much like him as possible: "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his."[59] Identification is therefore a persuasive act.

Here is an important distinction between Burke's and de Man's rhetoric. De Man, making consciousness his unit of observation, begins with the phenomenological assumption that complete identification is possible; Burke, who is more concerned with the social construction of identity than with consciousness, begins with the fact of division, of separateness, of strife. Identification cannot be assumed; rather, it "is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man's very essence" and rhetoric would be unnecessary.[60] The theological pun on communion/communication, typical of Burke, serves as a reminder that in the social sphere mystical unions can only be metaphorical; for under rhetoric's rule we always find ourselves praising Athenians to Lacedaemonians.

The next move in this argument is crucial to Burke's notion of rhetorical form. Speaker and audience are *consubstantial*, Burke argues.[61] His notion of consubstantiality, although paradoxical, provides Burke with a way of treating form as social action. In "The Philosophy of Literary Form" Burke says that the writer's implicit equations are not separate from his motives: "the interrelationships themselves *are* his motives. For they are his *situation*; and *situation* is but another word for *motives*."[62] On one level Burke is simply renaming each facet of the rhetorical exchange, just as he renames killing as transformation; in both cases, the change of names provides "perspective by incongruity." Burke wants to make the important point, however, that neither the author's nor the reader's "motives" can be isolated. Motives can be found in the text, in the author, and in the reader; alternatively, they exist nowhere in particular but are an action involving author, reader, text, a social context, and an underlying culture.

Identification, like motive, is an act involving division as well as resemblance. To explain the mechanism of identification, Burke offers the following scenario: "A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so." Thus A is "substantially one" with another person.[63] At the same time, however, he remains an individual, competing with other individuals. The pun implicit in the term "sub-stance" provides a further gloss. "Substance" designates intrinsic qualities, "what a thing *is*." Yet etymologically "substance" designates what "a thing *is not*," the context that stands beneath an object.[64] Identification therefore means both becoming another person and remaining separate from that person.

Because total identification remains a dream, there can never be an isomorphic match between the motives of writer and character, reader and character, or reader and writer. The reason is that human agents do not have "pure" motives. In Burke's parable, "the shepherd, *qua* shepherd, acts for the good of the sheep, to protect them from discomfiture and harm. But he may be 'identified' with a project that is raising the sheep for market."[65] Here is where Burke comes closest to de Man's skepticism. Yet de Man's poignant image of Montaigne, who observes himself in the fundamentally futile act of writing, is alien to Burke; for the failure of a shepherd to identify wholly with his sheep is essentially comic, a humorous "conversion downward" of the tragic hero's absorption in his role.[66] In Burke's rhetoric, although "difference" characterizes the situation of two agents, their situations also overlap. The dramatic alignments that we make in reading—what Burke, after Aristotle, calls the formal appeal—permit us simultaneously to perceive difference (to identify a thing) and resemblance (to identify with it).

PERORATION

In "Criticism and Crisis," Paul de Man writes that "the observation and interpretation of others is always also a means of leading to the observation of the self."[67] *Hamlet*, perhaps more than any other Shakespearean play, treats thematically the interaction of observer and observed. Hamlet himself is the "observ'd of all observers," which means not only that he is revered as a prince but that he is spied on by all observers. But as de Man says also, since both observer and observed constantly change places, it becomes unclear as to who is the observer and who the observed. Thus identification is an endlessly recursive process. When Hamlet considers what the Player would do in his own situation, he bases his future plans on an inscrutable relationship between the Player and Hecuba. Typically, he and we have to supply the missing links that potentially bind Hamlet and the Player (who are both social anomalies) with Aeneas (the dispossessed outcast who precedes the Player as storyteller) and finally with Hecuba, whose inarticulate cries are the narrative's origin *avant la lettre*. For this reason, the chain of relationships, which begins with Ophelia and Hamlet and ends with the Player and Hamlet, is horizontal rather than vertical, as in Levin's model; for this reason also, identification is both fragile and eternally deferred.

Ophelia's fate as rhetorical woman illustrates the ambiguous effects of identification. As an orator, Ophelia stands in the place of practical judgment. Like the iconographic figure of Prudence, she looks simultaneously backward and forward, offering a persuasive portrait of Hamlet by bringing both past and future into the present moment. Hamlet asks "What is a man?" and decides that reason, evidenced in "large discourse, / Looking before and after," distinguishes him from the beasts (4.4.36–37).[68] Because in this play Ophelia first attempts to unite past and future with eloquent speech, she can even supplant Hamlet as the play's emblem of rational humanity. Ophelia holds forth the promise of future knowledge, a resolution of the riddle of Hamlet's character. She gains speech, however, at the price of her selfhood and her life. Ophelia is eloquent when Hamlet is mad; she herself becomes the occasion for eloquence in Hamlet only when she is dead, transformed into a worthless plot of ground for Hamlet and Laertes to fight over in imitation of Fortinbras.

From Burke's comic perspective, however, killing is only a special form of transformation; thus the structural affiliation between Ophelia and Hamlet does not end even with her burial. Ophelia becomes the "ground" for Hamlet's final transformation through a new series of enacted rather than spoken identifications—between Hamlet and Laertes, Fortinbras, and finally, Pyrrhus. After his histrionics over her grave, Hamlet at last can assert his identity, declaring "This is I, / Hamlet the Dane!" (5.1.257–58). Fortinbras's final eulogy to Hamlet—"he was likely, had he been put on, / To have prov'd most royal" (5.2.397–98)—concludes Hamlet's life by ceremoniously conferring on him a public identity. At the same time, however, it extends to the critic an invitation to continue the proliferating chain of identifications.

Whether Ophelia's affiliation with Hamlet ends heroically or merely destructively depends on the contingencies that influence the act of identification. For most readers, identifying with Hamlet provides the comfort that Burke thinks rhetoric usually offers. Identifying with Ophelia, however, disrupts that complacency by providing an incongruous perspective on Hamlet and his play. Identification finally cannot be defined unilaterally—either as the destruction of subjectivity or as a genial meeting of friends—but as an experience somewhere between these two extremes. *Hamlet*, as Shakespeare's play about personal identity, offers ample instruction in how identity is formed and deformed through acts of identification. For this reason, perhaps, readers have always braved theoretical scorn to rewrite *Hamlet*'s characters in their own images.

TWO

Characterizing Shakespeare's Readers

Falstaff and the Motives of Character Criticism

Using Ophelia as a model orator, chapter 1 analyzed *Hamlet*'s rhetoric of characterization. In that play, observer and observed fashion themselves by reading one another through a repertoire of shared rhetorical forms; they at once identify one another and identify with one another. But if interpreting others involves interpretation of the self, as Paul de Man suggests, the critic of *Hamlet* must take her place in the chain of rhetorical relationships. Like Hamlet himself, she becomes "th' observ'd of all observers." Reproducing the gesture she accuses the author of making (in de Man's view) or writing criticism that symbolizes her own burdens (in Burke's view), the critic of Shakespearean character can never be disinterested. For this reason, reading Shakespearean character and writing character criticism are inseparable as activities.

Recent Shakespearean criticism has tended to define itself in opposition to a "romantic-empiricist" view of Shakespeare that elides the distance between critic and "object of inquiry."[1] Superficially, early character critics do aspire to the self-annihilation that Paul de Man describes in his critique of Poulet's concept of identification. But their writings could also be considered as a species of ethical criticism. Building on the definition of identity established in chapter 1, chapter 2 reexamines the motives of character criticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like the Renaissance formal Character, early character studies provide exercise in reading human nature through stylistic play. Like postmodern textual readings, they demonstrate also the fragility of a self constructed by writing. For this reason, early character criticism can help define a relationship between Shakespearean texts and a contemporary ethics of reading.

Perhaps the most famous statement about Shakespearean character is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's claim that he had a "smack of Hamlet" in him. Henry Crabb Robinson, writing to Mrs. Thomas Clarkson about Coleridge's 1811–12 Shakespeare lecture series, reports that "Last night {Coleridge} concluded his fine development of the Prince of Denmark by an eloquent statement of the moral of the play: 'Action,' he said, 'is the great end of all. No intellect, however grand, is valuable if it draw us from action and lead us to think and think till the time of action is passed by and we can do nothing.' Somebody said to me, 'This is a satire on himself.'—'No,' said I, 'it is an elegy.' "[2] Although Coleridge displays a typically romantic fondness for projecting himself into Shakespeare's characters, Crabb Robinson complicates the anecdote by dramatizing his own interpretation of it. Previous letters from Crabb Robinson to Mrs. Clarkson lamented that Coleridge had spent three of his fifteen nights on *Romeo and Juliet* and that he had digressed from the subject of Shakespeare's women into a long defense of school flogging.[3] Thus Coleridge, who was faltering as a lecturer despite his prodigious intellect, writes his own elegy. Crabb Robinson, on the other hand, satirizes Coleridge's failure to stick to the subject during his lectures. Just as Ophelia observes herself by watching Hamlet in the nunnery scene, Crabb Robinson makes himself the main subject of his anecdote; by satirizing Coleridge's reading of Hamlet, he praises himself. Coleridge's declared kinship with Hamlet therefore involves him in a bout of critical one-upmanship with Crabb Robinson.

The rhetorical context of Coleridge's famous remark is significant, for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of reading Shakespeare have distorted our sense of critical practice in the period. On the one hand, there is keen interest in understanding philosophically, even scientifically, the mechanism by which readers engage imaginatively with fictional characters; on the other hand, as Crabb Robinson's letter suggests, debates over characters' motivation serve a wider ranger of motives than prescriptive statements from the period would indicate.

Agonistic and playful without ceasing to be ethical, the Shakespearean character criticism that ended with A. C. Bradley is the Renaissance formal Character writ large. The Character, introduced to Shakespearean England by Isaac Casaubon's Latin translation of Theophrastus's *Characters* (1592–99) and Joseph Hall's *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (1608), enjoyed a vogue well into the eighteenth century; it was still used by writers as an aid to composing in the nineteenth century. The Character is usually discussed in terms of its verisimilitude, as a paradoxical fusion of universal qualities and flesh-and-blood individuality. But, as Benjamin Boyce's survey notes, the Character is generically anomalous. Situated somewhere between dialogue and drama, it is less a self-sufficient description of a social, moral, or psychological type than a rhetorical exemplum that calls for active readers.[4]

The English Character encouraged little philosophical speculation about its function, but the few statements available stress its demands on readers. Thomas Overbury, in the essay "What a Character Is," notes that the Greek infinitive "to character" means "to ingrave, or make a deepe Impression." For this reason, letters of the alphabet are called characters. Just as the alphabetic letters exercise the memories of children, the Character as literary exercise is figured as a hieroglyphic or emblem, "in little comprehending much." The remainder of the essay offers analogies to painting and music that suggest how a Character "comprehends much" in a small space. A Character "is a picture (reall or personall) quaintlie drawne in various collours, all of them heightned by one shadowing. It is a quicke and soft touch of many strings, all shutting up in one musicall close: It is wits descant on any plaine song."[5] The commonplace analogy to painting, in which a single shadowing heightens the various colors on a canvas, stresses unity among multiplicity. The "quicke and soft touch of many strings," uniting the separate strings of a lute in a musical "close" or cadence, may refer to the structural unity provided by the Character's concluding epigram. The final analogy in this series, the descant on a monophonic plainsong, compares the Character to an extemporaneous counterpoint to a *cantus firmus*, or given melody.[6] Referring to the Character's illusion of spontaneity, this analogy differs from the others by emphasizing the creative action behind the artifact. If the Character is a spontaneous performance, readers as well as the author must expend creative energy on it; readers, in effect, must make their own descant on a "plaine song."

In Overbury's little essay, the Character trains its reader's memory with hieroglyphics that require unpacking. Bishop Hall is more explicitly didactic about the Character's ethical function. In his introductory "Premonition of the Title and Use of *Characters*," Halls claims that, if used properly, his Characters will have a moral effect: They can encourage readers to fall in love with the "goodly faces of vertue" and to "abiure those vices" that do not seem "ill-favoured." If the reader finds in himself any touch of the evils described or any defect of the graces, "neither of us shall need to repent of our labor."[7] Theophrastus's own Characters may have been developed from Aristotle's taxonomy of virtue and vice in Book 2 of the *Rhetoric*, which was included to help orators project a suitable ethos and to evaluate audiences.[8] Thus Theophrastus's character portraits offer not just an amusing gallery of ethical types but regular exercise in reading human nature. For Hall, the exercise is reflexive; he wants readers to meditate on their own virtues and vices rather than to judge those of other people. Nevertheless, he represents his task as a rhetorical one. He "exhorts" and "dissuades" even as he offers "Vertue and Vice strip't naked to the open view, and despoiled, one of her rags, the other of her ornaments, and nothing left them but bare presence to plead for affection."[9] Bringing virtue and vice before the eyes, the Character writer aims for resemblance, a near-identity between portrait and abstraction. But virtue and vice, no matter what claims Hall makes for their presence, often shade into one another; thus, because hypocrisy "cometh neerest to Vertue, and is the woorst of Vices," the Hypocrite leads off the parade of Hall's vices in Book 2 of the *Characters*.[10] From this perspective, the exercise of writing and reading the Character, "stripping away" the rags and false ornaments, is more important than the printed portrait itself.

Exactly how the Character provides ethical training becomes evident from a comparison between the English versions and their Greek prototypes. Theophrastan Characters inhabit the present tense. Their actions are infinitely repeatable, their stories iterative narrations, in which a single representation stands for repeated occurrences of the same event.[11] Theophrastus's portrait of the Flatterer, for instance, defines his fault abstractly, then samples the Flatterer's remarks and gestures:

> Flattery we may take to be a way of associating with others that is degrading but serves the flatterer's purpose. He himself is the sort of

> person who will say, as he walks along with you, "Notice how people are looking at you? That doesn't happen with anybody else in Athens," or "I heard some nice things about you in the square yesterday. More than thirty of us were sitting there talking, and the conversation happened to come round to the question of who our foremost citizen is. Every one of them mentioned your name, first and last." And while he dispenses this sort of comment he is pulling a loose thread from your coat or picking off a piece of chaff that the wind has blown onto your hair. "There, you see?" he says with a laugh. "I haven't run into you for two days, and now you've got a beard that's all grizzled, even if you do have a head of hair as black as any for a man your age."[12]

By mixing "typical" remarks with sayings more closely marked for time ("yesterday," "two days") and place ("the square"), the Character writer offers a universal trait in the guise of a particular individual. The Flatterer meets his patron at a certain hour; and he is placed first at the square, then at the shoemaker's, a friend's house, and finally the theater. His typical activities are therefore presented as a "day in the life" of a flatterer.

Re-presenting once what supposedly happened or was said many times, the iterative narrative of Theophrastus's portrait turns action into description. But because the narrative relies heavily on details irrelevant to plot development, Theophrastus's Character of the Flatterer threatens to become what Gérard Genette calls "pseudo-iterative"; the portrait belies its universality with illustrative scenes that could not possibly repeat themselves exactly day after day.[13] In this way the Character's credibility as a generalized example is threatened from within by those very touches of liveliness that are considered its particular virtue. Because the Theophrastan character never reifies into a stereotype, the narrative demands from its auditors active, even suspicious participation.

Like their Greek prototypes, the English Characters invite, but finally do not permit, stock responses. The dynamics of reading, however, have changed. English Renaissance Characters rely more heavily on metaphor than on feigned speech and action. The result is an acute suppression of plot, or of the events standing behind the character portraits. English Characters, as collections of qualities rather than behaviors, are not obviously iterative narratives; they read, in fact, more as collections of aphorisms on a virtue or vice than as narratives. Bishop Hall's portrait of "The Flatterer," published midway through Shakespeare's career in the *Characters of Vertues and Vices*, exemplifies the coalescence of character traits that follows from a domestication of plot.[14] Some details of action and speech from Theophrastus's character remain: Hall's Flatterer plucks his "Great-One's" coat, hangs on his words, and repeats the supposed flattery of others. But whereas the Theophrastan portrait is based almost exclusively on *prosopopoeia*, or feigned speech and gestures, Hall frames his description of the Flatterer's speech and action with a succinct, paradoxical description of the vice itself: "Flatterie is nothing but false friendship, fawning hypocrisie, dishonest civilitie, base merchandize of words, a plausible discord of the heart and lips." From the beginning, the recipient of Hall's portrait is provided with reading instructions.

When Hall does describe specific behaviors, he tends to summarize rather than reproduce them: Thus the Flatterer's speeches "are full of wondring Interiections; and all his titles are superlative." Even when Hall reports indirectly the Flatterer's words, the event seems detached from time and space. Echoing Theophrastus, Hall tells how when the Flatterer walks with his Great-One, "hee sweares to him, that no man els is looked at; no man talked of; and that whomsoever hee vouchsafes to looke on & nod to, is graced enough." The change from direct to indirect discourse makes the events reported by Hall more truly repeatable than those described by Theophrastus. As a result, the reader's stance vis-à-vis the portrait also changes. No longer observing himself as the Flatterer's target—as the "you" referred to in the Theophrastan portrait does—the reader of Hall's Character watches from a comfortable distance as the Flatterer manipulates his Great-One.

The shift from an oral to a literate culture, with a resultant "separation of the knower from the known," in Eric Havelock's phrase, might be evoked to explain the estrangement of Hall's Flatterer from his reader.[15] But although Hall's Character invites a less direct identification with its participants by transforming dialogue into description, drama has not disappeared altogether from the Character; rather, it has been displaced, shifted from the words and gestures of the Flatterer to the verbal surface of Hall's prose. In Hall's portraits, stylistic features bear the burden of characterization more than reported speech and action do. Hall commonly uses circumlocutionary syntax; metaphor and simile also play their part, for some of the portrait's action has been transferred from the Flatterer himself to tropes: For instance, the Flatterer's "*tongue walks* ever in one tracke of uniust praises"; or "his base minde is well matched with a *mercenarie tongue*, which is a *willing slave* to another mans eare"; his art is nothing but "delightfull cozenage," whose "scope" is to "make men fooles, in teaching them to over-value themselves; and to *tickle his friends to death*" (my emphases). In this example, the metaphors come so thick, the mercenary giving way to the sycophantic slave and then to the tickler, that metaphor becomes more disorienting than illuminating.

Because activity in Hall's portrait of the Flatterer is often buried within figurative embellishments, the person represented becomes a difficult text rather than a familiar companion. Hall's Flatterer resists easy definition. First he is characterized by volubility, since his tongue wags with unjust praises. In the patron's presence, however, he whispers commendations to a friend in order to seem modest and sincere. Finally, the Flatterer begins to parrot his patron's wise sentences and to "bless" him with sycophantic gestures. The chattering Flatterer metamorphoses into a whisperer, then falls completely silent. The self behind his facade seems at once absent and present, for although "there is no vice, that hath not from him his colour, his allurement," the Flatterer has no independence: "in himselfe hee is nothing, but what pleaseth his GREAT-ONE, whose vertues he can not more extoll, than imitate his imperfections." As the source for every vice, the Flatterer is larger than life; as an individual, he does not exist at all. He is both everything and nothing.[16]

The influence of Senecan Stoicism, on both Hall's style and his ethics, provides one source for the Flatterer's simultaneous presence and absence, speech and silence.[17] But the paradoxes of Hall's portraits can also be found in other Characters from the English tradition and so cannot be dismissed by an appeal to philosophical sources. The *Characters* of Sir Thomas Overbury and his "friends" (1616), contemporary with Hall's *Characters* but published only after Overbury's death, are less complex in their syntax and use metaphor less liberally. But the Overbury Characters also thematize the message implied by Hall's convoluted syntax: Character can be read only with difficulty. The Character of a "Foote-man," for instance, concludes puckishly that "tis impossible to drawe his picture to the life, cause a man must take it as he's running." The "Very Woman," a more sinister type, "reads over her face every morning, and somtimes blots out pale and writes red. She thinks she is faire, though many times her opinion goes alone, and she loves her glasse, and the knight [*sic*] of the Sunne for lying. Shee is hid away all but her face, and that's hang'd about with toyes and devices, like the signe of a Taverne, to draw *Strangers*."[18] The Very Woman, who reads and writes her own face, creates a misleading sign of her worth through synecdoche; she is deliberately opaque. Nevertheless, opacity characterizes even the Wise Man, who "hides himselfe with the attire of the vulgar." He "endures the faults of all men silently, except his friends, and to them he is the mirrour of their actions; by this meanes his peace cometh not from fortune, but himselfe."[19] A silent mirror in the Stoic tradition, the Wise Man is at once transparent and opaque, withdrawn and forthright.

Under the rules of Charactery, human nature is not only variable but opaque, masked both by false exteriors and by the writer's stylistic ornament. To read a Character properly, then, is to become the virtuous counterpart of Overbury's Very Woman. One must simultaneously read and rewrite the portrait as she reads and writes her face. The very act of rewriting a Character, however, testifies to the fragility of the self—both for the fictional subject and for the observer who must negotiate a treacherous course through the portrait's tropes and labyrinthine syntax.

In histories of Shakespearean criticism, the development of character criticism is often represented as a monolithic movement, an abandonment of neoclassic concerns caused either by romantic notions of the imagination or by an unthinking bardolatry.[20] Early character critics, however, share with their Renaissance counterparts an absorption with the contingent nature of identity and an ambivalent attitude toward language's role in the construction of identity. Not very long before the vogue for character criticism, John Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40) had problematized the concept of personal identity; by locating identity in consciousness, they raise the possibility that, as Thomas Reid puts it, "no man is the same person any two moments of his life."[21] In

Hume's words, "What is more capricious than human actions? What more inconstant than the desires of man? And what creature departs more widely, not only from right reason, but from his own character and disposition? An hour, a moment is sufficient to make him change from one extreme to another, and overturn what cost the greatest pain and labor to establish."[22] In a Lockean epistemology, the associations of ideas in consciousness can occur by design or by chance, but their causes can be traced; definable relations govern the associations. Perceiving the logic in a chain of ideas, however, can be difficult: The ideas themselves may be inadequate or false; self-love, madness, and chance may influence the connections between ideas; and, perhaps most troubling, words are arbitrary signifiers that further obscure ideas and their relations to one another.[23] For this reason, the role of language in constructing identity continues to be problematic.

Given the persistent connection between identity and language use, it is not surprising that Falstaff, an enigmatic flatterer much like the one described by Bishop Hall, was and continues to be a favorite subject. Samuel Johnson, who in the notes to his Shakespeare edition includes one of the first portraits of Falstaff, apostrophizes him, asking "Falstaff unimitated, unimitable Falstaff, how shall I describe thee?" Much more recently, Harold Bloom calls Falstaff not merely unimitable but a "super-mimesis." Bloom's Falstaff is "so original a representation that he originates much of what we know or expect about representation[.] We cannot see how original Falstaff is, because Falstaff contains us; we do not contain him."[24] Falstaff's resistance to allegorical readings, however, only made the early character critics redouble their efforts to explain him. Among the many late eighteenth-century essays on Falstaff are three that can represent different approaches to reading character in the period. Of the three writers, William Richardson was well respected, Maurice Morgann was notorious, and James White was a shadowy legend, despite Charles Lamb's efforts to get his book read and reviewed. Adapting rhetoric inherited from the earlier character writers to a Lockean epistemology, these three critics exemplify the mix of motives behind early character criticism of Shakespeare.

William Richardson, professor of humanity at the University of Glasgow from 1773 to 1814 and the only academic in the trio of critics, epitomizes the philosophical or scientific approach to character analysis. Richardson performs "moral criticism" on Shakespeare's play by separating ethical content from psychological effect. From the *Elements of Criticism* of Henry Home, Lord Kames, Richardson adopts the notion of "ideal presence," which allows him to treat Shakespeare's characters as living persons. When we experience a play or real-life event, according to Kames, every object appears as if in our sight through an act of intuition, in a "waking dream."[25] "Entering into" the characters during this "waking dream," says Richardson, we empathize completely with them. If dramatic illusion is complete, elegant expression, harmonious composition, and delightful imagery work together on the mind: "Our imaginations are immediately stimulated and in action; we figure to ourselves the characters which the poet intends to exhibit; we take part in their interests, and enter into their passions as warmly as if they were naturally expressed."[26] This state is "ideal presence."

The notion of ideal presence allows Richardson to distinguish the experience of watching Shakespeare's characters from the act of analyzing them. Although experiencing Shakespeare's plays as waking dreams arouses rather than trains the emotions, performing psychological analysis on the characters after the fact can reinforce moral principles by providing lessons in human nature. We naturally judge other people by referring their actions to principles and passions governing our own behavior; but "when we measure the minds of others precisely by our own, as we have formed and fashioned them by habit and education," our theories of human nature will necessarily be inadequate. By reflecting on the motivation of fictional characters, we can gain better knowledge of human nature and thereby improve both the "heart and understanding."[27] Since Richardson seeks general principles, he moves swiftly through the plays, uncovering the pattern created by a character's "ruling passion." Like Kames and others before him, Richardson proceeds from the assumption that human nature is uniform: We all behave according to the same psychological laws. Second, every passion has a cause, either real or imagined; and third, although the causes of emotion are difficult to discern, the "natural signs" that accompany a character's show of passion are a universal language independent of time, place, or nationality. Safely ensconced in the study, then, we can read passions' signs confidently, seek reasons for them, and establish a psychological pattern that explains the character's behavior.

Analyzing Falstaff, Richardson concludes that Shakespeare, in order to make such a "mean" character interesting, added to Falstaff's basic character as many bad qualities as he reasonably could: "He accordingly represents him, not only as a voluptuary, cowardly, vain-glorious, with all the arrogance connected with vainglory, and deceitful in every shape of deceit; but injurious, incapable of gratitude or of friendship, and vindictive."[28] Following this round condemnation comes a separate analysis of Falstaff's "estimable" qualities: He is jovial, witty, good-humored, versatile, and, finally, shows "dexterity in the management of mankind."[29] Not only do Falstaff's social skills pale beside his moral shortcomings, but by the time Richardson has finished, even Falstaff's intellectual superiority has been unmasked as mere cunning. Richardson tips the balance between Falstaff's good and bad qualities, finding in him the moral consistency demanded by Richardson's own philosophical framework.

To confirm that Falstaff does not triumph in his "deceitful arts," Richardson reads the ending of *2 Henry IV* closely. Rejected by Prince Hal, Falstaff becomes the final dupe of his own artifice, so that poetic justice is served:

> He places himself in King Henry's [Hal's] way, as he returns from the coronation. He addresses him with familiarity; is neglected; persists, and is repulsed with sternness. His hopes are unexpectedly baffled: his vanity blasted: he sees his importance with those whom he had deceived completely ruined: he is for a moment unmasked: he views himself as he believes he appears to them: he sees himself in the mirror of their conception: he runs over the consequences of his humiliation: he translates their thoughts and their opinions concerning him: he speaks to them in the tone of the sentiments which he attributes to them; and in the language which he thinks they would hold. "Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds." It is not that in his abasement he feels a transient return of virtue: it is rather that he sees himself for a moment helpless: he sees his assumed importance destroyed; and, among other consequences, that restitution of the sum he had borrowed will be required. This alarms him; and Shallow's answer gives him small consolation. He is roused from his sudden amazement: looks about for re-

> sources: and immediately finds them. His ingenuity comes instantly to his aid; and he tells Shallow, with great readiness and plausibility of invention, "Do not you grieve at this? I shall be sent for in private to him: look you, he must seem thus to the world. Fear not your advancement. I will be the man yet that shall make you great, etc. This that you heard was but a colour, etc. Go with me to dinner. Come, lieutenant Pistol; come, Bardolph; I shall be sent for soon at night."[30]

Untouched by conscience even when he is denounced by the Prince, Falstaff saves face with his ingenuity and assures Shallow that Hal will send for him in private. In Richardson's version of this scene, Falstaff's saving graces only intensify his depravity: "Had he been less facetious, less witty, less dexterous, and less inventive, he might have been urged to self-condemnation, and so inclined to amendment."[31] In this way, Richardson reduces Falstaff's multiplicity to ethical unity.

Although Richardson plunders Shakespeare's text for psychological evidence, his reading of Falstaff's rejection by Hal links him to the tradition of the Renaissance Character. Whereas the Character writer has to transform an abstract quality into an individual, Richardson must fit a particular person and action to a generic pattern. He makes Falstaff an exemplar of unredeemed hypocrisy by augmenting the scene with descriptive commentary and by quoting Falstaff's own words. In *2 Henry IV*'s concluding scene, Falstaff does nothing, but Richardson transforms the absence of action into evidence of thought; to fill the gap, he writes his own *characterismus*, or representation of Falstaff's thought processes. In the latter half of the portrait, Richardson pieces together Falstaff's subsequent comments for an extended prosopopoeia, or represented speech.

In his own writing, Richardson reverses the rhetorical strategies that he attributes to Falstaff. According to Richardson, Falstaff first "sees himself in the mirror" of others' thoughts, then translates those thoughts. Richardson, on the other hand, begins by translating Falstaff's thoughts and feelings, then mirrors his speech with direct quotation. The resemblance between Falstaff's and Richardson's own rhetoric suggests that even the philosophical critic engages in identification with his subject; for this reason, we can look for unacknowledged motives in Richardson's writing. Terms from classical rhetoric cannot describe Richardson's narrative strategy perfectly; a characterismus is more properly a description of a mental state than a transcription of thought, and prosopopoeia a feigned speech rather than a cut-and-paste job on a printed text. The representation of Falstaff's thoughts more closely resembles what Dorrit Cohn identifies as "psycho-narration," which is characterized by a near-identity between subject matter and narrative activity. As Cohn makes clear, however, the narrator's voice always dominates in psycho-narration. Richardson's quotation of Falstaff's words, which Cohn would call "quoted monologue," also allows Richardson to dominate his subject by appropriating his words.[32] In M. M. Bakhtin's vocabulary, Falstaff's words and Richardson's words are in dialogue, but as Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist point out in their explication of Bakhtin's "politics of quotation," the "question of how much of the other's meaning I will permit to get through when I surround his words with my own is a question about the governance of meaning, about who presides over it, and about how much of it is shared."[33] Richardson reports Falstaff's words faithfully but shapes their meaning by eliminating all other voices in the scene. He has silently excised Hal's long, masterful condemnation of Falstaff; he has also omitted the subsequent byplay between Falstaff and Shallow where, for the first and last time, Shallow has the punch lines. In effect, Richardson has eradicated Falstaff's dramatic context.

Constructing Falstaff's Character, Richardson emphasizes his psychological and moral consistency; but like earlier Character writers, he does not maintain a clinical distance from his subject. Richardson impersonates Falstaff by speaking with his voice; at the same time, however, he tyrannizes over Falstaff by manipulating those words and by controlling their rhetorical context. As a critic, Richardson is both agonistic and playful: He rewrites Shakespeare's scene but also competes with Falstaff and with Shakespeare for control of the text.[34]

Although Richardson's literary rebellion is rather muted, other character critics rewrite Shakespeare's text with greater insouciance. James White's contribution to the Falstaff mythology, *Original Letters . . . of Sir John Falstaff and His Friends*, is a fanciful exercise in creative plagiarism. Through a series of letters, ostensibly gathered from Mrs. Quickly's heir, White rewrites Falstaff's story. Working variations on Shakespeare's plots in the *Henry IV* plays and the *Merry Wives*, White frees Falstaff entirely from the restrictions of theatrical representation, from textual limitations, and from the spatial boundaries of the printed book.

The *Letters* open with Falstaff writing to Prince Hal after the Battle of Shrewsbury: "Oh! I am sitting in a nest of the most unfledgd Cuckows that ever brooded under the wing of Hawk," he begins.[35] There follows a description of Justice Shallow and the "tall puissant Fellows" Falstaff has recruited; some banter about whether Falstaff is squandering the soldiers' money in drink; and a debate over whether Falstaff actually offered ten pounds to charity after Hal's safe return from Shrewsbury. Interwoven with this jesting is a running commentary on Falstaff's continued misdeeds. There is a letter from the bishop of Worcester relating that Falstaff was excommunicated for drinking communion wine impiously at Shrewsbury; a threat from Hal to hang Falstaff if he should conceal rebels; a letter of excuse from Falstaff assuring Hal that he has levied stiff fines on all rebels under his charge; an indignant epistle from Nym complaining that travelers stopped by the thieves cannot understand Pistol's abstruse speech; and finally, a communiqué from Falstaff warning Pistol that victims have recognized his quaint turn of phrase.

With his characteristically exuberant style, White translates the letter of Shakespeare's text into living voices and transforms his characters into living people. He tries his hand at Sir Hugh Evans's Welsh dialect and adopts Falstaff's fondness for wordplay and neologisms. He also crams the letters with irrelevant ejaculations and details, such as Justice Shallow's three-cornered beaver hat, that gain solidity and reality from their repeated mention. White uses not only dialogue and description but the epistolary form itself to create a sense of presence. In one incident, the Prince reads and responds to the letter that describes how Falstaff parted with a large sum of money in thanks for Hal's safe deliverance; as he writes, however, the Prince records a concurrent conversation with Poins that gives the lie to Falstaff's exaggerated claims for his charity.

In the epistolary world of White's *Original Letters*, an infinite amount of talk brings into being a new world and a new life for Falstaff. Translating the textual letter into speech, White demonstrates an unusually strong identification with Shakespeare's character. To his friends, apparently, White was known as "Sir John." According to one anecdote, on a certain occasion he actually impersonated Falstaff in his disguise as the "fat woman of Brainford" (*Merry Wives* 4.2). Decked out in a dress borrowed from the wardrobe of Covent Garden Theatre, White performed his part so well that he incurred the jealousy of some professional actors; like Falstaff himself, he was forced to flee their wrath in his feminine clothes.[36] White became so submerged in his role as Falstaff that when he died, according to Charles Lamb, "he carried away with him half the fun of the world."[37]

White's relationship with Shakespeare, as his literary forefather, is more vexed. As Jacques Derrida argues in "Plato's Pharmacy," the spoken word is powerless without a paternal origin: "The origin of logos is *its father*." Logos is therefore a son, "a son that would be destroyed in his very *presence* without the present *attendance* of his father. His father who answers. His father who speaks for him and answers for him. Without his father, he would be nothing but, in fact, writing."[38] White's letters, in which the living voice is heard through written words, acknowledge their paternal origin: The author claims to be transcribing a manuscript that he has inherited directly from Mistress Quickly's grandson. White's gesture of filial piety, however, masks a rebellion against the literary father's authority, since the fictional "Master Quickly" objects to having the excesses of his ancestors made public. White's dedication of the *Original Letters* to Samuel Ireland, father to the notorious Shakespearean forger, confirms the book's kinship with a contemporary symbol of inauthenticity. So while White does obeisance to Shakespeare, he also usurps his authority.

White's desire to rewrite Shakespeare's plays as well as to preserve the voices of his characters becomes evident when he weaves elaborate scenes from tiny bits of text. As White passes into the material from *Merry Wives*, there occurs an imaginative deposition taken from a country bumpkin, who reports having seen a large creature "big . . . about the belly" rising from the river: "It came slowly to the bank, an if it would land; and just then it roll'd over, and over, and over, of all the world like a huge tub, and then it so beat about and roar'd in the throttle!" The saga continues as the creature, having "floundered, and flounc'd about some five minutes under water, a' got on the land, and stood on it's legs, and drew a great dagger and lifted in the air, and so shook it's weapon at the Castle, and roar'd!"[39] The company decides that the "creature" must have been Owen Glendower, engaged in a conspiracy against the crown; White supports this judgment approvingly with a footnote to Holinshed. The leviathan, however, must be Falstaff, escaping from the laundry basket in which he left Mistress Ford's house; for in a subsequent epistle we find Mrs. Ford consoling Falstaff about his beating, an indignity that follows the episode of the laundry basket.

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This colorful account of Falstaff's mock-heroic emergence from the river originates with a quip from Mrs. Ford, who asks how Falstaff found his way to Windsor: "What tempest, I trow, threw this whale (with so many tuns of oil in his belly) ashore at Windsor?" (2.1.64–65). White also draws on Falstaff's relatively restrained soliloquy, in which he recalls how "the rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drown'd a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' th' litter; and you know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; [and] the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drown'd, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow—a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swell'd! I should have been a mountain of mummy" (*Merry Wives*, 3.5.9–18). From Falstaff's witty play on the paradox of sinking and swelling, White dramatizes his thrashing and bellowing. With a change in point of view and a plenitude of detail, White is able to make the absent event, Falstaff's escape, become present.

In other instances, White, like Richardson, alters events that actually occur in Shakespeare's plays. His version of the end of *2 Henry IV* banishes not fat Jack but those painful moments in which Falstaff is reduced to silence: the aftermath of Shrewsbury, the confrontation with Prince John, and finally, Prince Henry's public rejection of Falstaff and his other "misleaders." In White's account of the rejection, for instance, Pistol simply reports that the Prince rudely dismisses Falstaff's letter, rather than the man; as a result, "bawcockhood is dead." In fact, Pistol's voluble exclamations against Hal's rudeness take up so much room in the letter that what the Prince said or did remains obscure. By rewriting the *Merry Wives*, White goes Shakespeare one better, for he insinuates that Falstaff's adventures can continue indefinitely.[40]

Richardson and White resemble the Renaissance Character writers most directly when they rework Shakespearean passages that do not fit their dominant impression of a character. The close connection between stylistic play and ethical training that marked the Renaissance Characters, however, seems to have disappeared. Because Richardson's criticism is overtly moral, both the agonistic and playful sides of his writing are firmly subordinated to its philosophical aim. White, on the other hand, seems to have moved almost completely from criticism into belles lettres; although he touches on moral issues that other writers of the period address more directly, it is difficult to discern an ethical purpose in his exuberant imitations of Falstaff's language. The canonization of Shakespeare as Falstaff's author may account partly for the fragmentation of motive in Shakespearean criticism from this period: Unlike eighteenth-century editors, who were attempting to regularize Shakespearean texts, the character critics were hampered by a growing logocentrism.

One writer who does escape the trap of logocentrism is Maurice Morgann. Dismissed as merely "paradoxical" by his contemporaries and as a bardolator by later critics, Morgann nevertheless analyzes selfconsciously the dynamics of reading Shakespearean character. Like Richardson and White, Morgann assumes a persona that is simultaneously combative and insouciant. The preface to *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* claims that its goal, the vindication of Falstaff's courage, is only "some old fantastic Oak, or grotesque Rock," the object of a pleasant morning's ride. The real object is "Exercise, and the Delight which a rich, beautiful, picturesque, and perhaps unknown Country, may excite from every side."[41] Although he uses a common metaphor for light literary ventures, Morgann also positions himself as Falstaff's advocate against the critics. Claiming to depart radically from received opinion on the subject of Falstaff's cowardice, Morgann admits openly that the evidence against him is strong. Morgann cites the fact that Falstaff's companions freely call him a coward; that he runs away when attacked by the Prince and Poins during the robbery at Gadshill; that he escapes Douglas by counterfeiting death and "deserting his very existence"; and finally, that he takes refuge from his disgraceful behavior in lies and "*braggadocioes*." "These are not only in themselves strong circumstances," Morgann concludes, "but they are moreover thrust forward, prest upon our notice as the subject of our mirth, as the great business of the scene: No wonder, therefore, that the word should go forth that *Falstaff* is exhibited as a character of Cowardice and dishonour."[42] Morgann's own wit in imagining Falstaff "deserting" himself as he has deserted his duty, plus the metaphors of attack and defense when Falstaff's shortcomings are "thrust" forward and "pressed" upon our notice, identify Morgann as critic with his chosen character. *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* reflects on the act of analyzing Falstaff as much as on the character himself; its subject is Morgann reading Falstaff.

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Morgann's essay, however, is also ethical criticism, in the way that J. Hillis Miller applies the term to Paul de Man's writing. Two points that surface in the course of the essay provide the foundation for Morgann's ethics of reading. First, character portraits can be drawn from two divergent perspectives. We can see a man "externally, and from without"; or "a section may be made of him, and he may be illuminated from within."[43] Although Morgann does not say so explicitly, the two perspectives seem to be mutually exclusive. Most of the essay is devoted to the complexities of the "external" Falstaff; late in the argument, Morgann finally describes the "inner" Falstaff with a formal Character and finds him to be "most villainously unprincipled and debauched."[44] Unlike Richardson, Morgann does not try to reconcile the attractive exterior Falstaff presents to the world with his inner corruption. In other words, he seems completely uninterested in discovering the "first principles" of Falstaff's character. If anything, Morgann exacerbates the difference between the two Falstaffs and makes the portrait of Falstaff's inner nature less authoritative than the long, meandering account of his external behavior.

To an extent, Morgann attributes the incongruities of his narrative to Falstaff himself; he is "a man at once young and old, enterprizing and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, <cowardly in appearance and brave in reality; a knave without malice, a lyar without deceit;> and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier, without either dignity, decency, or honour."[45] Morgann, however, does not embrace the comforting idea that Shakespeare intentionally made his characters ambiguous because "life is like that."[46] Rather, Falstaff seems to behave in inexplicable ways because a discrepancy between what Morgann (following Hume) calls "impressions" and the understanding complicates all attempts to understand human nature. In drama, Morgann says, "the *Impression* is the *Fact*," so impressions take priority over conclusions drawn by the understanding. Though the understanding is powerless to determine the "first principles" of character, we take strong "impressions" of these first principles and love and hate at their prompting, even though the feelings they excite are not always subject to rationalization.[47] The distinction between impressions and the understanding is offered to explain a second binary opposition between our "discourse" and "affections" concerning Falstaff: "We all like *Old Jack*; yet, by some strange perverse fate, we all abuse him, and deny him the possession of any one single good or respectable quality."[48] Herein lies the crux of Morgann's critical puzzle: Impressions, such as the favorable impression we all have of Falstaff, are more accurate than the understanding; at the same time, however, impressions are also incommunicable. Despite its limitations, the critic must rely on the understanding.

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For Morgann, not only is human nature opaque, but the critic is hampered by his own interpretive apparatus. For this reason, it seems, Falstaff's inner self must be approached obliquely. The *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, like a character sketch magnified to heroic proportions, circles about its subject, delaying judgment by complicating simple assertions. What makes this essay truly an exercise in de Manian reading, however, is its close scrutiny of Falstaff's life as a text. Morgann's critical exercise begins, as de Man says reading must, with an "unstable commixture of literalism and suspicion."[49] He starts out as a literalist, writing Falstaff's biography to disprove the myth of his cowardice. Arguing that although Falstaff does not possess courage as a "principle" of character he does have natural or "constitutional" courage, Morgann combs the text for minute pieces of textual evidence that he accepts at face value. Collapsing the distinction between dramatic and historic data, Morgann uses verbal clues suggesting that Shakespeare may have originally named his character Oldcastle to reconstruct Falstaff's genealogy. Coming from Oldcastle stock, Falstaff naturally possesses all the trappings of gentility: knighthood, a coat of arms, bonds, and a signet ring, which Hal claims is copper but Morgann believes to be gold. From these tidbits, Morgann concludes that because Shakespeare's age associated nobility and courage, and because Falstaff clearly belongs to the nobility, Falstaff must also have courage.

Digressing, Morgann shifts the focus from Falstaff's courage to his morality. Having served as a page to Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, Falstaff "must have been a virtuous youth," Morgann reasons. He falls into disgrace with Hal not from cowardice but from wit, which is "the leading quality in *Falstaff*'s character, and that from which all the rest take their colour."[50] Wit makes Falstaff acceptable to society but also allows him to drift through life without acquiring any virtues; falling into bad habits, he gradually grows vicious.

Morgann is perversely literal in his defense of Falstaff's natural courage; elsewhere in the essay, however, he looks more suspiciously at mimetic renditions of textual detail, especially on the stage. In the second part of his essay, Morgann partially undoes his previous work by displacing courage from the center of Falstaff's character. At Gadshill, while Falstaff's companions run away through "natural cowardice," Falstaff turns an "accidental" moment of terror into jest. He therefore proves himself more of a buffoon than a coward. This distinction becomes important to an apparently extraneous digression that denounces contemporary representations of Falstaff's flight from Gadshill. Morgann blames the players for filling a falsely perceived "vacancy" in Shakespeare's dramaturgy with their own buffoonery:

> Instead of the dispatch necessary on this occasion, they bring *Falstaff, stuffing and all*, to the very front of the stage; where with much mummery and grimace, he seats himself down, with a canvass money-bag in his hand, to divide the spoil. In this situation he is attacked by the *Prince* and *Poins*, whose tin swords hang idly in the air and delay to strike till the *Player Falstaff*, who seems more troubled with flatulence than fear, is able to rise; which is not till after some ineffectual efforts, and with the assistance, (to the best of my memory) of one of the thieves, who lingers behind, in spite of terror, for this friendly purpose; after which, without any resistance on his part, he is goaded off the stage like a fat ox for slaughter by these *stony-hearted* drivers in *buckram*. I think he does not *roar*;—perhaps the player had never perfected himself in the tones of a bull-calf.[51]

Morgann would prefer a more restrained performance, shown through the interstices of a "back scene": "The less we see in such cases, the better we conceive. Something of resistance and afterwards of celerity in flight we should be made witnesses of; the *roar* we should take on the credit of *Poins*."

Superficially, Morgann sounds like Charles Lamb, who argues that Shakespeare's plays are better suited to reading than to the theater.[52] Lamb, however, contrasts the distractions of sound and sight in the theater with the direct insight into a character's mind that a reader can achieve. Morgann's discussion, by contrast, centers on the letter of Shakespeare's text. When the Prince, quoting Poins, recounts how Falstaff "ran and roared, as I ever heard bull-calf," Morgann responds skeptically: "If he did roar for mercy, it must have been a very inarticulate sort of roaring; for there is not a single word set down for *Falstaff* from which this roaring may be inferred, or any stage direction to the actor for that purpose: But, in the spirit of mirth and derision, the lightest exclamation might be easily converted into the roar of a bull-calf."[53] Pointing to Falstaff's silence in the text, Morgann argues that the actors take Poins's remark too literally.

Jacques Derrida's essay on Plato's *Phaedrus* provides a useful gloss on Morgann's attitude to the letter of Shakespeare's text. Painting, in the Platonic scheme of things, is twice removed from reality; it is a phantasm, or a copy of a copy. Writing, by contrast, does not even create such a phantasm: "He who writes with the alphabet no longer even imitates. No doubt because he also, in a sense, imitates perfectly. He has a better chance of reproducing the voice, because phonetic writing decomposes it better and transforms it into abstract, spatial elements. This *de-composition* of the voice is here both what best conserves it and what best corrupts it. What imitates it perfectly because it no longer imitates it at all."[54] In his reading of Falstaff's retreat from Gadshill, Morgann exploits the supplementary letter of the text to "de-compose" the text's voices and discredit the player's mimetic buffoonery.[55]

Here, as elsewhere in the essay, Morgann recognizes and exploits the instability of tropes, rejecting throughout the illusory identity perpetrated by metaphorical substitutions for the blatant contingency of metonymy. In his analysis of the Gadshill affair, Morgann also fastens on Falstaff's "ridiculous vexation" about his horse.

This detail, according to Morgann, proves only that Falstaff, older and more corpulent than his companions, "knew no terror equal to that of walking *eight yards of uneven ground*."[56] Falstaff's concern about his horse, an effect of his size rather than intellect or emotion, mitigates against any attempt to unify his actions under a single label. Morgann defends Falstaff by showing that his anxiety over the horse's disappearance is merely contingent (metonymy) rather than emblematic of his essential character (metaphor). Finally, objecting to the tradition of fattening Falstaff's belly with stuffing, Morgann proposes, by way of analogy, that since the Prince is called "starveling," "dried neat's tongue," and "stock fish," he might be properly represented by an "exhausted stoker."

By making his essay an exercise in reading rather than a demonstration of moral principles or an excursion into belles lettres, Morgann differs from his contemporaries. His critical conclusions are not revolutionary; arguing that Falstaff's wit and inventiveness keep him from repenting his errant ways, Morgann resembles Richardson rather closely. Morgann's interest in the Shakespearean text, however, makes him conscious of the critic's role in forming and deforming Falstaff. The rebuke that Prince John gives Falstaff at Shrewsbury gives him a particularly good opportunity to showcase his skill as the fat man's advocate. When Falstaff arrives too late for battle, Prince John warns him that his "tardy tricks" will "one time or other break some gallows' back." As Morgann admits, "this may appear to many a very formidable passage. It is spoken, as we may say, in the hearing of the army, and by one intitled as it were by his station to decide on military conduct; and if no punishment immediately follows, the forbearance may be imputed to a regard for the Prince of Wales, whose favour the delinquent was known so unworthily to possess. But this reasoning will by no means apply to the real circumstances of the case. The effect of this passage will depend on the credit we shall be inclined to give to *Lancaster* for integrity and candour, and still more upon the facts which are the ground of this censure, and which are fairly offered by *Shakespeare* to our notice."[57] Rather than defend Falstaff, Morgann attacks Prince John's integrity. He reminds readers that Lancaster has already broken his faith to the rebels: "We have just seen a very pretty manoeuvre of his in a matter of the highest moment, and have therefore the less reason to be surprized if we find him practising a more petty fraud with suitable skill and address." Morgann puts Prince John in the wrong with the rhetorical device of *traiectio in alium*, or transferring the blame to another person. Siding with Falstaff, he dismisses John as a "politician," a "*cold reserved sober-blooded boy*." Lancaster, a petty if Machiavellian prince, is incapable of appreciating Falstaff's wit; furthermore, he exhibits malice and envy of Falstaff's undeserved possession of Hal's favor. His snubbing of Falstaff is thus a cleverly calculated "scratch then, between jest and earnest as it were, something that would not too much offend the prince, yet would leave behind a disgraceful scar upon *Falstaff*."[58]

By clever twists in his argument, Morgann makes Prince John not only less attractive but more devious than Falstaff. Having cast doubt on Lancaster's credibility by attending scrupulously to textual detail, he is able to vindicate Falstaff's behavior in this scene. Morgann argues that Falstaff, who initially protests against Prince John's charges but then adopts John's pleasant tone, demonstrates prudence rather than cowardice. Building one sophistic argument on another, Morgann capitalizes on his "proof" of Falstaff's *lack* of cowardice to claim that he exhibits nothing less than an old soldier's prudence. The final word is that Falstaff, far from being a "constitutional" coward, was a military freethinker. By modeling the process Falstaff uses to make himself attractive despite his dubious morals, Morgann puts the critic in Shakespeare's text. The critic therefore reproduces the error of reading that Richardson only discusses and that White blithely ignores.

Morgann's ambivalence toward Falstaff suggests the complex nature of his identification with the fat soldier. Morgann was not an academic; between 1766 and 1769 he had served as secretary of New Jersey, and he held other administrative positions in America and Canada. Twenty years before the publication of the essay, Morgann had published anonymously *An Enquiry concerning the Nature and End of a National Militia*, which argues for a national militia over a standing army. In the pamphlet, Morgann pictures the English as a fat and diseased people, who through opulence "have suddenly gained Spirit and Bulk" and "must expect, like a Man who lives too fast, to meet an early old Age and Dissolution. Luxury, Corruption and Effeminacy, the Consequence of Wealth, the Disease of Prosperity, and Symptom of Decay, are already acknowledged and deplored."[59] The antidote to this Falstaffian decadence is a national militia: After a threat of war has passed, the citizen-soldiers would return happily to their shops, houses and estates, "to enjoy in Peace those Liberties and Possessions their Valour had secured."[60] In deflecting attention away from Falstaff's military role to his wit and humor, Morgann may be protecting his ideal image of a sober national militia; at the same time, his experiences in America between 1757 and 1777 might have encouraged him to see Falstaff, who is profligate without being a true coward, as a more realistic portrait of the part-time soldier. The connections between the *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* and Morgann's *Enquiry concerning the Nature and End of a National Militia* are only tantalizing possibilities but suggest that Morgann's exploration of Falstaff's valor, in Burke's terms from "The Philosophy of Literary Form," may be symbolic of his own "burdens."

The identification between character and critic in these three specimens of early Shakespearean criticism is complex. Morgann and White seem to regard Falstaff as something between a literary friend and a superior self to whom the critic subordinates himself. All three writers also compete with both character and author for textual control. These two extremes on the spectrum of critical motive—the desire for subjugation and for domination—converge at those points when Falstaff becomes most resistant to reading. Although Morgann alone attends scrupulously to the letter of the Shakespearean text, all three critics read Falstaff rigorously when the ethics of reading is at stake.

Harold Bloom decries the reduction of Falstaff to a Vice, Parasite, Glutton, Coward, or Seducer of Youth, but allegorical readings of him have always flourished. In its most recent guise, the allegorical impulse has identified Falstaff with Woman, both as a maternal figure that Hal must reject to become his father's son and as a "sweet creature of bombast," linked to the feminine copiousness of discourse that inhibits the male voice.[61] Falstaff therefore embodies rhetoric and its motives; his glibness, his opacity, and his talent for misleading others all characterize the medium of his creation and of his critical re-creation. Falstaff, who tells the "strangest tale[s]" (*1 Henry IV* 5.4.154) and has a seemingly endless fount of wit, also becomes the occasion for wit in others. No wonder, then, that he was and continues to be a critical favorite.

THREE

Earning a Place in the Story

Ethos and Epideictic in *Cymbeline*

Kenneth Burke's account of identification's role in persuasion, outlined in the first chapter, stresses that identifying a person generically (identifying him as an X) also involves identifying *with* him, becoming "consubstantial" with him. While chapter 2 illustrated consubstantiality in the essays of three character critics, this chapter addresses the role identification plays in reading and writing Shakespearean character. Consubstantiality works somewhat differently in Shakespeare's plays and in the writings of his earliest critics. The rhetoric of Shakespearean characterization can be used competitively or for self-display, but it is also pragmatic, providing schemata for reading ethical character in the everyday world. Furthermore, in Shakespeare's plays rhetorical form structures the reading and writing of character more clearly than it does in the character criticism; without the larger forms of judicial, deliberative, and epideictic rhetoric, experience is incoherent. Nevertheless, the rhetorical forms that permit Shakespeare's dramatis personae and his own audience to comprehend one another can also bring into question the integrity of those selves they name and describe. For this reason, a Shakespearean rhetoric of characterization functions as "equipment for living" in a complicated way; it permits and shapes ethical judgments but also challenges the grounds on which those judgments are based. For Shakespeare's audience as for the figures within his plays, rhetoric encourages but also disrupts the assumption that his plays offer, in A. C. Bradley's phrase, a "little world of persons."[1]

In *The Motives of Eloquence*, Richard Lanham imagines Renaissance man as a selfconscious user of language whose rhetorical training allows him to try on new roles, committing himself to none. Marion Trousdale, applying the lessons of a rhetorical education to Shakespearean drama, offers a less exuberant portrait of *homo rhetoricus* but concurs that rhetorical habits of speech and thought are important to understanding how Renaissance fictions were composed and analyzed. According to Trousdale, the verbal models one finds in school texts and rhetorics provide a "grammar" for generating and receiving literary texts. Wesley Trimpi argues specifically that forms of rhetorical argumentation were transmitted to later periods through exercises derived from the Roman schools of declamation: the *controversiae* (judicial declamations), *suasoriae* (deliberative declamations), and *progymnasmata* (exercises preliminary to full-scale declamation) that were incorporated into the English Renaissance curriculum virtually without alteration.[2]

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A survey of topics used for the school exercises, especially for the progymnasmata, is suggestive for Shakespearean studies. Richard Rainolde's *Foundation of Rhetoric* (1563), an English version of Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, illustrates the "historical narration" with accounts of that "cruell tyraunt" Richard III and of Julius Caesar's conquest of Britain; the first topic, of course, recalls Shakespeare's *Richard III*, and the second informs the subplot of *Cymbeline*. For the "poetical narration," Rainolde uses the love of Venus and Adonis to explain how the rose became red. His sample "destruction," or exercise disproving some widely held belief, debunks the idea that the Trojan War was fought for the sake of Helen, who in the course of the exercise is dismissed as a mere harlot. Finally, to exemplify *prosopopoeia*, or the representation of an absent person's speech and manners, Rainolde gives a hypothetical speech from Hecuba after Troy's fall.[3]

Shakespeare, among other writers, draws on rhetorical exercises inherited by his culture from the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is unclear, however, how those exercises work when translated into a dramatic context. In their historical accounts of homo rhetoricus, Lanham and Trousdale both posit a symmetry between fictional individuals and their audiences. For Lanham role playing means temporarily assuming the identity of another person. Trousdale implies a cooler, more cerebral connection between character and spectator, who "place" one another through generic categories. She does accept, however, that character and spectator employ basically the same rhetorical strategies.[4] But Shakespearean identification is more varied than general accounts of the process indicate. Robert Y. Turner's study of Shakespeare's "apprenticeship" suggests that as Shakespeare masters his craft he learns how to complicate the relationship between his characters and audience. In his earlier "rhetorical" plays, according to Turner, Shakespeare's characters talk like orators. They model audience response directly by placing other characters in simple moral categories; thus the audience identifies directly with morally acceptable speakers, so that the possibility of improper identification with the wrong characters is precluded. From the period of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love's Labor's Lost* on, however, Shakespeare's characters forestall simple moral judgments by exhibiting a greater range of thought and feeling; they also judge themselves. As the characters grow more complex, so does the response demanded of an audience. Turner links this change to Shakespeare's growing interest in irresistible passions and in the tension between choice and external circumstances.[5] It could also be argued that as his career progresses Shakespeare begins to reflect on rather than simply use his repertoire of rhetorical strategies. As this chapter argues, Shakespeare's latest plays—from *Cymbeline* on—explore representation in general and the rhetoric of characterization in particular.

At first glance, Shakespeare's later plays show little interest in character. Their language seems to reflect local circumstances rather than any deep-seated ethical or psychological traits of the dramatis personae; even their protagonists lack coherent motivation. Furthermore, these plays foreground generally the problem of theatrical representation, demonstrating time and again that what we hear need not be compatible with what we see on stage. These generalizations might apply to many Shakespearean plays after the period of his "apprenticeship," but they are particularly true of the late romances. *Cymbeline* is a pivotal play in the Shakespearean canon, linking the great tragedies and early comedies with the romances. Stylistically old-fashioned and thematically nostalgic, *Cymbeline* is a retrospective work. At the same time, as Arthur Kirsch argues, it is an experimental play, in which Shakespeare tries his hand at the coterie drama associated with Beaumont and Fletcher and the private theaters.[6]

Though *Cymbeline* may be selfconsciously literary, many critics have dismissed it as a badly written play. Samuel Johnson complains not only about *Cymbeline*'s poorly constructed plot, "the folly of the fiction," but about its improbable characterization, or "the absurdity of the conduct" in "any system of life."[7] *Cymbeline*'s characterization is disjointed, and no character is more mercurial than Posthumus Leonatus, the play's romantic and martial hero. A poor but worthy gentleman, Posthumus secretly marries Imogen, the king's daughter. Banished by her angry father, he takes refuge in Italy, where Jachimo, a jealous Italian, goads him into a wager on his wife's virtue. By a trick, Jachimo wins the bet; Posthumus, although his friends are skeptical, immediately accepts Jachimo's lurid account of Imogen's infidelity, flies into a rage, and then plots the murder of his supposedly errant wife. In the brief moment it takes for him to exit and reappear on stage, he is transformed from the most sanguine of husbands to the bitterest of misogynists. When Rome and England go to war, Posthumus returns to fight on the side of his Italian hosts but changes his mind. Dressed as a peasant, he then fights for England against the intruders. The change of clothes, signifying his shifting loyalties, shows Posthumus to be as quixotic in affairs of honor as in love.

Cymbeline's characters respond to events rather than shape their own destinies. Like Posthumus on the battlefield, they change their minds with their clothes, to fit altered circumstances. Critics have discussed the difficulty of distinguishing appearance from reality in this play and the use of verbal and presentational clothing imagery to emphasize discrepancies between externals and inner essence.[8] They disagree, however, about the significance of *Cymbeline*'s inconsistent characterization. Responses to the play's characters fall roughly into three categories. Some readers consider them as by-products of *Cymbeline*'s Byzantine plot, rather than as individuals with unified personalities and moral natures. R. A. Foakes argues that in *Cymbeline* "human intentions, the will, the act of choice, play a very subdued role." By making his characters discontinuous, Shakespeare represents the human condition as mutable and self-contradictory and asks spectators not to interpret events but to "wonder at their strangeness."[9] The second group explains inconsistent characterization as a generic feature of satire: In this reading the play mocks Posthumus's failure to match his reputation for virtue.[10] Finally, psychoanalytic critics, seeking a deeper coherence beneath the chaotic surface of the characters' behavior, have focused on man's ambivalence toward woman and his tendency both to idealize her and to fear her sexuality.[11]

The argument that *Cymbeline*'s sketchy characterization indicates Shakespeare's lack of interest in character is contradicted by the fact that individuals within the play obsessively rationalize the inscrutable behavior of those around them. Jupiter appears near the end of *Cymbeline* to claim credit for its neat resolution, explaining that he has afflicted Posthumus with the trials of Job only to increase his happiness: "Whom best I love, I cross; to make my gift, / The more delay'd, delighted" (5.4.101–2). Jupiter's control over events, however, is open to question; he contributes only a riddling prophecy to the play's resolution, leaving sharp-witted Imogen to spot Posthumus's ring on Jachimo's finger and start the chain of revelations that ends the play happily.[12]

Furthermore, the characters respond to their trials less with "wonder" than with a driving desire to understand the strange events controlling them. Posthumus, disillusioned by Imogen's supposed infidelity, surmises that his own mother must have cuckolded his father; his rage and grief find an immediate outlet in explanations. Imogen, certain that she can read Posthumus's inner self as she reads the characters of his handwriting, cannot tolerate Jachimo's innuendo about his behavior abroad; she asks to be given bad news plainly, "for certainties / Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing, / The remedy then born" (1.6.96–98). Even when she awakes to discover Cloten's headless corpse dressed in Posthumus's clothes, Imogen concludes within a few lines that the servant Pisanio must have murdered him; her enthusiasm for certainty has not been dampened by experience. And though psychoanalytic criticism has done much to fill in the play's sketchy characterization, *Cymbeline*'s action turns on questions about ethos or ethical character rather than about psychology.

Both the urge to evaluate ethical character and the difficulties attendant on moral judgment are evident from *Cymbeline*'s opening lines. The First Gentleman, explaining how Imogen's marriage has enraged Cymbeline, implies that the rage is unjustified. According to him, Posthumus Leonatus, who is now Imogen's husband,

> is a creature such
> As, to seek through the regions of the earth
> For one his like, there would be something failing
> In him that should compare. I do not think
> So fair an outward and such stuff within
> Endows a man but he. (1.1.19–24)

"You speak him far," the Second Gentleman remarks, with perhaps a trace of skepticism (1.1.24). Critics, as well as the Second Gentleman, have responded warily to the First Gentleman's hyperbole. They perceive in his strained tone hidden doubts about Posthumus's virtue, frustration at not being able to praise Posthumus adequately without resorting to fancy phrases, or more generally, a linguistic failure that results in "inadvertent slander."[13] The First Gentleman's rhetoric may ring false to contemporary ears, but his speech is a perfectly conventional, if truncated encomium or speech praising Posthumus's moral character. When challenged, the First Gentleman stands his ground but apologizes for his own shortcomings as orator:

> I do extend him, sir, within himself,
> Crush him together rather than unfold
> His measure duly. (1.1.25–27)

An inchoate metaphor conflates Posthumus with his character portrait: Rather than stretch the "stuff" or fabric of Posthumus's nature beyond the limits of credibility, the Gentleman insists, he "crushes" it together.[14] His contention that Posthumus is too noble to be compared with other men (the "outdoing topos") and his apology for not doing justice to such a superlative subject (the "inexpressibility topos") are both part of the encomiast's standard repertoire.[15] From its beginning, then, *Cymbeline* plays with the antagonism between the First Gentleman's two roles, as Posthumus's encomiast and as chronicler of the chaos at Cymbeline's court. Although the First Gentleman "crushes" his subject rather than unfold it duly, the problem does not resolve into a binary opposition between action and characterization, or between language and experience. Both events and character are accessible only through the formal structures used to represent them: Their relationship therefore involves rhetorical form, subject matter, speaker, and audience.

The encomium and its satiric counterpart, the *vituperatio*, are among the progymnasmata children learned at school.[16] The First Gentleman's encomium, as a formal speech of praise, belongs to epideictic rhetoric. In classical rhetoric, epideictic includes all kinds of ceremonial oratory, speeches designed for display rather than for the courtroom or the political arena. Epideictic is also associated with the ornamented middle style; that connection is solidified as poetry gradually comes to be subsumed under epideictic. Defined in the Renaissance as the rhetoric of praise and blame, epideictic also comes to be associated more strongly with ethics. Renaissance defenses of poetry, in particular, shield poetry from charges of indecency by classifying it under epideictic rhetoric. By praising good behavior and vituperating bad, poetry nudges audiences toward virtue.[17] As in *Cymbeline*, stylistic exaggeration and explorations of ethical character are linked.

Jachimo's fanciful picture of Imogen as a seductive Venus (2.2.11–51), a showpiece of characterization that sets in motion the play's larger plot, explores selfconsciously the fragility of a self fabricated through rhetorical performance. Jachimo's rhapsody over the sleeping Imogen, by exposing the mechanics of characterization, demonstrates that the speaker as well as his subject is a rhetorical construct; by extension, the Shakespearean spectator is also subjected to the language he uses to make sense of *Cymbeline*'s plot and characters. Jachimo's speech begins as an *effictio* or blazon, an enthusiastic head-to-toe catalogue of Imogen's physical charms. To enact his fantasy of a blissful night spent with Imogen, which he will use to win the wager with Posthumus, Jachimo relies on decorative figures and tropes: hyperbole, metaphor, and other figures of amplification common to epideictic rhetoric. Imogen's skin is white as a lily, for instance, her lips like "rubies unparagon'd" (2.2.17). Even the candle is attracted to her heavenly eyes and tries to peep under Imogen's eyelids to see her blue eyes, "now canopied / Under these windows, white and azure lac'd / With blue of heaven's own tinct" (2.2.21–23).

Jachimo's stylistic excesses are frequently linked to his role as rapist or as artist. Murray Schwartz, for instance, argues that Jachimo activates, then distances, his sexual fantasies, substituting a visual rape for "taboo touch." Images such as the voyeuristic candle personify Jachimo's urge to violate Imogen. Harley Granville-Barker, on the other hand, feels that although sensuality dominates in Jachimo's soliloquy, "the night's lonely silence brings it to an aesthetic fineness."[18] Both possibilities are suggested by Shakespeare's return to an earlier style in his late plays, what Granville-Barker calls a new "euphuism of imagination."[19] As epideictic rhetoric, however, Jachimo's speech is not merely expressive or poetic. Epideictic rhetoric in this play is agonistic; for Jachimo's tribute to Imogen's beauty belongs to a series of boasting competitions between men concerning the beauty and virtue of their ladies. Jachimo hopes to score not only a poetic but a sexual and social triumph over Posthumus. The projected rape can be seen as part of Jachimo's plan to substitute himself for Posthumus in Imogen's bed. His subsequent effort to persuade Posthumus of Imogen's infidelity, though it confirms Jachimo's sexual superiority, also allows him to possess Posthumus's ancestral ring; the ring, like Posthumus's wife, is a material signifier of his familial identity and rank.[20]

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While epideictic rhetoric is agonistic, controlling its subject through the speaker's power to confer praise and blame, the speaker's identification with his subject and with his audience imposes limits on him as well. As Granville-Barker observes, the thoughts or emotions behind the poetry of Jachimo's new euphuism often seem too far-fetched for the occasion or speaker; in this case, especially, extravagant poetry seems doomed to self-parody. When Jachimo reaches a climax, he abruptly changes tone and reverts to business: No longer a passionate Tarquin gloating over his Lucrece, he has become an accountant noting the accoutrements of Imogen's chamber.[21] Exchanging the penis for the pen, Jachimo exemplifies Shakespeare's deflationary technique in this play, which Leonard Powlick has labeled his "comedy of anticlimax."[22]

Ironically, Jachimo's seduction can be a rhetorical success only if it fails in a practical sense. As a cunningly manipulative love poet, Jachimo remakes Imogen's nature at will, transforming the chaste wife who retires to bed early with a book into an overblown love goddess. To persuade Posthumus to share his interpretation of events, Jachimo must give his verbal picture *enargeia*, which according to Erasmus occurs "whenever, for the sake of amplifying, adorning, or pleasing, we do not state a thing simply, but set it forth to be viewed as though portrayed in color on a tablet, so that it may seem that we have painted, not narrated, and that the reader has seen, not read."[23] Jachimo's testimony to Imogen's sensuality depends on the energy of his proliferating metaphors. At the same time, however, constructing the character portrait depends on the physical immobility of Imogen's body, a condition that makes her seduction improbable.

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Having brought Imogen to life with his rhetoric, Jachimo now must put her to rest. Stealing her bracelet, he conjures sleep to "lie dull upon her, / And be her sense but as a monument, / Thus in a chapel lying!" (2.2.31–33). By comparing Imogen to a figure on a funerary monument, Jachimo calls attention to the cold stoniness of her chastity and so works against his thesis on a second level. Jachimo finally leaps back into his trunk, crying out, "One, two, three: time, time!" (2.2.51). The tolling bell, a signal that the speech has spanned three hours, testifies to his impotence. Tarquin made good his rape. In Jachimo's proleptic speech, however, rhetoric must substitute for experience; the event is over before the speechifying has ended.

Jachimo's comic failure in part stems from the self's status as a literary artifact. Jachimo can never just "be himself."[24] The reminder of stage time reinforces another detail of staging, the belated revelation that Imogen has left her copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* open at the rape of Philomel. Thus Jachimo finds that instead of directing the action he follows a script by Ovid.[25] Instead of substituting for Posthumus in a material sense, he joins a long line of literary rapists. It is also possible to see Jachimo's failure as an inevitable consequence of rhetorical performance. To convince Posthumus (and, by extension, other audiences) that the seduction actually took place, Jachimo must model the passion he wants Posthumus to believe Imogen showed toward him. Jachimo's identification with Imogen, his victim, entails a loss of selfhood for him as well as for her. When Jachimo pops back into the trunk that has concealed him, he metaphorically substitutes himself for Imogen rather than for Posthumus. Inside the trunk, he replaces the jewels and "rich plate" that he tells Imogen it contains. Thus Jachimo, like woman, is reduced to property exchanged between men.

Losing his autonomy, Jachimo also loses his voice. In a different context, Paul de Man writes that a latent threat inhabits prosopopoeia, the figure that gives a face and voice to dead, absent, or nonexistent persons. Prosopopoeia, by making the dead speak, implies by its symmetry that "the living are struck dumb."[26] Although Jachimo does not ascribe speech to Imogen until he is safely back in Italy, for all practical purposes he is now "struck dumb"—reduced to grunts, exclamations, and wild gestures as he records the details of Imogen's bedchamber. When Jachimo retreats into the trunk, he is identified even more completely with the woman whose honor he violates and experiences a metaphorical death, as she will do later. Several critics have argued that Jachimo's act of entering the trunk, a female symbol that Imogen herself explicitly links to her honor when she vows to guard it, represents his sexual intrusion.[27] But the trunk is also a tomb, and the act of entering it completes Jachimo's feminization. Still chaste and now silenced, if not obedient, Jachimo is a perverse emblem of ideal femininity.

Although it seems to be the basis for anthropomorphism or identification on the level of substance, prosopopoeia denies to its creations the ideal presence it asserts on their behalf.[28] Because prosopopoeia is a "verbal deed," Jachimo's identification with Imogen provides him with a competitive strategy for winning his wager with Posthumus. When Jachimo re-presents Imogen for Posthumus's benefit, the picture of her bedchamber serves him no longer as food for fantasy but as a memory image, a form of verbal shorthand that he employs to recall evidence "proving" that he has enjoyed Imogen's favors. Summarized in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and reconstructed by Frances Yates in *The Art of Memory*, artificial memory provides a visual shorthand that works as a mnemonic device. The person chooses a location with a number of "places," a background against which he can project images that will allow him to recall a scene or a series of facts on which to base an argument.[29] The *Ad Herennium* offers a few practical guidelines for choosing clear, strong images that will awaken memory. Images of objects or figures that are exceptionally great, base, marvelous, or ridiculous and images of figures in action strike the memory most forcibly. Thus the hyperbolic quality of Jachimo's effictio and its emphasis on movement are designed to evoke memory. Yates cautions against confusing images in poetry with memory images, but Shakespeare, in having Jachimo comment on the process by which he memorizes the bedroom, underscores rhetoric's function as a memory aid.

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Jachimo's memory image becomes the occasion for a new fiction, with a new plot line, when Posthumus reworks the story of Imogen's sexual infidelity. Jachimo's portrait literally provides the "ground" for Posthumus's: Jachimo may even speak from the back of the stage, whereas Posthumus moves down front to deliver his soliloquy.[30] Unlike Jachimo, whose passion is tied to the stage image before him, Posthumus moves from generalizations to specifics. From the premise that "we are *all* bastards" (my emphasis), he concludes that his own mother must have cuckolded his father; this belief in turn prompts the ugly image of Jachimo making love to Imogen: "Perchance he spoke not, but / Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German [one], / Cried 'O!' and mounted" (2.5.15–17). Using Jachimo's narrative as his own memory image, Posthumus first reconstructs the supposed encounter between Jachimo and Imogen, then reevaluates Imogen's character.

The speech ends cynically with a compact list of women's faults:

> there's no motion
> That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
> It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,
> The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
> Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;
> Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,
> Nice longing, slanders, mutability,
> All faults that name, nay, that hell knows,
> Why, hers, in part or all; but rather, all. (2.5.20–28)

As a set piece, this *ethopoeia* lacks the concreteness that often characterizes the Renaissance moral Character as a genre. Posthumus's diction remains resolutely abstract, his style curt. The portrait anatomizes rather than describes woman, unfolding the general concept of inconstancy into its parts by the standard method of *distributio*; more specifically, the portrait works by enumeration. Posthumus's *enumeratio* is a list built on nouns. Asyndeton (lack of connectives) and isocolon (repetitive clausal structure) give the enumeration an impersonal authority alien to Posthumus's passion. The speech also exploits the advantages of amplification, ticking off vices in rapid succession until it seems that woman must possess "all faults that name, nay, that hell knows." Posthumus anatomizes Imogen more viciously than Jachimo does, plucking out the sources of her "vice" just as King Lear imaginatively anatomizes Regan to find the cause of her hard heart.

With Posthumus's sketch of Imogen as the epitome of feminine vice we have left far behind the blunt Englishwoman who responded to a seduction attempt by summoning her father. Because identification—between speaker and subject and portrait and subject—is never complete, our sense of Imogen's *ethos* is constantly deferred. If Jachimo's portrait gains presence through absence, we might say that the presence of Posthumus's rage calls attention to the absence that characterizes his list of female vices. Posthumus's curt style, like Jachimo's excessively flamboyant style, eventually becomes comic. He decides to write satires against women, to "detest them, curse them," and finally to do nothing at all: "yet 'tis greater skill / In a true hate, to pray they have their will: / The very devils cannot plague them better" (2.5.33–35). In the last line, Posthumus makes the satirist's gesture of detachment; he will let women be their own worst punishment. As a satirist, Posthumus follows a traditional script, reworking the topics covered in popular classical satires such as Juvenal's sixth satire, which warns another Posthumus against marriage. If Shakespeare alludes to Juvenal's satire, the comparison emphasizes that Posthumus, like Jachimo, is subservient to literary precedent.[31] Like Jachimo, he himself is transformed into a Character when he tries to remake Imogen's ethos.

Cymbeline's set pieces of characterization testify to rhetoric's power to make and unmake ethical identity. They demonstrate as well the pitfalls of identification for those who read and evaluate character. Since the original stage emblem on which both portraits of Imogen are based will conform to a greater or lesser extent to Jachimo's account of Imogen's chamber, the spectator of *Cymbeline* is also implicated in the play's web of identifications. Whether the stage is crammed with the iconographic furniture Jachimo describes at length to Posthumus or whether only a few necessary props are incorporated, there will never be a perfect match between what we see and what we are told. The Shakespearean spectator therefore risks becoming a comic butt like Jachimo and Posthumus. Shakespeare's comedy of anticlimax extends to his audiences, so that *Cymbeline* continually demonstrates rather than describes the instability of the self in a world governed by rhetoric.

Because the hyperbolic rhetoric of Posthumus and Jachimo is undercut with comedy, their style might be attributed to self-love or egotistical blindness. In *Cymbeline*, however, epideictic rhetoric is not confined to special occasions; it is a normal mode of speech, providing its dramatis personae with ways of making sense and of evaluating the confusing events of their world. After Posthumus's misogynistic set piece, *Cymbeline*'s action continues to be structured through the juxtaposition of incomplete narrative and explanatory character portraits. When Pisanio receives orders to kill Imogen, he confronts a story whose origins are murky and whose projected end seems intuitively wrong. His immediate desire is for an author, an agent who can be held responsible for Posthumus's charge of adultery against Imogen. Reading the letter, Pisanio exclaims, "How? of adultery? / Wherefore write you not / What monsters her accuse?" (3.2.1–2). He conveniently imagines a "false Italian," whose poisonous tongue must be the source of Posthumus's change of heart. The rhetoric of praise and blame divides actors into black and white categories; just as the First Gentleman labels Posthumus a paragon and his rival Cloten a "thing too bad for report," Pisanio concludes from the puzzling letter that while Imogen is "more goddess-like than wife-like" (3.2.8), Posthumus's behavior is now as "low" as his bad fortune. Pisanio's urgent need to sort out the events leading to Posthumus's demand that he murder Imogen leads to tentative judgments of character. In a sense *aporia*, the absence of "poisonous tongu'd" Jachimo as effective cause of Posthumus's rage, necessitates Pisanio's effort to read the "plot" in which he must participate and to rank Imogen and Posthumus in a moral hierarchy.

Under stress, Imogen employs a similar strategy. Discovering Posthumus's intention to murder her at Milford Haven, she first justifies her own behavior, then thinks of Jachimo, who in this new light compares favorably with Posthumus; finally, she surmises that "some jay of Italy" has betrayed Posthumus (3.4.49). Still driven to organize experience, she seeks refuge in character judgments. Even in the final scene, when Imogen starts the chain of revelations that concludes the play happily, Jachimo and Posthumus continue to compete with epideictic rhetoric; this time they outdo one another by heaping vituperation on themselves. Posthumus was the rarest of good men in Italy, Jachimo tells Cymbeline; only through the direst villainy was he persuaded of Imogen's infidelity. "Send out / For torturers ingenious," replies Posthumus in turn, "Spit, and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set / The dogs o' th' street to bay me; every villain / Be call'd Posthumus Leonatus" (5.5.214–15, 222–24).

The rhetoric of characterization provides *Cymbeline*'s beleaguered individuals with strategies for coping with apparently unmotivated actions; to this extent, the forms used to describe character are what Kenneth Burke calls "equipment for living." But rhetorical strategies, because they grow predictable, are part of the problem as well as the solution in *Cymbeline*. Used repeatedly, they can produce what Burke, following Veblen, calls a "trained incapacity"—"a state of affairs whereby one's very abilities can function as blindnesses."[32] Both Imogen and Posthumus understand behavior, their own as well as each other's, through a rhetorical typology. Praising Imogen as "her adorer, not her friend" (1.4.68–69), Posthumus seems comfortable—sometimes too comfortable—in the role of respectful hyperbolist. Posthumus is expected to praise his lady absolutely, to declare her "more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified, and less attemptable than any [of] the rarest of our ladies" (1.4.59–61). He learned the rules of this game as a youth in France. The schema validating this "outdoing" game played by lovers, however, mandates a strict division between virtue and vice. In this game, women fall into one of two categories: They are either chaste paragons or whores, common "tomboys" like those Jachimo tells Imogen that Posthumus is consorting with in Italy. When Imogen no longer fits into one category, he transfers her to the other. The operation is neat, economical, and simple to execute.

Imogen also demonstrates a weakness for familiar roles and the scripts they provide. She enjoys the histrionics of leave-taking, complaining to Pisanio less about the separation from Posthumus than about the interruption of their final scene. Imogen runs through her list of appropriate vows for bereaved lovers, feeling frustrated by a lack of closure when her father denies them a parting kiss. When Jachimo represents Posthumus as the rakish gentleman on tour, Imogen recoils. But when he offers her a more palatable story, she capitulates readily to the comforting thought that "all's well" (1.6.179). In Milford Haven, where she discovers Posthumus's change of heart, Imogen experiences a crisis similar to the one from which Posthumus suffers. Finding her integrity as Posthumus's wife questioned, she asserts that she has fulfilled her role to the letter:

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> False to his bed? What is it to be false?
> To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
> To weep 'twixt clock and clock? If sleep charge nature,
> To break it with a fearful dream of him,
> And cry myself awake? That's false to 's bed? is it?
> (3.4.40–44)

Imogen counters the loss of her chosen role by redefining Posthumus as a "false Aeneas" whose treachery will be extended to all men. Casting Posthumus as Aeneas, Imogen puts herself in Dido's role and promptly offers to commit suicide. Like her husband, she is at the mercy of fictional prototypes.

In *Cymbeline*, types tend to degenerate into stereotypes. Whereas epideictic's categories of virtue and vice help Imogen and Posthumus to schematize the external world, stereotyping also schematizes them. Fictional typing is attractive because it orders experience, separating the heroes from the villains. As Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman explain in *The Social Construction of Reality*, the paradigms that allow an individual to master his social reality make the past intelligible and the future predictable by ordering the phases of his biography.[33] As he uses paradigms and confirms their correctness, the individual performs routine "identity maintenance." However, warn Berger and Luckman, "*all* social reality is precarious. *All* societies are constructions in the face of chaos."[34] Identity maintenance involves constant struggle because "even when the world of everyday life retains its massive and taken-for-granted reality *in actu*, it is threatened by the marginal situations of human experience that cannot be completely bracketed in everyday activity. There is always the haunting presence of metamorphoses, those actually remembered and those only sensed as sinister possibilities. . . . It is one thing for a well-behaved family man to dream of unspeakable orgies in nocturnal solitude. It is quite another to see these dreams empirically enacted by a libertarian colony next door."[35] When the libertarian colony moves in, when your wife appears to be unfaithful, or when your husband wants to murder you, those helpful paradigms become liabilities and a crisis of identity can follow.

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Identity crisis in *Cymbeline* involves moments of high comedy, but as rigid strategies are brought to bear on an increasingly convoluted action, character and plot are driven farther apart. Imogen, waking to find Cloten's headless corpse dressed in Posthumus's clothes, performs an excruciatingly complete effictio, beginning not at the top but with Cloten's "foot Mercurial," "Martial thigh," and "brawns of Hercules" and ending where the "Jovial face" should have been (4.2.310–11). As in the case of Jachimo's portrait of Imogen, a concentration on externals falsifies character; and as before, the description convinces because of absence rather than presence. In this case, the simple absence of a head permits Imogen to identify the corpse wrongly. Cloten's headless corpse, decked out in his rival's clothing, emblematizes the impossibility of reading character confidently.

The difficulty of reconciling plot and character is frequently figured as a problem of reading in *Cymbeline*. Posthumus's letters, as textual sources for the play's incomplete narrative, hinder rather than help Pisanio's desperate desire for illumination:

> O damn'd paper,
> Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,
> Art thou a feodary for this act, and look'st
> So virgin-like without? (3.2.19–22)

Blackened by its own villainy for participating in this travesty of justice, the paper loses its ability to characterize; quite literally, a blackened letter can no longer record the marks on which reading is based. The letter's opacity, rather than giving Posthumus's account vividness or enargeia, destroys the relationship between figure and ground and therefore obscures both past and future. In a similar vein, Imogen begins her odyssey to Wales convinced that she can "read" Posthumus as she reads the characters of his writing. Although at Milford Haven she finds the "scriptures of the loyal Leonatus" all turned to heresy (3.4.81), she continues wistfully to carve vegetables into characters at the cave. With the discovery of

Cloten's headless corpse, however, "to write and read" have become "treacherous" (4.2.316–17).

The second movement in *Cymbeline*'s plot, the return from pastoral Wales to Cymbeline's court, models an alternative method for reading the self, a method more appropriate to what Catherine Belsey calls the "liberal humanist" subject and what Richard Lanham calls the "central self." Posthumus, having reached a low point, repents of the murder he thinks has been committed for the surprising reason that many men "must murther wives much better than themselves / For wrying but a little" (5.1.4–5). Changing his Italian weeds for the garb of a British peasant, he seeks death in battle. Dr. Johnson admired his soliloquy at the beginning of act 5 for its spontaneous sincerity; however, only the conventionally elegiac thought that Imogen was better than Posthumus suggests any degree of introspection. Posthumus's tendency to avoid responsibility by "editing" the past, as Murray Schwartz puts it, is uppermost in this speech: He blames Pisanio, comforts himself, and finally escapes both conscience and notoriety in the mindless excitement of battle.[36] The one feature of the soliloquy that bothers Dr. Johnson, its final conceit, ironically provides the only evidence of change in Posthumus's character. Praying for the "strength o' th' Leonati," Posthumus vows "To shame the guise o' th' world" by beginning a new fashion: "less without and more within" (5.1.31–33). Defining himself by his internal virtue rather than his clothes, Posthumus articulates a view of the self that contradicts the play's general emphasis on role playing and Posthumus's own effort to identify external sources for his bad behavior.

The central self, however, is constructed from the outside in, through clothes and rhetoric. Because the self in this play is a construct, a sequential representation of potential roles rather than a given, it can be spoken into existence. Posthumus's vow to show "less without and more within" merely signals his adoption of a new role. He becomes the Stoic whose true self cannot be read on his exterior, the man who, in Hamlet's words, recognizes that readiness is all. Even in its most serious and sincere moments, *Cymbeline* insists that the self is grounded in rhetoric and in social action. This is so because the actions that form character themselves become accessible only through rhetorical re-creation. Our sense of Posthumus's renewed virtue, the foundation of his central self, depends on the valor he shows in a battle we do not see and on a blatantly simplistic encomium offered by the shades of his dead family members.

The sole epic action in the play, the battle between the Romans and Britons, is represented by a dumbshow. In the Folio version it takes up only fifteen lines. Posthumus supplements the pantomime by giving his own account of the battle to an English lord who presumably had fled the field. The fact that Posthumus chronicles his own heroism compounds the problem of interpretation. He opens with an epic simile, probably indebted to *Frederyke of Jennen* and indirectly to the *Aeneid*. Cymbeline, as a wounded bird metaphorically deprived of wings by his fleeing army, falls; meanwhile, the Roman army, like a beast of prey "lolling the tongue with slaught'ring," cuts down the Britons (5.3.8). Emerging from the simile, Posthumus grows more concrete, anatomizing the confused events with neatly isocolonic, parallel phrases. The Britons are struck down, "some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling, / Merely through fear" (5.3.10–11).

With his catalogue of the wounded as with his complicated simile, Posthumus observes epic decorum. Rhetorics often use descriptions of battle to model copiousness. In *The Complete Gentleman* of 1622, Henry Peacham points to Virgil's battle scenes for examples of pleasing variety in poetry: "What variety in his battles, assailing the enemy's camp, besieging cities, broils among the common people, set battles in fields, aids of horse and foot! etc. Never the same wounds, but given with divers weapons, as here one is wounded or slain with a piece of a rock, a flint, firebrand, club, halberd, long pole; there another with a drinking bowl or pot, a rudder, dart, arrow, lance, sword, balls of wildfire, etc." Having listed potential weapons, Peacham goes on to catalogue possible locations for the wounds they make and the circumstances under which those wounds might be received: "In divers places, as the throat, head, thigh, breast, hip, hand, knee; before, behind, on the side, standing, lying, running, flying, talking, sleeping, crying out, entreating. Of place, as in the field, in the tents, at sacrifice, upon the guard, in the daytime, in the night."[37]

Posthumus's catalogue, like Peacham's, builds an insistent rhythm; as he moves toward the battle's turning point, his speed increases and his images are compressed more tightly:

> Then began
> A stop i' th' chaser; a retire; anon
> A rout, confusion thick. Forthwith they fly
> Chickens, the way which they {stoop'd} eagles; slaves,
> The strides {they} victors made: and now our cowards,
> Like fragments in hard voyages, became
> The life o' th' need. Having found the back door open
> Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound
> Some slain before, some dying, some their friends
> O'erborne i' th' former wave. (5.3.39–48)

The climactic series of nouns (stop, chaser, retire, rout, confusion) arrests the action; when the tide of victory has turned in Britain's favor, the verse resumes with a contorted simile. The first two clauses imitate the Roman retreat by reversing temporal sequence; *now* the Romans fly along the same path down which they previously had swooped like eagles. Grammatical relations are even more obscure in the second comparison: "slaves, / The strides {they} victors made." "Slaves" seems to parallel "chickens" but turns out to be the subject of an implied verb; it acts as another epithet for the Romans, who retrace as slaves the strides they had made previously as victors. This is *Cymbeline*'s style at its most strained. Posthumus employs the "rhetoric of speed," which Annabel Patterson has traced to Hermogenes.[38] *Asyndeton* (lack of connectives), *merismus* (division of an action into parts), and *brachylogia* (ellipsis or abbreviated construction) achieve speed and mimic the battle's chaotic nature. The speech also employs what George Puttenham calls the figures of disorder: *parenthesis* and *hysteron proteron* (dislocated syntax).[39] Having described the Romans' retreat, Posthumus begins once again to survey the panorama of slaughter, detailing the variety of calamities befalling the Romans. Although Posthumus's passion builds, traditional rhetorical structures give shape to the running style appropriate to action.

The structural skeleton underlying Posthumus's apparently spontaneous and passionately mimetic rendition of the battle becomes noticeable when the Lord expresses wonder and Posthumus responds angrily with an aphorism: "Two boys, an old man (twice a boy), a lane, / Preserv'd the Britains, was the Romans' bane" (5.3.57–58). This rhymed jingle, reducing a flurry of action to a mnemonic couplet, underscores the fact that the details evoked by Posthumus, like those in any battle narrative, exist primarily for the sake of enargeia. The rhetoricians acknowledge that amplification not only increases admiration or pleasure but also strengthens a narrative's credibility. Quintilian, describing how to unfold a battle scene, stresses like Peacham the need for variety. He even suggests adding details, generically appropriate "fictitious incidents of the type which commonly occur."[40]

Plot and character, intimately related to one another in *Cymbeline*, are both structured by rhetorical convention, so that fact and fiction are constantly revealed as versions of one another. The relationship between behavior and judgments about character is finally established in the play's final act, when the Leonati confront Jupiter with their encomium from beyond the grave. The family's challenge and Jupiter's masque follow hard on Posthumus's martial valor and his repentance while awaiting execution. Posthumus's soliloquy and the challenge from the Leonati, like the two portraits of Imogen, form a diptych that reverses "figure" and "ground."[41] In preparation for death, Posthumus offers a prayer to the gods that for many readers confirms his inner regeneration.[42] Welcoming his imprisonment, Posthumus analyzes the paradox that bondage provides a way to liberty. Most of the speech is organized around comparisons and similitudes. Posthumus resembles a man sick with gout, while Death acts simultaneously as his physician and as a key to unlock his fetters. Having banished death's terrors, Posthumus applies the figures to his own case and offers his life in exchange for Imogen's: "If you will take this audit, take this life, / And cancel these cold bonds" (5.4.27–28). Showing a Stoic cheerfulness in the face of death, Posthumus behaves in an appropriately penitent manner. Although his prayer contains a number of standard *topoi* from the classical consolation—including the ideas that "the great misery of this world makes life wearisome" and that "life is a debt that must be paid"—the absence of comic framing in this scene deflects attention from its literary qualities.[43]

Despite his earnestness, Posthumus's redemption is not confirmed and completed, however, until the Leonati restore his good name with their own oratory: His sincerity and his central self need to be supplemented by the rebellious pyrotechnics of the Leonati. The play complicates cause-and-effect relationships here, since Jupiter's providence, Posthumus's contrition, and the Leonati's persistence all contribute to the play's peripeteia. The Leonati, however, wield a good deal of power at this point. Posthumus, immobilized by his chains, lies asleep on the floor; furthermore, although Jupiter gruffly dismisses the Leonati, he does respond to the demands of his rebellious subjects.[44] The Leonati call down the god in the machine. Their speech therefore may be read as a prayer (following G. Wilson Knight) or as a challenge, since the Leonati refer to Jupiter's own marital infidelities and threaten to take their case to the "shining synod" of the gods (5.4.89). More important, by reciting formally the facts of Posthumus's biography, the Leonati provide a verbal equivalent to Jupiter's divine grace.

The Leonati, delivering an encomium over the sleeping Posthumus, organize their praise of him according to the three standard topics: They refer to Posthumus's gifts of fortune, such as his worthy ancestry and noble wife (5.4.37–47, 55–57); to his gifts of the body, his "fair stuff" molded by nature (5.4.48–51); and finally to his spiritual gifts, a noble heart and brain (5.4.63–68). Although Posthumus himself is the subject of this speech, the encomium's three-part structure emphasizes the individual's ancestry, national background, and family. Thomas Wilson, in his advice for "praisyng a noble personage," follows Quintilian in recommending a "threfolded order": The encomium should cover the period before the subject's life, the period of his life, and the period after his death. In the description of the epoch before the subject's life, the realm he comes from, his shire, town, parents, and ancestors should all be considered.[45] Thus the Leonati, by their very appearance and recitation of their bravery and suffering, provide the historical frame required in an encomium.

Meredith Skura, focusing on the psychology of Posthumus's dream, writes that the masque of the Leonati represents "a revelation of the familial matrix that underlies all human experience." Skura interprets the masque as a psychological metaphor dramatizing a human truth: Posthumus cannot "find himself as husband until he finds himself as son, as part of the family he was torn from long ago."[46] Shakespeare, however, refuses to valorize the biological family's influence on individuals in this play. Posthumus, Cymbeline's lost sons, and even Cymbeline himself spend their formative years with substitute families and surrogate parents. The nature-nurture debate becomes particularly knotty when Belarius claims that Cymbeline's sons show sparks of royal nature because they yearn to fight against the Romans; yet these same boys have acquired their taste for heroics by listening to old Belarius's war stories (3.3.86–95). The masque also provides a reminder that Posthumus never knew his family; as his name implies, Posthumus's father died before his birth and his mother in childbirth. Posthumus's identifying traits, both his nobility and his poverty, are defined by the father's deeds before his birth, by Posthumus's position in Cymbeline's household, and by his "election" as Imogen's husband.

Posthumus does not merely recover his family. Rhetorically and dramatically, they create him anew, shaping his character portrait by simplifying the narrative of his life. Because Posthumus's repentance is provided with a public context by the epideictic biography, finding his place in the family is a rhetorical, perhaps more than a spiritual or psychological, event. The Leonati therefore accomplish what the First Gentleman in the opening scene could not: They "delve" Posthumus "to the root" (1.1.28). But their panegyric biography, foregrounding some details from his life and suppressing others, is transparently a fiction. The epideictic theory and practice that lie behind this encomium recognize that human biographies are socially constructed fictions. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, for instance, acknowledges that the encomiast must sometimes shape contradictory evidence. In practice, he must assert that "coincidences and accidents" reflect choice: "Produce a number of good actions, all of the same kind, and people will think that they are signs of excellence and choice."[47] In other words, the actions supporting an encomium, like other kinds of narratives, are fictions in the etymological sense: They are constructions, fabrications, or crafted objects. Detailing the subject's noble birth, education, and friends makes the praise more plausible, since "good fathers are likely to have good sons, and good training is likely to produce good character."[48] Virtue therefore lies both in man's nature and in society's judgment.

In this way Aristotle arrives at a circular definition of the noble man.[49] We can recognize the virtuous man by his good deeds, since man tends to become what he does; on the other hand, the virtuous man's behavior will be virtuous because he is. Character produces action, and action molds character. Nobility therefore depends on a probable congruence between a man's past and his behavior. The

Leonati exploit this paradox inherent in epideictic tradition with their "proof" of Posthumus's virtue. They begin with the highly debatable question, "Hath my poor boy done aught but well?" (5.4.35), and conclude: "Since, Jupiter, our son is good, take off his miseries" (5.4.85–86). Focusing on Posthumus's ancestry, they establish a causal relationship between noble background and moral virtue.

The rhetoric of characterization, by submitting the chaos of an individual's life to extreme categories of virtue and vice, necessarily fictionalizes character. The speaker shapes his subject's life to pass a final judgment on him: He both describes and creates a character, chronicles a life and fabricates a fiction. But because rhetorical forms are public and traditional, the verbal structures of epideictic oratory reflect the truth of social judgment. *Cymbeline*'s obsession with judging character indicates that rhetorical institutions of character require constant rehearsal for their validity. In *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckman remind us that man experiences the institutional world as an objective reality: "It has a history that antedates the individual's birth and is not accessible to his biographical recollection. It was there before he was born, and it will be there after his death. This history itself, as the tradition of the existing institutions, has the character of objectivity. The individual's biography is apprehended as an episode located within the objective history of the society." But although institutions have a life of their own, succeeding generations know them only by hearsay; the institutions therefore need to be legitimated. "The same story, so to speak, must be told to all the children," as Berger and Luckman put it.[50]

The fact that stories must be told to succeeding generations highlights once again the importance of identification between a speaker and his subject. As Barbara Lewalski notes in her discussion of the connections between poetry and epideictic rhetoric, the speaker is especially prominent in epideictic oratory. Representing his own feelings or speaking as a community spokesperson, the speaker mediates between subject and audience.[51] He does not remain untouched by the interaction, however. Because the orator identifies with his subjects, he judges himself as he judges them. In this way, according to Joel Altman, rhetorical practice serves a moral end through morally neutral means.[52]

The epideictic structures that guide ethical self-fashioning in *Cymbeline* served a similar purpose within the Renaissance language curriculum. Trained at school in fictional verse epistles and in the progymnasmata, boys learned early to personate or identify with classical and mythological figures. In this way, according to Richard Lanham, a rhetorical education encourages the boy to try on many identities. Such role playing has an ethical purpose, since fledgling orators learned not only that others could think differently from them but that they could *be* different.

Educators, notably Erasmus, agree that fictional exercises shape character by schooling the judgment through imaginative projection. Although in *De Conscribendis Epistolis*, he prudently dismisses Ovid's *Amores* as unfit for the very young, Erasmus lists a series of fictional letters, based on the *Heroides*, to guide boys along virtue's path. The epistles exploit a youthful potential for histrionics. An imaginary letter addressed to Achilles, for instance, counsels him to bear the seizing of Briseis nobly, "showing that even a wicked king must be obeyed, that the common good must take precedence over private grief, and finally that it is utterly unbecoming of Achilles' high birth, noble spirit, and brilliant career that he should forget his valour for the love of a foreign slave girl."[53] But highly charged topics such as this one can train a child's moral faculties; this epistle, according to Erasmus, attacks "disreputable pleasure" and praises "exceptional heroism." The schoolmaster's effort to shape his charges' judgment extends to their sense of self. Even so circumscribed an activity as translation from Greek, for instance, demonstrates not only the particular nature of the Greek language but the "points of similarity and variance between ourselves and the Greeks."[54] Rhetorical exercises therefore work, to use Kenneth Burke's terms from *A Rhetoric of Motives*, by encouraging identification in the face of division.

The title to this chapter refers to Enobarbus, who hopes that loyalty to Antony will at least earn him a place "in the story"—that is, in historical chronicle. The phrase applies equally to this play because *Cymbeline*, as Hugh Richmond has said of *Henry VIII*, is "romance redeemed by history."[55] Posthumus is redeemed by his brave actions and his repentance, but earning a place in *Cymbeline*'s story is impossible without the intervention of formal rhetoric. In an anticlimactic coda to the recognition scene, Cornelius the doctor reports that Cymbeline's queen has confessed on her deathbed that she had never loved the king and that she was planning to poison him. Cymbeline's only response is "O most delicate fiend! / Who is't can read a woman?" (5.5.47–48). Reading character is a persistent problem for the inhabitants of Cymbeline's Britain. In *Permanence and Change*, Kenneth Burke says that "a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing."[56] This maxim, which might explain the impossibility of reading character, also makes that reading a cultural imperative. We need rhetorical structures because, as Imogen says when confronted with Cloten's headless corpse, "Our very eyes / Are sometimes like our judgments, blind" (4.2.301–2).

FOUR

“Not True, to Be True”

Hyperbole and Judgment in *Othello*, *King John*, and *The Winter’s Tale*

At one point in *Cymbeline*, Pisanio finds himself serving multiple masters: the absent lord Posthumus, who has commanded Pisanio to kill Posthumus’s wife Imogen; Imogen herself; and the evil queen and her clownish son, to whom he must pretend allegiance. Reviewing the plots that have enmeshed him, Pisanio remarks that “wherein I am false, I am honest; not true, to be true” (4.3.42). To be true, or to keep faith with the innocent Imogen, Pisanio must lie and deceive the others who claim his loyalty. The double meaning of “truth” in this instance suggests the strain put on rhetoric by its double function: sorting out facts and conducting human relations. In rhetorical situations, we are in the realm of opinion, where whatever is “true” must in some way be “false.”

Rhetoric is concerned with proof in the realm of opinion, with discovering and judging “what probably happened.” Whereas philosophy begins with a thesis or abstract problem, rhetoric begins with a hypothesis or specific case that requires judgment.[1] The province of literature is midway between the thesis and hypothesis. Literature addresses general issues but frames them in terms of specific persons, times, and circumstances. In Aristotle’s anatomy of drama, plot or action is analogous to the rhetorical hypothesis; it is a specific case to be judged. When dealing with plot we ask, for instance, whether or not Orestes is guilty of matricide. But when character is factored into the equation, we are in that middle area between judging a case and arguing an issue. The action is over, the verdict rendered: What remains is to judge the quality of the act by evaluating the principal actor’s *ethos*. In this situation we do not put Orestes on trial but ask after the fact whether he was justly acquitted of matricide.[2]

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When dealing with literary character, we are dealing with "truth" in both senses of the word. "Character," in Aristotle's technical sense, means signs of moral choice; consideration of character therefore involves questions of justice and injustice. Some exercises from the *progymnasmata* and *controversiae*, used to train schoolboys' judgment, are framed as courtroom trials or legal debates. Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata* include an exercise, similar to Quintilian's thesis, which involves arguing for and against a proposed law on the basis of its justice. The juicier controversiae include legal dilemmas such as that of the virgin who is captured by pirates and sold into prostitution. She asks her clients to pay her, yet respect her chastity. When a soldier refuses, she kills him, is acquitted and restored to her parents, then asks to become a priestess. The law says that "a priestess must be chaste and of chaste parents, pure and of pure parents"; budding rhetors are invited to argue for or against her claim to the priesthood. In the Elder Seneca's sample speeches for this controversia, the case against the girl not only cites her murder of the soldier but casts doubt on her chastity. The prosecution insists that her clients must at least have kissed her and insinuates that no one can know what goes on behind a brothel's closed doors. Even the fact that she lived with pirates is rather unfairly urged against her.

As the prosecutor warms to his task, more vivid reconstructions of the virgin's life in the brothel ensue: "Do you regard yourself as chaste just because you are an unwilling whore?—She stood naked on the shore to meet the buyer's sneers; every part of her body was inspected—and handled. Do you want to hear the outcome of the sale? A pirate was the seller, a pimp the buyer, a brothel the place to which she was taken. You were led off to a place where you could do nothing more upright than to die.—You asked for money more eagerly than you ask for a priesthood."[3] Offered on the girl's behalf is an alternative narrative in which "each visitor paid more to preserve her chastity than he had brought along to violate it."[4] The debate calls for a judgment about the girl's purity, which depends on the spirit in which she killed the soldier who tried to rape her, but also questions the fact of her chastity.

In the case of the priestess-prostitute, both defenders and attackers freely reconstruct the facts on which judgment is based. As in Pisanio's case, truth as fact is subjected to broader questions of right and wrong. Quintilian, discussing the importance of the narration or statement of facts to forensic rhetoric, defines the statement of facts as a persuasive exposition of what has been done or is supposed to have been done; he apologizes in advance for suggesting the use of plausible fictions when facts are scarce or unfavorable to the orator's case: "Now I should regret that anyone should censure my conduct in suggesting that a *statement* which is wholly in our favour should be *plausible*, when as a matter of fact it is *true*. There are many things which are true, but scarcely credible, just as there are many things which are plausible though false."[5] Although Quintilian is hesitant to say so, the intelligent orator must consider narrative as persuasion rather than chronicle. His job is to say nothing "contrary to nature" and to "assign reasons and motives" to individuals involved in the events under consideration.[6]

The story of the priestess-prostitute is familiar from Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Marina, of course, does not even understand the instructions that Boult and Pander give her for feigning reluctance in front of her clients. She herself voices the sentiment of one of Seneca's prosecutors, that death is better than even a virtuous life in the brothel. Marina, furthermore, converts her customers to virtue. Lysimachus even gives her money and employment to preserve her chastity. Thus Marina finds herself in the unlikely position of receiving money for services not rendered, just as the priestess-prostitute's defender has suggested. In *Pericles*, Shakespeare adopts the less plausible position that a virgin captured by pirates and sold into prostitution could not only retain her virtue but transmit it to others while earning her keep: He chooses the power of hyperbole over probability.[7]

Because it is simultaneously true and false, hyperbole is paradoxically a trope of judgment. In her 1975 Annual Shakespeare's Birthday Lecture for the Folger Library, Madeleine Doran provides a sensible if partial account of Shakespeare's idealism. Although we normally read hyperbole ironically, as "intentionally destructive in its overreaching," according to Doran, the Renaissance took the rhetoric of praise more seriously.[8] To translate virtue into action, as documents such as Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* suggest, we need ideal models; Shakespeare's heroes and heroines, Doran suggests, often provide such models of excellence. Shakespearean paragons may have individualizing quirks to humanize them: Desdemona tells a white lie about her lost handkerchief, for instance, and Cordelia shares her father's stubbornness. Nevertheless, Shakespeare means us to see these characters as living ideals. No pale shadows of Platonic virtue, Shakespearean paragons incarnate perfection; and so a Renaissance audience would incline seriously to hyperbolic praise of them. Lorenzo's admiration for Portia's "godlike amity" and Ophelia's sad lament that Hamlet was "the glass of fashion and the mould of form" would strike a responsive chord in Elizabethan listeners. Doran acknowledges correctly the presence of Renaissance ideals in Shakespeare's exemplary characters. Yet by limiting her exploration of hyperbole to ethical descriptions, she fails to recognize the wider range of uses to which Renaissance life and theater put hyperbole. As a master trope, hyperbole plays an important role in questions of judgment about any action by separating actors into black and white categories. On the microscopic level of style, hyperbole performs a function like that performed by the larger forms of epideictic rhetoric.

Renaissance rhetoricians, although they sometimes mention hyperbole's power to represent extremes of virtue and vice, stress that hyperbole exaggerates life to praise or dispraise. George Puttenham calls it the "over reacher" or "lowd lyar." Characterized by "immoderate excesse" and "dissimulation," hyperbole lurks on the fringes of an upright and polite society. When used properly, it helps to "advaunce or greatly abase the reputation of any thing or person." But because its power to influence reputation makes hyperbole dangerous, we must use it discreetly or be sure that the subject's worth warrants such exaggeration: "for although a prayse or other report may be allowed beyond credit, it may not be beyond all measure."[9] A gross hyperbole might be excusable in love, where we are expected to praise "our mistresses vertue, bewtie, or other good parts."[10] It is more problematic in politics, where distinctions between truth and falsehood have greater consequences.[11] For this reason, Puttenham must assert that hyperbole has no real power to alter reality or the reader's perception of it.

Renaissance rhetoricians follow their classical predecessors when they limit hyperbole's scope by connecting it to epideictic rhetoric.

Quintilian warns that hyperbole must be decorous and avoid "extravagant affectation." He relaxes these restraints only for "abnormal" subjects; "for we are allowed to amplify, when the magnitude of the facts passes all words."[12] Hyperbole, then, is "true" when it describes an inexpressibly good or bad object: It does justice to exemplary subjects and aggrandizes or demeans lesser ones. More so than Puttenham, Quintilian acknowledges that hyperbole cannot testify to real moral worth. Although Doran warns against the modern tendency to read hyperbole ironically instead of seriously, the rhetoricians themselves acknowledge two possibilities: that hyperbole willfully and blatantly exaggerates an object's worth and that it successfully represents exemplary objects.

This confusion about hyperbole's nature mirrors a larger disagreement about poetry's function in the Renaissance. As Brian Vickers has argued in an article on the epic, Renaissance rhetoricians muddle their sense of poetry's purpose by forcing together Aristotle's recipe for tragic catharsis in the *Poetics* with an epideictic scheme for poetic genres derived from the *Rhetoric*. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle divides up poetry according to the poet's character. The "graver sort" of poet represents noble persons and actions in hymns, panegyrics, epic, and tragedy; the "meaner sort" represents the actions of the ignoble in satire, comic epic, invective, and comedy. According to Vickers, this is a familiar Aristotelian distinction by magnitude: Heroic and tragic characters are "better than ourselves," whereas comic characters are "worse." However, since Aristotle also divides mankind according to virtue and vice, we judge poetry not only by using a scale of magnitude (a more/less model) but also by using a category of inclusion and exclusion (a yes/no model): "On the one model virtue is relative, you have more or less of it; on the other it is absolute, you either have it or you don't."[13]

Renaissance views of dramatic character reproduce on a larger scale the paradox of hyperbole, which may represent absolute states of virtue and vice truly or exaggerate relative states for didactic purposes. Shakespeare's judgment scenes, where verdicts turn more frequently on questions of moral character than of circumstance, explore hyperbole's role in assessing character accurately. Before we examine these scenes, however, it is useful to survey how classical and Renaissance rhetoricians classified hyperbole and how they thought it functioned. The relationship between hyperbole's two functions (as exaggeration and as description of extreme states of virtue and vice) becomes more comprehensible when hyperbole is regarded as a class of metaphor. Renaissance rhetoricians, following Quintilian and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, link hyperbole most closely to simile; in this way, they establish a clear syntactic distance between an object and its poetic comparison. The *Ad Herennium*, used as a Renaissance schoolbook, lists two kinds of hyperbolic comparison: from equivalence ("His face burned like fire") and from superiority ("From his mouth flowed speech sweeter than honey"). Hyperbole also exists independently, as in this example: "If we maintain concord in the state, we shall measure the empire's vastness by the rising and the setting of the sun."[14] Puttenham offers as one example of hyperbole a lover's conceit or extended simile. Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* also gives several examples of hyperbole based on simile: "He is as swift as a swallowe, he hath a belly as bigge as a barrell, he is a giaunt in makyng."[15]

Aristotle, however, classifies hyperbole under metaphor.[16] His first example is "the one about the man with a black eye." Because of the eye's striking discoloration, " 'you would have thought he was a basket of mulberries'; here the 'black eye' is compared to a mulberry because of its colour, the exaggeration lying in the quantity of mulberries suggested."[17] Hyperbole asserts an identity between objects, differing from metaphor only in its scope or "quantity": Hyperbole sees in the bruised eye a basket of mulberries, metaphor only one berry.

Attitudes toward hyperbole therefore change with rhetoric's perspective on metaphor. Renaissance rhetorics define metaphor as the substitution of one word for another. Puttenham once again gives the conventional wisdom on "*metaphora*, or the Figure of Transporte": "There is a kinde of wresting of a single word from his owne right signification, to another not so naturall, but yet of some affinitie or conveniencie with it, as to say, *I cannot digest your unkinde words*, for I cannot take them in good part: or as the man of law said, *I feele you not*, for I understand not your case, because he had not his fee in his hand. Or as another said to a mouthy Advocate, *Why barkest thou at me so fore?*"[18] "Wresting" words from one meaning to another, metaphor commits violence. Metaphor is also "unnatural," since it removes words from their "proper" or "right" meaning. As a less precise and less honest simile, metaphor, like hyperbole, is potentially dangerous. For this reason, Puttenham adds that some "likeness" or "affinitie" must exist between the two words in a metaphor. Puttenham's skepticism about metaphor traces back to Quintilian and the *Ad Herennium*, among other sources. Quintilian lists three justifications for metaphor: "A noun or a verb is transferred from the place to which it properly belongs to another where there is either no *literal* term or the *transferred* is better than the *literal*. We do this either because it is necessary or to make our meaning clearer or, as I have already said, to produce a decorative effect."[19] He alludes to metaphor's creative function—naming objects without names—but dwells more on metaphoric decorum. For Quintilian, the metaphor's use as decoration overshadows its two other functions, to name and to clarify.

Aristotelian metaphor also involves a transfer of names: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy," says the *Poetics*.[20] But for Aristotle metaphor is not merely decorative. As Paul Ricoeur points out, metaphor fills a semantic lacuna and so creates meaning. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle compares metaphor to philosophical speculation. Metaphors should be drawn "from things that are related to the original thing, and yet not obviously so related—just as in philosophy also an acute mind will perceive resemblances even in things far apart. Thus Archytas said that an arbitrator and an altar were the same, since the injured fly to both for refuge."[21] Because metaphor organizes experience around similarities, it has a referential function.[22] Aristotle has two views of metaphor's relation to actuality: Sometimes it creates reality; sometimes it creates only the *appearance* of reality. But despite his ambivalence, at least according to Ricoeur's reading, Aristotle does suggest that metaphor's power to make an audience "see things" substantially affects the external world.

Later rhetoricians are more reticent. The *Ad Herennium* allows that metaphor can be used to create "a vivid mental picture" by drawing on images already in nature: To invent easy comparisons, one can "set before one's eyes everything animate and inanimate, mute and articulate, wild and tame, of the earth, sky, and sea, wrought by art, chance, or nature, ordinary or unusual."[23] In the *Ad Herennium* mental pictures precede comparison, whereas in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* the act of comparison brings the image into being. Comparisons and metaphors create in the *Rhetoric*, transcribe in the *Ad Herennium*. For later rhetoricians, then, bringing a comparison "before our eyes" creates not actuality but illustrative analogies. Renaissance rhetoricians continue to link vision with metaphor. John Hoskins, in his *Directions for Speech and Style*, declares that metaphors are "requisite to match the compassing sweetness of men's minds, that are not content to fix themselves upon one thing but they must wander into the confines; like the eye, that cannot choose but view the whole knot when it beholds but one flower in a garden of purpose; or like an archer that, knowing his bow will overcast or carry too short, takes an aim on this side or beyond his mark."[24] Hoskins, treating metaphor's sensual appeal indulgently, considers it a vehicle for knowledge. But between Aristotle and Hoskins, metaphor's referential power to create meaning has dwindled. Hoskins's reader, who knows in advance that the archer deliberately aims high or low to hit the mark, differs from Aristotle's auditor, who responds to metaphor with "How true it is! but I missed it!"

Paul Ricoeur, synthesizing and criticizing both ancient and modern theories in *The Rule of Metaphor*, identifies two important misconceptions about the metaphor. Beginning with Aristotle, theorists have assumed that metaphor, like simile, substitutes one word for another. Ricoeur replaces this "substitution theory" with an "interaction theory," adapting for his purpose Max Black's schema of "focus" and "frame." While the word is metaphor's "focus," the sentence and surrounding context "frame" the word. Their interaction changes both focus and frame. The metaphor "Man is a wolf," for instance, turns not on the lexical meaning of "wolf" but on a system of associated commonplaces that a linguistic community attaches to "wolf." Frame influences focus. But as Ricoeur points out, the focus also changes the frame: Thus the metaphor "Man is a wolf" also anthropomorphizes the wolf.

Since metaphor begins with the sentence's logic rather than with the word, Ricoeur argues, it has a global function in mimesis. Ricoeur confirms the presence of two qualities of Aristotelian metaphor rejected by later tradition. Aristotle considers metaphor creative because it "brings things before our eyes." Ricoeur agrees that metaphor, as an organizing device, creates new categories even as it violates others. The comparison between man and wolf, for instance, selects human features and organizes them to make a new psychological or ethical category for man. Pointing to Aristotle's emphasis on metaphor's relation to naming, Ricoeur argues that metaphor has a referential function, created by the tension between metaphor's power to create and its submission to reality. Its logic lies within the verb "to be"; for as the metaphor's focus fights to set up a new reality, the frame struggles to maintain the existing reality. "X is *not* Y" therefore accompanies every statement that "X *is* Y." Without this double tension, according to Ricoeur, metaphor "plays itself out in substitution and dissipates itself in ornamentation; allowed to run free, it loses itself in language games."[25]

Ricoeur's explication of metaphor as a narrative strategy is pertinent to the Renaissance fondness for amplification. In *De Copia*, Erasmus demonstrates how to embellish thought, unfolding at length statements that could be expressed more generally and pithily. One example is the sentence, "He lost everything through excess." What Erasmus's unspecified agent lost and how he lost it are detailed methodically. Amateur orators must have enjoyed running through the litany of ways in which the man wasted his property: in "foulest passion for harlots, in daily banquets, in sumptuous entertainments, nightly drinking bouts, low taverns, delicacies, perfumes, dice, and gaming that what remained to him would not equal a farthing."[26] In a sense, this entire passage is metaphorical, since it describes not what did happen but what might happen. The debauchee who lost all through excess embodies the metaphorical tension between "is" and "is not": A debauchee would probably engage in these kinds of actions, but under the terms of the exercise we already know that no such person exists and that no such event took place. The narrative is an allegory or expanded metaphor that turns its subject, "he," into a Character—the debauchee. Ricoeur's notion of metaphor explains the process of amplification in this exercise to the extent that the extended metaphor answers the question, "What happened?" On the level of style, metaphor as cognition can fill in a dramatic hypothesis. But once the list of crimes has been given, and once the subject has become a Character, judgments about the quality of his actions are called for. Ricoeur's model for metaphor does not consider sufficiently the move from definition to evaluation; in particular, Ricoeur cannot account for the metaphoric role played by hyperbole.

In fact, no theory of metaphor—whether classical, Renaissance, or contemporary—accounts completely for hyperbole's role in evaluation. Renaissance rhetorical practice, as several commentators have reminded us, does not meekly exemplify theory.[27] Renaissance students studied rhetoric in order to speak well in public. As Erasmus puts it in *De Copia*, the aim of rhetorical study is to avoid being "confused, or crude, or even silent."[28] Language use is therefore improvisatory and circumstantial, rooted in a particular moment and context. Marion Trousdale points out that, from the perspective of language use, tropes are directly mimetic. As distortions of ordinary language, they either express or represent a speaker's mind in order to persuade an audience.[29] In this context, tropes are most useful for their ability to convey attitude rather than cognitive information. As social action, in Kenneth Burke's terms, "metaphor" is another name for "perspective"; metaphor lets us see one thing in terms of something else in a way that conveys an attitude toward it. In this way, metaphor and hyperbole involve not only objects or propositions but also a speaker, audience, and rhetorical context.[30]

Hyperbole, as the stylistic equivalent of epideictic forms, plays a key role in relating character to plot. As cognitive metaphor, hyperbole helps to judge hypotheses by distinguishing what "probably happened." By providing a perspective weighted with attitude on those events, it also helps to evaluate those events by distributing praise and blame. Thus hyperbole brings to the foreground the relationship between factual truth and justice. In Shakespeare's plays, the tension between figurative language's cognitive and evaluative functions is most apparent in trial scenes, where the relationship between character and plot becomes problematic. Since schoolboys engaged in formal debates in the style of Seneca's *Controversiae*, these staged trials call into play habits of thought and speech shared by a culture.[31]

Shylock's trial in *The Merchant of Venice*, as the most detailed representation of judicial process in the Shakespearean canon, examines the grounds of moral ethos by interrogating Venetian justice; the trial scene, however, defuses the tension between character and plot in at least three ways. First, to the extent that Shylock rather than Antonio is on trial, the facts of the case are never in doubt. The bond is extant; only the quality of Shylock's projected action, taking the pound of Antonio's flesh, is at issue. Second, Portia's male disguise and her participation in the love plot deflect attention from the deceptiveness of her rhetoric. Portia's method of argument and her reliance on a trick of wording link her to Shylock, but her rhetoric seems at once more disinterested and less weighty than his.[32] Portia's disguise as a doctor of law rather than as a pretty boy unsexes her. Appropriating her knowledge from an exclusively male profession and framing her argument in the general terms of a thesis, Portia is so completely submerged in her legal role that neither her gender nor her personal identity is perceptible through the disguise. Furthermore, Portia's potential unruliness as a learned lady is contained when she abandons her courtroom rhetoric for sexual banter. Thus the play ends not with Portia's exercise of power but with the husbands' repossession of their wives' "rings," in both the sexual and the economic sense.[33]

Third, Portia's legal argument derives its authority from a series of patriarchal figures: Bellario, who supposedly furnishes her with his legal opinion; the Duke, who demands from Shylock a "gentle" answer; and finally, since this play frames the battle between the letter and spirit of the law as a problem in equity, the unknown author of the law regarding forfeiture of bonds.[34] The long-absent framer of Venetian law, whose intention must be consulted in applications of the law not anticipated by its original wording, is a kind of *prosopopoeia*. He is not the origin of justice but a ventriloquist speaking with a Venetian accent. Frank Whigham argues persuasively that Shylock poses a threat to the Venetians because he seeks power without wanting membership in the ruling class and that he therefore demystifies the Venetians' heroic self-image. The law, as Whigham points out, literally belongs to the ruling class in this play. Portia, by offering Shylock reasonable arguments, disguises the Venetians' very real power over him. When Portia finds in the bond "no mention of a jot of blood, she reveals the language of the law as infinitely interpretable, as the ongoing creation of its native speakers, who maintain their power precisely by 'ad libbing' with it."[35] In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare camouflages the arbitrary relationship between law and justice by a simple accumulation of authorities.[36]

In other trial scenes, however, Shakespeare exposes more boldly the social construction of identity by questioning the grounds on which judgments of character are made. *King John*, *Othello*, and *The Winter's Tale* all consider the role hyperbole plays in knowledge of actions, exploring the paradox of truth and falsehood. *Othello* dramatizes the error of reading hyperbole conventionally, as conveying feeling rather than information. In the amoral world of *King John*'s politics, however, hyperbole becomes an agent for factual truth, no matter how contingent that truth may be. *The Winter's Tale*, finally, explores the rhetorical basis for all knowledge of human affairs. In each play, Shakespeare forces a realization that, although a significant gap always separates *res* from *verba*, hyperbole often provides access to truth as well as to destructive falsehoods.

Bernard Spivack calls the love between Desdemona and Othello "a proposition and the play their battlefield, testing whether love so conceived and dedicated can long endure."[37] But the battle between Iago and Othello is conducted less through logic than through opposing styles of argument: Whereas Othello shows a penchant for overstatement, Iago's characteristic figure is *meiosis*. At stake is the definition of Desdemona's character and therefore the possibility of hyperbolic virtue. Each of the men in her world describes Desdemona in extreme terms: To her father she is "a maiden, *never* bold; / Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion / Blush'd at herself" (1.3.94–96; my emphasis); to Cassio she is "divine Desdemona," a maid "that paragons description and wild fame" (2.1.62); even to Iago "she's fram'd as fruitful / As the free elements" (2.3.341–42). Othello, although he avoids naming Desdemona's virtues, at least recognizes in a conditional way that, "if she be false, [O then] heaven [mocks] itself" (3.3.278). Whereas Desdemona seems to embody hyperbolic virtue, Othello has lived a life of hyperbole, full of improbable hardships and encounters with chimerical creatures; small wonder, then, that even his reunion with Desdemona at Cyprus must be figured as the calm following an apocalyptic storm. Since style plays a key role in representations of self and other in this play, Stephen Greenblatt has defined Othello's tragedy in rhetorical terms. Othello's identity depends on constant performance of his life's story, which is inscribed within the language and values of an alien culture; his predicament is universal to the extent that the language from which the self is fashioned is always imposed from without.[38] In the Renaissance, the rhetoric of self-fashioning is doubly alien, since from childhood on the private self of a man is shaped, judged, and revised with the forms used to train Greek and Roman orators for public life.

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Although Othello's rhetoric may belong to an alien culture, he is a competent orator. Othello's marriage and its dissolution are both commemorated through narratives that rely on judicial rhetoric. Othello's first tale, the story of how he wooed Desdemona, is presented in a public forum. Because Brabantio has accused Othello of seducing his daughter with witchcraft, Othello is unofficially on trial. He therefore delivers to the assembled Venetians not a "round unvarnish'd tale" (1.3.90) but a foreshortened version of the judicial oration's *confirmation*. According to Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, in the confirmation the speaker should "heape matter and finde out argumentes, to confirme the same to the outermoste of our power, makyng firste the strongest reasons that wee can, and nexte after, gatheryng all probable causes together, that beeyng in one heape, thei maie seme strong, and of greate weighte."[39] Othello's story, although not presented as a single speech, follows the pattern Wilson recommends for cases that depend on a person's character rather than some point of fact.

Speaking to Iago prior to the actual confrontation with Brabantio, Othello describes his ancestral background: "I fetch my life and being / From men of royal siege" (1.2.21–22). When addressing the Duke, he declares publicly his inner nature: "Rude am I in my speech, / And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace" (1.3.81–82). In his defense, Othello also cites typical behaviors; his arms, for instance, use their "dearest action in the tented field" (1.3.85). But he dwells longest on "what he hath confessed, or what he hath to saie for hymself," in Wilson's formula, repeating for his audience's benefit some of the stories that won Desdemona's heart. Not only is the most private narrative of Othello's life framed by the structures of public discourse, but the *histoire* that informs this *récit* is already rhetorical: The love of Desdemona and

Othello is based not only on his talent for speaking but on her skill as a listener. Although F. R. Leavis echoed Iago's contempt for Othello's bombastic style, self-dramatization is not an indulgence but a given of public life in this play.[40]

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In Venice, the tension between forms of proof and hyperbolic style is defused. But style and substance do not remain united for long. That Iago attacks Othello's sense of self through his language has been amply demonstrated. Iago works by innuendo, by fragmentary quotation, by simply echoing Othello's own words. He also manipulates Othello's vocabulary by reducing all experience to its lowest common denominator: He equates spiritual things with animals, bodily functions, and economic bargains.[41] Othello claims desperately that "it is not words that shakes me thus" (4.1.41–42), but Iago successfully detaches words from their rhetorical context by effacing himself as speaker, reticently refusing to speak his mind. When Othello talks to Iago he simply hears reflected back to him disembodied voices—Brabantio's, Desdemona's, his own. In other words, Iago transforms persuasion into a private dialogue and finally into a monologue, in which Othello convinces himself of Desdemona's infidelity. "If I do prove her haggard," Othello proposes in his first moment of solitude during the temptation scene, "Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings, / I'ld whistle her off, and let her down the wind / To prey at fortune." Within a few lines, however, he has concluded: "She's gone. I am abus'd, and my relief / Must be to loathe her" (3.3.260–63, 267–68). By this point in the seduction scene, Othello has assumed the role of both prosecutor and judge; he also acts as a lawmaker, establishing with Iago's help ad hoc punishments for marital infidelity that can satisfy only poetic justice.

Iago also transforms Othello's syntax, disguising the contingent nature of rhetorical argument as well as the speaker's motives. Iago is fond of using "like" and "as," connectives that emphasize the distance between objects and the descriptive terms applied to them.[42] He exploits the fact that his auditors, like many rhetoricians, consider simile more accurate than metaphor. Preaching to Roderigo that "our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners," Iago robs the simile of its range of association by maintaining a strict parallelism between tenor and vehicle: Body is to garden as will is to gardener and, finally, as sensuality is to reason (1.3.320–32). Madeleine Doran has identified “if,” the word that turns statements into conditionals, as another of Iago’s syntactic weapons against Othello.[43] “If” stresses the distance between *res* and *verba*, a distance that has not existed until now for Othello. The clown Touchstone in *As You Like It* represents “if” as the social glue that prevents chaos. When two courtiers give one another the lie, only a well-timed “if”—“if you said so, then I said so”—prevents hot words from turning to blows. “Much virtue in If,” as Touchstone puts it (5.4.101, 103). But Iago’s “if,” unlike that of Touchstone, denies the possibility of the subjunctive mood, in which truth and falsehood coexist.

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Under Iago’s tutelage, Othello erases the difference between probability and fact by assuming that the quality of an act is self-evident; he forgets that rhetorical constructions are hypothetical fictions rather than certainties. Othello is not alone in his misconception. Joel Altman aptly labels *Othello*’s sophistic style the “Shakespearean fantastic” because it relies on imagination and emotion for its appearance of verisimilitude. The play’s characters, however, attempt to naturalize its rhetoric by turning commonplaces into fact and by accepting the probable as the natural.[44] Even Iago fails to distinguish the contingent from the absolute. Kenneth Burke argues that Othello and Iago are “consubstantial” because they share a linguistic common ground. Although Othello must be persuaded that Iago’s insinuations about Desdemona are true, he “never for a moment doubts them as *values*.”[45] If language is weighted with value and attitude, Iago himself must be shaped by his inherited rhetoric. Magnifying the commonplace out of all proportion, Iago is a “cultural hyperbole; he does not oppose cultural norms so much as hyperbolize them.”[46] Despite his stylistic sleight of hand, then, Iago does not eradicate hyperbole from *Othello*’s world; he can only change Othello’s attitude toward rhetorical performance.

This is precisely what Iago does. Feminist criticism has shown that critical portraits of Desdemona mirror the radically different views of her proffered in *Othello*; Desdemona’s critical history reveals the extent to which judgments about character depend on perspective in this play.[47] Othello, as he loses faith in Desdemona, also loses his sense of perspective; more accurately, Othello is betrayed by his increasing allegiance to a single perspective. In the handkerchief scene Othello's limited perspective, both visual and intellectual, literally hampers his understanding. Watching from a distance and restrained physically by the need for concealment, Othello replaces the words he cannot hear with his own dialogue and supplements the ambiguous pantomime with his own commentary on Cassio's gestures and facial expressions. Although Othello adopts Iago's demeaning view of woman, his change of heart is not only psychologically but rhetorically motivated. He cannot tolerate the tension between "is" and "is not" that characterizes metaphor; instead of wrestling with the paradox of Desdemona's hyperbolically pure love for him, Othello moves her from the category of "paragon" to that of "whore."

Othello's retreat from hyperbole brings with it other rhetorical liabilities. Othello makes a generic error when he accepts as judicial proof Iago's pragmatographia (or representation of an action), which describes how in a dream Cassio gripped and wrung Iago's hand, then kissed him hard, "as if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots / that grew upon my lips" (3.3.421–24). Epistemologically, Iago's representation of Cassio's dream is comparable to the lurid account of how Seneca's virgin-prostitute was manhandled in the marketplace. But the legal context of Seneca's formal exercise keeps the speaker's agonistic motive in full view. Othello, on the other hand, treats Iago's pragmatographia not as formal description but as an unstructured, spontaneous memory. What makes the dream so ludicrous to Desdemona's partisans makes it credible to Othello. For him "character" has been factored out of speech; language now can only represent "what happened" or, alternatively, convey a speaker's feelings.[48] Othello can no longer make responsible judgments about the quality of an act. In accepting the dream as a transcription of Cassio's sexual life rather than a fantasy, Othello commits on a grander scale what Rosalie Colie calls "unmetaphoring," treating a conventionalized figure as a description of actuality.[49] When metaphor is dismantled, hyperbolic language can still be cathartic; but in the smaller, meaner world that Iago has created for Othello, it can never represent accurately the human condition.

Eradicating the public, ceremonial structures that turn mere talk into persuasive oratory, Iago destroys the conditions under which hyperbole can have real value in defining character. Othello's downfall can be attributed to his failure to read hyperbole appropriately, a failure that results from separating the emotive and cognitive functions of figurative language. Othello loses neither the power to construct metaphors nor the impulse to use them. He merely exchanges one interpretive frame (Desdemona is pure and faithful) for another (Desdemona has betrayed him with Cassio); he does so because he has lost sight of the fact that representations, as verbal acts, are weighted with attitude.

To kill Desdemona, Othello adopts the roles of priest, judge, and executioner, seeking the familiar security of the judicial situation. That he must play all the parts himself suggests the pathos of his situation, in which debate has degenerated into a lonely monologue. His confusion and anger when Desdemona fails to follow the penitential script he offers her suggest as well the pathos of relinquishing rhetoric. Although he refuses to name the legal "cause" for Desdemona's execution, Othello does have at hand ample evidence of her chastity: "that whiter skin of hers than snow," the light from her candle, his own comparison between Desdemona's "balmy breath" and the rose's scent (5.2.1–16). Dismissing the testimony of his own tropes, which represent Desdemona as ideally virtuous, Othello—like Quintilian and like most Renaissance rhetoricians—relegates hyperbole to the unimportant domain of love.

Reading hyperbole conventionally, as an exaggeration that is not meant to be taken seriously, Othello draws a flawed blueprint for action and destroys both himself and Desdemona. In his trial of Desdemona, he uses hyperbole to measure the distance between objects (the candle) and spiritual realities (the Promethean heat of Desdemona's soul). Winifred Nowottny argues that in *Othello* justice and love are opposed and that Othello's error is in applying standards of judgment to love, where action should be guided by faith.[50] She is correct in that Othello wrongly seeks empirical certainty in a situation that belongs to the realm of opinion. But in *Othello* love and justice are not inexorably opposed to one another, as the first trial scene illustrates: Justice, like love, depends on a recognition that narratives are constructed rather than discovered, plus a conscious commitment to a particular construction of events. Hyperbole's self-contradictions are finally resolved in this play, but at a high cost. Desdemona becomes the ideal that Madeleine Doran sees in her; but she can only *be* an emblem of chastity, like a perfect chrysolite or pearl, when she is dead. Only then is the tension between "is" and "is not" that defines hyperbolic metaphor resolved.

Whereas *Othello* records the folly of denying hyperbole's referential function, in *King John* we see hyperbole's surprising potential to ferret out information in a world of bewildering politics. In this play the absence of moral absolutes forestalls the possibility of factual certainty. Often considered a political play rather than a history play per se, *King John* nevertheless is concerned with the representation of history. More precisely, it dramatizes the history writer's dilemma in the English Renaissance. In the rhetorical tradition, writing history means reconciling the demands of chronicle—listing deeds that happened in their proper order—with the epideictic schemes used for classifying and judging history's actors.[51] In *King John*, the problem of representing history is also the everyday problem of living through history. The play's structure is episodic, blurring the causal ties between events, and dialogue is structured as a disembodied debate between opposing points of view. In such a situation, making judgments about character and motive becomes doubly difficult.[52]

King John begins by invalidating the usual grounds for judgments about character. In *Cymbeline*, the Leonati's biography of Posthumus Leonatus started with his ancestry, but the Bastard lacks both a name and a genealogy. Whether the Bastard is truly Richard Cordelion's son is never resolved; rather, we see that identity conferred on him by the royal fiat of Elinor and John. The Bastard has a "trick of Cordelion's face" and the "accent of his tongue," and John pronounces his parts "perfect Richard" (1.1.85–86, 90). Rather than developing organically, the Bastard's "character" is engraved on his exterior by the words of his new brother and grandam. The Bastard's inconsistent behavior and obscure motives have been discussed at length.[53] In an admirably coherent account of his shifting allegiances, James Calderwood argues that the Bastard begins by choosing self-interest over honor in his famous speech on commodity, then commits himself to honor after discovering the body of Arthur.[54] Calderwood and other commentators tend to look for moral coherence in the Bastard; but as this play's improviser, the Bastard uses prosopopoeia strategically. After accepting his new identity and relinquishing his land, he pledges that "I will not practice to deceive, / Yet to avoid deceit, I mean to learn" (1.1.214–15).[55] As a newly born aristocrat determined to "smack of observation," the Bastard takes on the courtier's deceptive verbal habits. Next, by personifying Commodity as a "smooth-faced gentleman," he tries on the role of a satirist who rails at what is denied him. Although the Bastard's characteristically blunt style of speech has been read as a sign of sincerity, he reflects on his roles selfconsciously, using the rhetoric of praise and blame. The Bastard, as *King John*'s epideictic commentator, generalizes about events and his own role in them.

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From the death of Arthur on, the rhetoric of praise and blame becomes common currency, the only language available for chronicling events as well as classifying their actors. As Sigurd Burckhardt notes, in *King John* the political order is created rather than discovered.[56] England lacks a linguistic as well as a political center, for King John speaks primarily in the interrogative mood; even when he pronounces "death" and "a grave" as Arthur's fate, his words may be concrete, but his meaning is not explicit.[57]

Ironically, the most effective oration in the second half of the play comes from poor, pallid Arthur, who persuades Hubert not to murder him through "sheer speech, the mere force of words unaided by any authority whatever."[58] Although Arthur relies heavily on pathetic exclamations when Hubert threatens to put out his eyes, he also manipulates metaphor skillfully. For instance, he successfully brings before Hubert's eyes the image of a coal drained of its personified malice: In Arthur's conceit, the coal's spirit has been blown out by a "breath of heaven" that casts "repentant ashes" on its head, thus preventing the coal from harming Arthur's eyes (4.1.109–10). The repentant coal figures proleptically and in a negative fashion the consequences for Hubert of killing Arthur: guilt, a repentance that comes too late, and damnation. At the same time, the trope provides Hubert with an alternative model of behavior, urging him to repent before rather than after committing the murder.[59] In this example, a balance is maintained between "is" and "is not," so that the metaphor conveys not only Arthur's passion but the enormity of murdering a child.

When Arthur dies, however, metaphor seems to lose its referential power. Faced with Arthur's death and Hubert's apparent guilt in the deed, the Bastard convenes an impromptu court. The scene is an odd one. The Bastard seeks a statement of fact: "Knew you of this fair work?" (4.3.116), he demands of Hubert. He proceeds, however, not by cross-examination or consideration of the evidence but by issuing dire threats. If Hubert has had a hand in Arthur's death, says the Bastard, he will find himself "beyond the *infinite* and *boundless* reach / Of mercy" (4.3.117–18, my emphases). Not waiting for an answer to his original question, the Bastard moves into hyperbolic comparisons describing the enormity of Hubert's alleged crime and character:

> Thou 'rt damn'd as black—nay, nothing is so black—
> Thou art more deep damn'd than Prince Lucifer.
> There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell
> As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child. (4.3.121–24)

B. Ifor Evans notes that Shakespeare's history plays feature a "bold rhetoric" in which a "number of comparisons [are] set out, one after the other, with an ever increasing emphasis."[60] But here the simile is never completed. The Bastard begins to describe Hubert's ethos by its "color," then abandons this analogy for a more direct comparison between Hubert and Lucifer based on degrees of damnation: Hubert will be *more* damned than Lucifer if he killed Arthur.

Next the Bastard piles on threats, emphasizing how tiny weapons will serve well enough to kill so great a villain as Arthur's murderer:

> If thou didst but consent
> To this most cruel act, do but despair,
> And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
> That ever spider twisted from her womb
> Will serve to strangle thee; a rush will be a beam
> To hang thee on; or wouldst thou drown thyself,
> Put but a little water in a spoon,
> And it shall be as all the ocean
> Enough to stifle such a villain up. (4.3.125–33)

Hubert responds obliquely to this barrage of threats and exclamations, offering an equally hyperbolic pledge of faith that adopts the Bastard's own syntax:

> If I in act, consent, or sin of thought
> Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath
> Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,
> Let hell want pains enough to torture me. (4.3.135–38)

Because there is no recourse to a reality outside language—Arthur's fate is unknown at this point—Hubert can respond only with a protest of innocence that inverts the Bastard's accusations within his own formal structure, the "if/then" conditional. In this elliptical trial, based entirely on hyperbolic declarations of guilt and innocence, factual certainty remains inaccessible. "I am amaz'd, methinks, and lose my way / Among the thorns and dangers of this world," the Bastard complains (4.3.140–41). In other words, the expressive function of hyperbolic metaphor has completely eclipsed its referential function.

The Bastard's hyperbolic attack, surprisingly, does elicit truth from Hubert; but language's power to represent not only factual truth but also honesty and fidelity continues to diminish. The slippery English lords, who readily produce laments and tears for Arthur, turn epideictic rhetoric into empty ceremony. The two kinds of truth—as fact and as expression of faith in another human being—come together briefly once more in Melune's puzzling death speech, when he forswears deceit and recalls his love for Hubert.[61] Ethical "truth" substitutes for accurate facts only at death or, in dramatic terms, at the end of a complete action. When deeds are tabulated and praise and blame distributed, a simplified moral ethos shapes the narrative of one's life and hyperbole becomes the "truth" in both senses.

King John dramatizes the problems of using rhetoric to represent events as well as to express personal thoughts and feelings. The Bastard uses hyperbole as a practical tool, to navigate his way through the "thorns and dangers" of a world with no moral center. Figurative language is equally opaque in *The Winter's Tale*, but in this play even the formal structures of judicial rhetoric are radically unstable. When Leontes arraigns his queen for adultery, conspiracy to murder, and treason against the state, Hermione responds to his charges with a well-constructed judicial oration. Discussing orations that call for judgments of character, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* recommends that "when the persone shalbe touched, and not the matter, we must seke els where, and gather these places together":

i. The name.

ii. The maner of livyng.
iii. Of what house he is, of what countre and of what yeres.
iiii. The wealthe of the man.
v. His behaviour or daily enurying with thynges.
vi. What nature he hath.
vii. Whereunto he is moste geven.
viii. What he purposeth from tyme to tyme.
ix. What he hath doen heretofore.
x. What hath befaulne unto hym heretofore.
xi. What he hath confessed, or what he hath to saie for hymself.[62]

When Leontes attacks her good character, Hermione's response follows this argumentative pattern closely. She defends her innocence first by referring to her manner of living (ii). Hermione contrasts her chaste past with her present unhappiness in a skewed simile that never satisfactorily resolves itself:

You, my lord, best know
([Who] least will seem to do so) my past life
Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,
As I am now unhappy; which is more
Than history can pattern. (3.2.32–36)

Hermione then calls to her defense her status as a king's daughter, as mother to a hopeful prince, and as Leontes' own royal bedfellow (3.2.37–41). Following the appeal to external signs of nobility comes an appeal to her inner virtue (vi):

For life, I prize it
As I weigh grief, which I would spare; for honor,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I stand for. (3.2.42–45)

Finally, there is Hermione's appeal to past behavior and present hardships (viii–x):

I appeal
To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes
Came to your court, how I was in your grace,

How merited to be so; since he came,
With what encounter so uncurrent I
Have strain'd t' appear thus; if one jot beyond
The bound of honor, in act or will
That way inclining, hard'ned be the hearts
Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin
Cry fie upon my grave! (3.2.45–54)

After Leontes' interruption, Hermione finishes with her "confession," which in this case is a firm declaration of her innocence of adultery (xi, 3.2.61–71). Having cleared herself also of the charge of conspiracy, Hermione finally falls silent. As a courtroom performance Hermione's speech is impeccably cogent and decorous; it should succeed, as Othello's self-defense before the Venetian Duke succeeded. For an audience trained in rhetoric as for Sicily's lords, Leontes dismisses much too easily Hermione's argument and Apollo's oracle, a piece of external or "inartificial" proof that reinforces her oration.

If *Othello* dramatizes hyperbole's fragility in public discourse, *The Winter's Tale* represents the opposite case. Here culturally validated forms of proof are rendered impotent by the hyperbolic metaphors of a jealous tyrant. Leontes' characteristic style, with its loose syntax and fast pace, imitates the breakdown of thought under pressure from passion.[63] But Leontes' wild metaphors are still strategic. Joseph Summers calls Leontes a "mad structuralist who reads all the signs in one destructive fashion," demonstrating "how paranoia may create something like the social situations it has first imagined."[64] His favorite device is allegory, or extended metaphor. Reveling at first in his "just censure" and "true opinion" of Hermione's guilt, Leontes spins out a metaphor that becomes hyperbolic by its violence and lack of relevance to the situation that produced it:

There may be in the cup
A spider steep'd, and one may drink; depart,
And yet partake no venom (for his knowledge
Is not infected), but if one present
Th' abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the spider.
Camillo was his help in this, his pandar.

> There is a plot against my life, my crown;
> All's true that is mistrusted. (2.1.39–48)

Anne Barton, commenting on this passage, notes that the images characterize situation rather than speaker.[65] Certainly the venomous spider has little connection with metaphors and imagery patterns elsewhere in the play; expressing Leontes' feelings of betrayal, it has a local rather than a cumulative effect. But Leontes' metaphor soon takes on a narrative force of its own. His violently hyperbolic image of a poisoned man, literally the knowing cuckold, sparks the idea that Hermione and her lover might have tried to poison Leontes. The "probability" of Camillo's complicity allows Leontes to fit the last piece of confusing evidence, Camillo's flight, into his paranoid puzzle. Leontes ends with an ironically inappropriate maxim, "All's true that is mistrusted," which shows him how to foil the supposed plot against his crown. However misguided, Leontes' hyperbole provides him with a definitive interpretation of events in Sicily and a plan of action.

More vivid than fact, Leontes' stylistically ornate hallucinations successfully supplant Hermione's orderly version of events. As she herself tells Leontes, her life "stands in the level" of his dreams (3.2.81). But not only the mad and jealous fail to distinguish fact from hyperbole in this play, as Antigonus's dream of Hermione's death testifies. The vision of Hermione that comes to Antigonus is hyperbolic in her purity and her sorrow; dressed in pure white robes, she bows *three* times to Antigonus, then gasping furiously, pours tears from her eyes as if from two spouts of a fountain. Having delivered her message, the apparition melts into the air with piercing shrieks. Despite Antigonus's warning to himself that "dreams are toys," this dream rings true for several reasons. Hermione comes dressed as a ghost and behaves with Senecan excess, bringing the idea of sorrow before Antigonus's eyes.[66] Furthermore, the precedent of consulting Apollo's oracle makes the supernatural seem commonplace. Finally, any skepticism we might have about the reality of Hermione's death is also deflected by Antigonus's misinterpretation of her request. Despite the oracle's testimony and the Sicilian lords' firm faith in Hermione, Antigonus concludes that Hermione wants Perdita left in Bohemia because she is Polixenes' bastard.[67] The improbability of his conclusion distracts attention from the ontological status of the vision. At the juncture between the Sicilian and Bohemian halves of his play, then, Shakespeare confuses figure and ground by juxtaposing Antigonus's carefully detailed vision of Hermione with the Clown's crude rehearsal of Antigonus's demise. In the end, of course, the vision is partly discredited (since Hermione is alive), whereas the outcome of the Clown's story is confirmed (since Paulina marries Camillo). Whether Hermione is brought to life or has lived in seclusion for sixteen years, the vision Antigonus received earlier is now inaccurate. In this way *The Winter's Tale* limits rhetorical representations to the realm of probability.

In Bohemia we are taught a new way of reading people. Carol Thomas Neely notes that while the Bohemian peasants speak more directly than anyone in Sicilia does, Florizel, in his disguise as a shepherd, also speaks a revitalized language.[68] To praise Perdita as the goddess of her rustic feast, Florizel indulges enthusiastically in the rhetorical practice of amplification, praising in turn each of his lover's actions as if he were constructing a textbook example from Erasmus's *De Copia*:

> What you do
> Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
> I'ld have you do it ever; when you sing,
> I'ld have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
> Pray so; and for the ord'ring your affairs,
> To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' th' sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that; move still, still so,
> And own no other function. Each your doing,
> (So singular in each particular)
> Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
> That all your acts are queens. (4.4.135–46)

All of Perdita's distinctive actions, "so singular in each particular," culminate in her present "crowning" deed: welcoming the guests, including her nemesis Polixenes, to the sheep-shearing feast. Florizel paints Perdita rather abstractly, as a perpetual motion machine that "does" various actions "so," in a perceptible manner: "when you sing, / I'ld have you buy and sell *so*; *so* give alms; / Pray *so*" (my emphases). Abstract diction, enjambment, repetition, and sound patterns such as alliteration and the *homoioteleuton* (like endings) on "singular" and "particular," all help to transform Perdita audibly into a wave of the sea. Florizel's praise works primarily through sound patterns, re-creating a musical imitation of Perdita's actions rather than her image.

This speech comments on the emblematic scene in which Perdita plays the role of Flora by handing out appropriate flowers to her guests. Yet although Florizel pays tribute to Perdita's beauty in action, characterization and plot work against one another. Insisting that Perdita's actions make her metaphorically a queen, Florizel challenges not only his father but also Perdita's defense of aristocratic marriage when she banishes "gillyvors" or "Nature's bastards" from her garden. Frame and philosophical focus contradict one another as Florizel seeks to make his Perdita literally the future queen of Bohemia. Florizel's *ethopoeia* works also against what other speakers encourage us to see, since by her stepfather's admission this woman whom Florizel praises for her action moves little, acting more like a "feasted one" than the jolly mistress of a country celebration. Like her mother Hermione at the play's conclusion, Perdita appears as a work of art, a *Primavera* by Botticelli rather than a wave of the sea. Although Perdita might well seem like a "queen" when surrounded by Mopsa, Autolycus, and the peasants, Florizel's hyperbolic statement that Perdita's actions make her a queen requires the opposing realization that Perdita is "really" (at least for the moment) a peasant foundling. We need also the angry dissent of Polixenes, who now sees in this "queen of curds and cream" a "fresh piece / Of excellent witchcraft" (4.4.161, 422–23). Florizel's hyperbole therefore wins our assent by focusing on the question of Perdita's birth. We must confront the gap between Perdita's queenly stature and her family, between Florizel's praise and the rustic chaos surrounding her. In Paul Ricoeur's formulation, "X is Y" depends on the dissenting echo that "X is not Y."

With this lesson in reading character we have come full circle, for Florizel's definition of Perdita mirrors Hermione's defense of herself. Whereas Hermione insisted on her ancestry as part of her defense, Florizel's love creates a new genealogy for Perdita. Proper use of hyperbolic metaphor in *The Winter's Tale* depends less on attention to the grounds of comparison—that is, to probability—than on the attitude expressed by the speaker. Florizel's hyperbole is referentially true only by accident. However, his hyperbole is not only passionate but persuasive because he is a generous speaker; he identifies with his subject but does not appropriate her into his own narrative.

In the culminating statue scene, Leontes replicates Florizel's rhetorical feat and brings Hermione to life by reading her carefully, noting her wrinkles as well as the freshness of her color.[69] As the sight of Hermione strikes him, Leontes spontaneously praises both workmanship and woman:

> O, thus she stood,
> Even with such life of majesty (warm life,
> As now it coldly stands), when first I woo'd her!
> I am asham'd; does not the stone rebuke me
> For being more stone than it? O royal piece,
> There's magic in thy majesty, which has
> My evils conjur'd to remembrance, and
> From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
> Standing like stone with thee. (5.3.34–42)

Comparing first himself, then Perdita, to the cold stone, Leontes demonstrates a new referential, as well as emotional, use for metaphor. The statue's wrinkles shock him; but because he *can* see them, Leontes incorporates into his vision what Erving Goffman calls "out-of-frame" information, details that seem invisible because the observer's frame of reference does not account for them.[70]

Visual frames work like the conceptual frames of metaphor described by Ricoeur. E. H. Gombrich, in *Art and Illusion*, reproduces a 1601 Italian engraving of a whale that had washed ashore in Ancona. The Italian whale has long, pointed ears that no whale has ever worn. The Italian engraver, Gombrich discovers, probably copied a Dutch engraving of another whale, also with ears. The Dutch draftsman in turn probably "mistook one of the whale's flippers for an ear and therefore placed it far too close to the eye," drawing the whale's head according to the proportions of the human head. The Italian reproduces the mistake for the same reason: The whale's head fits a familiar schema of the human head. The erroneous ears escaped his attention because they are "out-of-frame"; only if he compares schema and object can he see that the whale has no ears.[71] So Leontes, by incorporating Hermione's wrinkles into his image of her, holds together the frame and focus of his metaphor and balances the referential and attitudinal functions of metaphor.

Hyperbole is ultimately domesticated as illustrative metaphor in *The Winter's Tale*, but at the same time it unveils the process by which the external world is constructed through language. All descriptions of the world "out there" are hyperbolic. What makes some "truer" than others is the spirit in which they are given and their confirmation by an audience. Hyperbole therefore plays a greater role in thought and judgment than the cautious attitude of the rhetoricians would indicate. Aristotle, however, did recognize that praise can serve a hortatory function, so that epideictic shades easily into deliberative rhetoric. A change of wording does the trick. To say that "a man should be proud not of what he owes to fortune but of what he owes to himself" is to make a suggestion. To make the same point, one might praise the man who "is proud not of what he owes to fortune but of what he owes to himself." "Consequently," says Aristotle, "whenever you want to praise anyone, think what you would urge people to do; and when you want to urge the doing of anything, think what you would praise a man for having done."[72] The idea that verbal acts tacitly involve praise and blame is congenial to a culture governed by the *theatrum mundi* metaphor. Like Pisanio, the perplexed servant from *Cymbeline* caught between three masters, the characters of Shakespeare's plays use a language that is weighted with attitude. For this reason they must always be "false" to be "honest; not true, to be true."

FIVE

"To See Feelingly"

Vision, Voice, and Dramatic Illusion in *King Lear*

The conclusion of *The Winter's Tale* anatomizes the nature of dramatic illusion by figuring the relationship between voice and vision in terms of human relations. Florizel's tribute to Perdita identifies her as a "princess" by balancing truth against falsehood in the statement "All your acts are queens." The hyperbole conveys his faith or "truth" by doing homage to Perdita as a person rather than subjecting her to a rhetorical formula. Leontes, in his encounter with the "statue" of Hermione, undergoes a similar test of faith and responds as Florizel does, using language as gesture to point to the statue rather than to possess it verbally.[1] In this variation on the Pygmalion story, man does not bestow life on cold stone but uses language simply to describe what he sees: Hermione's wrinkles, her breath, her veins, the motion of her eye.[2] Echoing Florizel's words and rhythm poignantly, Leontes expresses a willingness simply to look, listen, and feel:

> What you can make her do,
> I am content to look on; what to speak,
> I am content to hear. (5.3.91–93)

Leontes has learned to use words to establish relations rather than to manipulate others and impose his own verbal reality on them.[3] Florizel, Perdita, Camillo, and Polixenes echo him as a chorus. Hermione's statue therefore creates a social ritual in which individuals, by playing their designated parts, act in unison: Vision, voice, gesture, and emotion work together to create a *sensus communis*. But Leontes cannot bring Hermione back to life without Paulina's intervention. Following Paulina's lead in his response to the statue, Leontes engages in what Erving Goffman has called impression management. Taking the "attitude of the observer," a phrase that Goffman adopts from George Mead, Leontes looks at himself from the perspective of Paulina in order to regulate his performance and her perception of it.[4] Paulina's presence in the scene is therefore coercive: She controls both Hermione and Leontes by providing them with behavioral models to imitate.[5]

As they are trapped in a mimetic cycle, Leontes and Hermione become types of Pygmalion and Galathea, whose relationship exemplifies for Paul de Man the obstacles to identification through speech. In Jean Jacques Rousseau's version of the myth, Galathea is born not from Pygmalion's desire but from his fear that his artistic genius has deserted him. Hoping to revitalize his imagination by altering his most perfect work, Pygmalion raises his chisel to deface the statue, and the statue responds by descending from her pedestal. Exchanging a single word, "moi," Galathea and Pygmalion try to unite with one another through sheer verbal repetition. But just as Leontes' speech cannot bring Hermione's statue to life without the authority of Paulina, speech cannot provide a transcendent union for Pygmalion and Galathea. Galathea, as de Man notices, submits to her lover with an air of resigned tolerance. Pygmalion's ecstasy is also misguided. He has imposed his ego on the statue, projecting onto its cold marble "all the wishes of his heart." In his moment of high passion, Pygmalion begs to have his soul transferred into the statue's lifeless body, "that Pygmalion might die to live in Galathea." Pygmalion's egoism is gently mocked, for the sculptor quickly realizes that in being Galathea he could no longer see and enjoy her. He has to settle for a less than complete union. Once she comes to life, however, Pygmalion submits to his creation, giving to Galathea his "whole being" and vowing to live in her. Because speech cannot transcend difference, the desire for union results either in alienation or in slavery.[6]

The Winter's Tale, examining the paradoxical nature of dramatic illusion, anatomizes the limitations of Shakespeare's verbal medium. Although rhetoric exists to "bring things before the eyes" of spectators, on the stage speech and spectacle can come into conflict. The kind of complete identification between speaker and audience that the orator strives for is therefore doomed to failure. In Shakespeare's case, the paradox is exacerbated by the dramatist's allegiance to two different verbal traditions, the oral and the literate. The tensions that characterize dramatic illusion in *The Winter's Tale*'s conclusion are also found in *King Lear*. As Shakespeare's great play of blindness and insight, *Lear* explores as well the role of speech in human relations. When Edgar uses poetic description to make blind Gloucester believe that he has miraculously survived a fall from the Dover cliffs, the play explicitly addresses the relationship between voice and vision in dramatic illusion. At once archaic and contemporary, *Lear* illustrates clearly the contributions of what I metaphorically call "oral" and "written" traditions to Shakespearean illusion.

Before we turn to *King Lear*, however, it is useful to examine at greater length the mechanics of illusion in the oral and written traditions. At one end of the spectrum falls Eric Havelock's account of oral performance. Reconstructing epic performance in pre-Platonic Greece, Havelock sees the intellectual and affective dimensions of performance as inseparable. As "preserved communication," epic transmits cultural mores in mnemonically potent form, particularly through the exploits of larger-than-life heroes. The success of an epic performer or rhapsodist, his ability to train the memories of listeners, depends on making his audience identify almost pathologically with his performance:

> A modern student thinks he does well if he diverts a tiny fraction of his psychic powers to memorise a single sonnet of Shakespeare. He is not more lazy than his Greek counterpart. He simply pours his energy into book reading and book learning through the use of his eyes instead of his ears. His Greek counterpart had to mobilise the psychic resources necessary to memorise Homer and the poets, or enough of them to achieve the necessary educational effect. To identify with the performance as an actor does with his lines was the only way it could be done. You threw yourself into the situation of Achilles, you identified with his grief or his anger. You yourself became Achilles and so did the reciter to whom you listened. Thirty years later you could automatically quote what Achilles had said or what the poet had said about him. Such enormous powers of poetic memorisation could be purchased only at the cost of total loss of objectivity.[7]

A performance's didactic and affective dimensions are inextricable because the experiences of speaker and auditor are nearly identical; the intensity of their alliance creates the kind of ideological consensus that Father Walter Ong values and that Paulina achieves in Shakespearean Sicily.[8] "Sight isolates, sound incorporates" is one of Ong's favorite maxims; for the spoken word is both embodied in a living speaker and destined for an audience. Speech creates dialogue, while print isolates people from their words and from one another. In Havelock's version of oral performance as well, voice creates the kind of identification necessary to a society based, as Havelock thinks pre-Platonic Greece was, on a sensus communis elicited through agonistic oratory.

An enormous distance separates the kind of phenomenon Havelock describes and the account of illusion we have inherited from the Romantics, who epitomize the "literate" attitude toward dramatic illusion. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the kind of identification that Havelock describes may not have been achieved, but the reality of fictions at least required discussion. Sir Philip Sidney, in *An Apology for Poetry*, asks ingenuously: "What child is there that, coming to a play, and seeing Thebes written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes?"[9] Samuel Johnson takes an even stronger stance against the need for dramatic illusion. Attacking the unities of time and place in the "Preface to Shakespeare," he affects an ironic reasonableness.[10] Of course we will have difficulty leaping from Rome to Alexandria in one hour, Dr. Johnson concedes, if "when the play opens the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more."[11]

For Dr. Johnson and his kin, illusion is a matter of opinion, its probability established by argument. When illusion comes to be regarded as a psychological process, however, the possibility of complete delusion becomes frightening rather than ludicrous. At the same time, vision rather than voice becomes the medium for illusion. Writing to Daniel Stuart during the general period of his Shakespeare lectures, Coleridge sets out his "true Theory of Stage Illusion." Like many of his eighteenth-century predecessors, he testifies to the power of images to supersede judgment, the "comparing power" that lets us affirm or deny their reality. In dreams, and by extension in the "waking dreams" excited by poetry and drama, suspension of the will produces a suspension of judgment.

But stage illusion, as opposed to dreams, involves not a passive acquiescence of the will but a *voluntary* "Lending of the Will" to the act of abrogating judgment.[12] In other words, the will initiates and sustains the suspension of judgment. In *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge's theory of illusion is boiled down to a paradoxical formula, the "willing suspension of disbelief." This now-famous maxim, by sacrificing conceptual precision to proverbial neatness, unfortunately simplifies the relationship between "images" and the "will" in the state of illusion. Coleridge's letter to Stuart, despite the contortions of its prose, indicates not only the complexity of illusion but also the sense that illusion demands from spectators a nearly physical exertion of imagination. Coleridge insists that illusion involves effort of will, not merely absence of will. The reader or spectator "encourages" and "supports" the illusion by a "voluntary contribution on his own part, because he knows that it is at all times in his power to see the thing as it really is."[13]

The will must keep a tight rein on illusion because reading a text—and, by extension, watching a play—involves egoism. When speaking abstractly, Coleridge generally does not distinguish between plays acted and plays read. Reading is a drama, in which text and reader almost become adversaries.[14] Thus what we see on stage and what we read on the printed page have comparable epistemological status. While the poet exercises himself in the world, his reader exploits poetry as a forum for his own egoism. Even if we have never attached such feelings to "our own personal Selves," Lear or Othello is a "divine Dream" whom we become or even help to create from ourselves.[15] Reading, interpretation, and even conversation are therefore species of egoism. Whenever "a man is attempting to describe another's character, he may be right or he may be wrong," Coleridge writes in his *Notebooks*, "but in one thing he will always succeed, in describing himself."[16] Consciousness of one's own self therefore colors perception of others. Egoism, however, frequently poses dangers to the self's moral integrity. In *The Friend*, his major project following the series of Shakespeare lectures, Coleridge traces egoistical judgments to arrogance and presumption, which are vices of habit and therefore of will. As evidence Coleridge tells a story in which a "young man who had left his Books and a Glass of Water to join a convivial party" was pronounced drunk by the company, since " 'he looked so strange and pale!' "[17] The moral, according to Coleridge, is that the revelers see their own vices in the studious young man.[18]

Keeping in mind the moral ambiguity of identification in artistic experience, we can look more closely at Coleridge's accounts of Shakespearean illusion. When Coleridge applies his general thoughts about illusion to the specific act of reading Shakespeare, he celebrates the imagination's power but surreptitiously limits its scope with metaphors that undermine his organicism. In the ninth lecture of his 1811–12 Shakespeare series, Coleridge defines two categories of "enlightened" Shakespearean readers: those who read with both "feeling and understanding" and those who "without affecting to understand or criticise merely feel and are recipients of the poet's power." Coleridge amplifies this statement with a parable that relates reading Shakespeare to three exotic mirages, structured as an extended pun on the reader's "enlightenment":

> —The reader often feels that some ideal trait of our own is caught or some nerve has been touched of which we were not before aware and it is proved that it has been touched by the vibration that we feel a sort of thrilling which tells us that we know ourselves the better for it. In the plays of Shakespeare every man sees himself without knowing that he sees himself as in the phenomena of nature, in the mist of the mountain a traveller beholds his own figure but the glory round the head distinguishes it from a mere vulgar copy; or as a man traversing the Brocken in the north of Germany at sunrise when the glorious beams are shot ascance the mountain: he sees before him a figure of gigantic proportions; & of such elevated dignity, that he only knows it to be himself by the similarity of action—Or as the [Fata Morgana] at Messina in which all forms at determined distances are presented in an invisible mist dressed in all the gorgeous colors of prismatic imagination and with magic harmony uniting them and producing a beautiful whole in the mind of the Spectator.[19]

Coleridge was fascinated by these mirages and recorded information about them in his notebooks. The "glory," a human shadow surrounded by a multicolored halo that is produced by a special combination of raking light and mist, had been observed in England. Coleridge copies an account of the Brocken specter from a Göttingen newspaper; the story tells how a traveler saw a figure of "gigantic size," which was projected at a great distance and elevated, as in Coleridge's version, like a statue on a pedestal. The traveler discovers, as wind threatens to blow his hat from his head, that the colossus will mimic his actions. He bows to the apparition; it returns the bow. The innkeeper and another man join him, and they amuse themselves by watching the huge shadows imitate their gestures. Immediately after this description of the Brocken specter, Coleridge copies a description of the fata morgana, linking them in the notebook as they were clearly linked in his mind. To see the fata morgana, one stands on a high spot overlooking the Strait of Messina; the observer's back should be turned to the rising sun, whose rays make an angle of about forty-five degrees; the sea itself must be calm, disturbed neither by wind nor by currents. If these conditions are met, the spectator "will observe in the water as in a mirror many objects reproduced, innumerable rows of well-defined pillars, arches, castles, regular columns, high towers, splendid palaces with balconies and windows, long alleys bordered with trees, pleasant plains with herds, armies of people on foot and on horseback and many other strange pictures."[20]

The exact connection between the two kinds of Shakespearean reader and these three optical illusions is left to Coleridge's own audience; the lack of symmetry between readers and illusions makes interpretation difficult. In the first two examples, the observer seems to exercise understanding as well as "feeling" or imagination, since his wonder comes from realizing that the beautiful and dignified figure before him is his own shadow. In the fata morgana, however, feeling or imagination takes precedence over understanding, since the mirage takes shape as a "beautiful whole" only in the spectator's mind. Enlightened readers of Shakespeare therefore may exercise conscious control over the illusions they encounter, but they may also surrender to them.

Coleridge's parable about reading Shakespeare, like the "true theory of stage illusion," makes the ideal reader simultaneously active and passive. In this case, the logical division between the two kinds of reader prevents the paradox of active surrender: Those readers who both understand *and* feel are active, whereas the recipients of Shakespeare's power are passive. The difference between these two kinds of Coleridgean readers can be considered as the difference between allegory and symbol, in Paul de Man's terms. A symbol (like the fata morgana) holds out the possibility of identity between subject and object, so that their relationship is one of simultaneity. Coleridge's source stresses that the fata morgana lasts for only a brief moment, but in Coleridge's version the fusion of spectator and mirage is represented as an event that transcends time; the illusory city, projected out across the ocean, takes shape finally within the spectator's mind. The Brocken specter and the glory, on the other hand, depend on time for their effect and therefore can be classed as allegories. The Brocken specter, in particular, excites wonder only when the German traveler *recognizes* that the gigantic shadow is his own and tests his hypothesis with a series of trial gestures. Allegory renounces "the nostalgia and the desire to coincide," using temporal difference to forestall an illusory identification between the self and the nonself.[21] Readers of understanding, whose recognition takes place over time, therefore belong to the world of allegory rather than symbol.

The rhetorical structure of Coleridge's parable privileges the fata morgana and the reader of feeling over the other mirages and the readers they represent, but that hierarchy is unstable. As Michael Cooke comments, in many of Coleridge's poems vast spaces accompany spiritual disorientation.[22] In his Shakespeare lectures, by contrast, the process of attaching ourselves to feelings remote from our own seems benign. In the optical illusions Coleridge uses to illustrate reading, the observer easily maintains a physical distance from his shadow while he harmonizes the vision in his mind. Allegory, by tempering the illusion's impact with comic byplay, therefore prevents the spectator from falling into Pygmalion's trap. Coleridge's mirages take place in obscure, lonely places, at specific times of day, and under exacting climactic conditions: His spatial model for the reader's illumination is infected by time.[23] Thus the reader of understanding, who maintains greater psychological distance from the mirage and even mocks himself by making it imitate his gestures, is necessary to Coleridge's general mechanism for reading Shakespeare. Allegory is a safety valve preventing the self's identification with its own shadow. Coleridge therefore circumscribes illusion by subjecting imagination to the more pedestrian understanding; just as the will theoretically exercises constant vigilance over illusions to ensure that they will not intensify into delusions, so the reader of understanding controls the excesses of the reader of imagination.

For Coleridge, dramatic illusion results from submission to a mirage that is sustained and can be broken by the will's consent. Illusion is a matter of perception, literally an effect of vision. Havelock's image of a cultural education by identification, on the other hand, subjects the conscious mind to the emotions and posits an intellectual apprehension that is embodied and works primarily through the ear rather than the eye. *King Lear* explores both possibilities through our efforts to extract wisdom from the characters' tribulations. *Lear*, as a number of critics have recognized, submits its audiences to the trials of its characters: As Stephen Booth puts it, *King Lear* is Shakespeare's greatest achievement "because it is the greatest achievement of his audience, an audience of theatrically unaccommodated men."[24] We are tested not only intellectually but physically; in this sense Dr. Johnson's distress at the play's ending is exemplary rather than extravagant. Paul Jorgensen, who reads Lear's pilgrimage in light of the Renaissance theme of *nosce teipsum*, notices that Renaissance treatises address Lear's insistent question "Is man no more than this?" by examining his "unimpressive and vulnerable body."[25] Like Lear, the audience gradually identifies with unaccommodated man, as I will argue, by being assaulted not only through the mind and feelings but through the most basic of senses—sight and hearing.[26]

Critics have recognized that in *King Lear* traditional forms, including forms of language, are inadequate to the experiences they represent. As Howard Felperin argues, "Shakespeare never succumbs to the rhetorical pressure of the traditional forms he employs, to their built-in claim to have made sense of the world, but keeps them always in brackets and puts them ultimately into question."[27] Rhetoric's limited ability to shape both self and world is figured thematically in the play by a contrast between the antique, largely "oral" culture that Lear has lost and a hostile, "literate" world where information is processed dispassionately through the eye rather than the ear.[28] *King Lear*'s primitive atmosphere is a critical commonplace, but the play's rhetoric, like its anthropology, is frequently archaic and suggestive of oral habits of speech. Because the educational system of Renaissance England emphasized oratory, because the vernacular tongue was largely nonliterary, and because Latin retained features of its oral heritage, Elizabethan English often exhibits features of oral style. According to Father Walter Ong, this residue is below the level of selfconscious artistry; it belongs to *langue* rather than to individual speech acts or *parole.*[29] Marion Trousdale also finds oral elements in Shakespearean drama, arguing that the "verbal conventions controlling both smaller and larger verbal patterns of Shakespeare's text" belong "logically and historically" to the "artistic and cultural concerns of an oral age."[30]

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The oral texture of *King Lear* depends in part on its dense concentration of sententious and proverbial language.[31] Pared down to its essentials, *King Lear*'s plot dramatizes the biblical proverb "A kingdom divided soon falls"; the play also ends on a proverbial note, with the ceremonious recognition that "*the* weight of this sad *time we must obey*, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (5.3.324–25; my emphases).[32] The proverb occupies an anomalous position in literate culture and for this reason provides useful information about the operation of rhetoric in *Lear*'s world; like Lear himself, proverbial language is a relic of an earlier time. In an oral culture, proverbs cast venerable wisdom into satisfying aural patterns to create "memorable thoughts."[33] Like other formulas of oral poetry, proverbs are highly patterned repositories of cultural wisdom—"preserved communication," to use Havelock's term.[34] But in literate culture proverbs no longer possess the same authority, since the Platonic metaphysics that fostered the development of literacy in Western culture values abstractions over aphorisms. According to Havelock, the transition from oral to literate culture involves the "separation of the knower from the known." The thinking self, now detached from its physical and social environment, begins to recognize the "known" as an object independent of the self, making abstraction possible.[35] Regarded as timeless abstractions rather than as situation-bound generalizations, literate proverbs perforce introduce commonly accepted ideas into situations they cannot describe completely. In later literature, therefore, proverbs often encourage irony.

Within the rhetorical tradition, the proverb retains some of the power it possesses in oral performance by serving a hortatory function or by enhancing the speaker's ethos. The range of rhetorical uses for the proverb is apparent from Hermogenes' taxonomy, which defines proverbs as persuading, dissuading, or addressing the "nature of the thing."[36] Aristotle and Quintilian both say that proverbs are useful as evidence in argument. Aristotle particularly recommends maxims and proverbs for deliberative rhetoric, since they concern practical conduct and recommend courses of action to be chosen or avoided. Kenneth Burke, as well, appreciates the proverb for its power to generalize, to "size up" and name a variety of situations, and to suggest a plan of action.[37] For Aristotle, the proverb can also be a metaphor from "species to species," which suggests another way that it can be used to make sense of the world. In Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, finally, a "neat application of proverbs" can strengthen a speaker's *ethos* by enhancing his wit. Even Socrates, in the *Protagoras*, praises the skill of Spartan orators who give the illusion of reticence, then fix opponents with a well-chosen proverb.[38]

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Proverbs are epidemic in *King Lear*, but the play's speakers, either cunningly or ignorantly, often mistake proverbial wisdom for the philosophical generalizations of a post-Platonic culture. For this reason, the play's proverbs often sound ironic. *King Lear*'s love test, although its literary prototype centers on a gnomic riddle, begins with the assumption that speech is both transparent and powerful. The battle of wills between Lear and Cordelia focuses on whether the heart can be heaved into the mouth on demand, and Lear's sudden banishment of his recalcitrant daughter posits an identity between the king's "sentence" and his "power" (1.1.170). But in Lear's love test proverbial wisdom, tightly woven into the language of all contestants, is used strategically to size up a difficult situation.

Goneril usurps proverbial wisdom early on with her proclamation of filial love; she in fact appeals to proverbs throughout the play, particularly to those concerning the behavior of old men. Goneril crams from three to seven proverbs into her carefully worded reply to Lear's demand for love:

> Sir, I love you more than [words] can wield the matter,
> Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty,
> Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare,
> No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;
> As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;
> A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable:
> Beyond all manner of so much I love you. (1.1.55–61)[39]

Whether or not all of Goneril's formulations are strictly proverbial, the bland generality of her response is manifest. Goneril uses proverbial language intelligently, to establish her ethos and to win her audience's favor. Proverbs are useful for this purpose because common sayings automatically *sound* true. Aristotle recommends proverbs especially for speeches that seek to woo an audience rather than to debate an issue. Maxims also help the cunning orator manipulate an audience's prejudices, since people like to hear what they already believe: "One great advantage of maxims to a speaker is due to the want of intelligence in his hearers, who love to hear him succeed in expressing as a universal truth the opinions which they hold themselves about particular cases. . . . If a man happens to have bad neighbors or bad children, he will agree with anyone who tells him, 'Nothing is more annoying than having neighbors,' or 'Nothing is more foolish than to be the parent of children.' "[40]

To rephrase the play's closing statement, Goneril says what she ought to say, perhaps not what she feels. But she shares a command of proverbs with two other competent speakers in this scene, Cordelia and Kent. Kent, exhorting Lear not to banish Cordelia, applies the proverb "Empty vessels sound most" when he says, "Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least, / *Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds* / Reverb no hollowness" (1.1.152–54; my emphases). Cordelia's own response, "Nothing, my lord," is a literal application of the proverb "To whom we love best we can say least." Her unwilling rejoinder to Lear, "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth" (1.1.91–92), possibly draws on still another proverb: "Wise men have their mouth in their heart, fools their heart in their mouth."[41] Cordelia's wise allusions, although expressive of emotion, are also rhetorically pointed, since they counter Goneril's claims with an unspoken appeal to common expressions about love. Ironically, close-mouthed Cordelia can be seen as the cleverest daughter of them all, since she appeals to her father's sense that his own language is so powerful that it must be used sparingly. Cordelia engages in yet another practice recommended by the rhetoricians. As Aristotle puts it, maxims should be used even when they run counter to popular feeling if they make the speaker's character appear more noble.[42]

In *King Lear*, sententious language is not identified with any particular character; moral opposites such as Goneril and Cordelia can use them for similar rhetorical strategies. Proverbial sayings are in fact indigenous to *Lear*'s world, for they appear not only in public settings such as the love contest but also in more private moments: in Cordelia's aside, "What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent" (1.1.62); in Cordelia's guarded skepticism when she takes her leave, ominously predicting that "time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides" (1.1.280); in Goneril's and Regan's conference, when they remark that Lear has "ever but slenderly known himself" (1.1.294).

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Only Lear does not resort to proverbs during the love test; their absence seems particularly striking since Aristotle and later rhetoricians think that maxims and proverbs sound best in the mouths of old men. Lear has constructed his imagined scene around proverbial commonplaces, since he hopes to set his rest on Cordelia's kind nursery and has choreographed the contest according to the saying "Last but not least." But Lear seems unconscious of the few proverbial elements within his own talk; the one proverb he does utter, the oft-repeated "Nothing will come of nothing," is offered in dead seriousness, as a performative utterance rather than as a metaphor or exhortation. In Sigurd Burckhardt's words, Lear organizes the trial "as though it were a poetry contest." As a result, "he makes a fearful mistake, but the mistake is the regal one of taking people *at their word* in the most radical and literal sense."[43] Both his "nature" and "place" urge Lear to keep his vow to disinherit Cordelia, to prevent Kent from coming "betwixt our sentence and our power" with his advice (1.1.170). So like Cordelia, his true daughter, Lear cannot see that his proverb "Nothing will come of nothing" is really metaphorical. Lacking selfconsciousness about his rhetoric, he adopts the proverb as a literal program for action.[44]

Kent and the Fool, as Lear's two guides in his journey toward self-knowledge, attempt to indoctrinate him with cultural wisdom by rehearsing proverbial formulas; through a kind of impression management, they hope to make Lear "see" his past authority and present folly. They therefore try to make him "see better" through oral means. Kent, disguised as Caius, offers his services to Lear. Kent's terse account of his qualifications for the position lists two proverbial phrases in succession: "I can keep honest counsel, *ride*, *run*, *mar a curious tale in telling it*, and deliver a plain message bluntly. That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence" (1.4.32–35; my emphases).[45] The disguised Kent, espousing antique values, speaks as he did in the contest scene: in formulaic cultural truths. Perhaps he even represents the oral values that are disappearing from Lear's world. For Kent also *acts* proverbially, dramatizing the saying "To be all fellows at football" when he trips the haughty Oswald and sends him sprawling on his face.

Kent's attempt to enact proverbial sentiments in defense of an increasingly blind Lear becomes poignant in his confrontation with Oswald. To Cornwall Kent offers only the complaint that a tailor made Oswald and the inadequate excuse that "anger has his privilege." Cornwall, of the new regime, hears only the tune of saucy bluntness in Kent's speech and claps him into the stocks, where he becomes a visual exemplum of the proverbial advice that one is "never too old to learn" and that "Fortune's wheel is always turning." In this way, Kent's wisdom is subjected to the irony that undermines proverbs in a literate culture. Put another way, Kent's "fall" from Fortune's wheel signifies the loss of sensus communis in Lear's divided kingdom and a failure of identification among the members of his family. Cornwall and Regan make Kent a Character, a written document for Lear and for us to read allegorically. In Coleridge's terms, we necessarily become readers of understanding, rather than of imagination, when the king's "sentence" is stripped of its presence and its power.

The Fool, Kent's counterpart in Lear's early education, also speaks in proverbs and sings songs constructed from strings of proverbs and pieces of pseudowisdom. Siegfried Wenzel, describing the Fool's medieval ancestors, notes that "wise fools" often shocked their masters into reform either by quibbling with paradoxes or by dramatizing moral allegories. In the type of exemplum called the "fool's testament," the Lord's fool states a desire to go to hell because he will find his master there. In a slightly different version, the fool pretends to be at death's door and ceremoniously wills his few possessions to members of his household; to the master, for whose benefit this event is staged, he bequeaths his fool's bauble. The message is one familiar to *King Lear*'s audiences: The master is no better than the fool when he abuses or abdicates his position.[46] But the rhetoric of Lear's Fool seems remote from that of his literary predecessors and of his Shakespearean counterparts. Like Lear himself, he is far removed from the world of deliberative oratory, in which alternatives are debated. Feste of *Twelfth Night* can banter with Olivia, proving "dexteriously" that she is a "fool" for mourning her brother's death. But the wisdom of Lear's Fool is gnomic and sounds more like snatches of oral poetry or ballads; his speech is constructed from prefabricated aphorisms strung together by rhyme, rhythm, and parallel construction.[47] In fact, as Robert Weimann suggests, the Fool seems to provide a link to the forgotten world of ritual.[48] In a typically proverbial example, he enjoins Lear to

> Have more than thou showest,
> Speak less than thou knowest,
> Lend less than thou owest,
> Ride more than thou goest,
> Learn more than thou trowest,
> Set less than thou throwest. (1.4.118–23)[49]

The Fool returns insistently to two subjects: how Lear will suffer for wasting or giving away his kingdom and dwindle to nothing; and how Lear, having given away his titles, can now exchange places with the Fool. The entire performance becomes a series of variations on Lear's first fateful proverb, "Nothing will come of nothing."

Whereas Kent is reduced to an allegory of bad fortune, the Fool's wisdom becomes almost nonsensical. Erasmus, in his introduction to the *Adagia*, remarks that although some proverbs are metaphorical and applicable to human life, many proverbs are one without the other and some fail both requirements.[50] In a cynical way, the Fool's comments seem to fall into this last category. His speech is only one step away from Poor Tom's mad ranting. When Lear asks, "Dost thou call me fool, boy?" (1.4.148), the Fool assents. Kent warns him that "this is not altogether fool, my lord" (1.4.151), but Lear neither analyzes nor acts on the Fool's aphorisms. Oral performances, being dependent on rhythm and sound, bring cultural wisdom before the mind's eye by personification, stimulating imaginative vision through acoustic effects: Thus wrath becomes the wrath of Achilles. In the context of poetic performance, proverbs can also translate the general into the specific, so that "Honesty is the best policy" becomes "An honest man is he who reaps profit." In drama, the proverb is even more potent when put into the mouth of a character who says, "If I do good to friends will it not profit me?"[51] In an oral context, then, sententious language belongs to a speaker, either real or imagined; it has force as the utterance of that person. In *Lear*, however, proverbs have become detached from the situations they are meant to explicate.

On the heath Edgar takes over as the play's representative of reason in madness, offering bits of proverbial wisdom between his appeals to Harsnett's devils. But Lear, who seeks philosophical knowledge from Poor Tom, continues to think of language as abstract rather than metaphorical. For this reason, he cannot apprehend a speaker, either real or personified, behind Edgar's rhetoric. When he considers the "poor naked wretches" of his realm and counsels pomp to "take physic" (3.4.33), Lear draws on biblical proverbs. But these literate rather than oral proverbs are never made vivid through personification. The "wretches" cannot be located; they are merely out there "somewhere." Lear remains trapped between oral and literate habits of speech, for the proverbs available to him are no longer re-created in the collective memory of a people but written down in a book that ironically remains inaccessible to Lear, who lives not only before Christ's but before Merlin's time.[52]

Verbal failure, the inability to link language with people, has a visual equivalent in this play. Stanley Cavell has argued that *King Lear* insists on the literal use of eyes to recognize others. Gloucester, because he is ashamed of Edmund, has "avoided eyes" with false respectability. Lear has also "avoided eyes" in his spiritual blindness.[53] Lear therefore does not "hear" the Fool's wisdom because he does not "see" or acknowledge him. The only person that Lear actually "sees" or acknowledges on the heath is Poor Tom; but Tom's speech is sound without sense, and his body, like that of a Bedlam beggar who inscribes his misery on his limbs with pins and sprigs of rosemary, is a document to be read in shamed solitude. As a speaking subject, Poor Tom is unintelligible; as a written document, he is merely grotesque. Edgar, as unaccommodated man, is the allegory of his own reading, to use de Man's formulation; he exemplifies the law of unreadability.

Becoming the play's satirical conscience, Lear takes refuge in irony. In this way, he continues to avoid the need to identify with others. His deafness and blindness can be described in rhetorical terms as a failure of *enargeia*, which in turn comes from a failure of emotion. In the *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian proposes that an orator can create pathos in his listeners only if he experiences himself those emotions that he wishes to arouse in others:

> But how are we to generate these emotions in ourselves, since emotion is not in our own power? I will try to explain as best I may. There are certain experiences which the Greeks call φαντάσιαι, and the Romans *visions*, whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes. It is the man who is really sensitive to such impressions who will have the greatest power over the emotions. . . . When the mind is unoccupied or is absorbed by fantastic hopes or daydreams, we are haunted by these visions of which I am speaking to such an extent that we imagine that we are travelling abroad, crossing the sea, fighting, addressing the people, or enjoying the use of wealth that we do not actually possess, and seem to ourselves not to be dreaming but acting. Surely, then, it may be possible to turn this form of hallucination to some profit. I am complaining that a man has been murdered. Shall I not bring before my eyes all the circumstances which it is reasonable to imagine must have occurred in such a connexion? Shall I not see the assassin burst suddenly from his hiding-place, the victim tremble, cry for help, beg for mercy, or turn to run? Shall I not see the fatal blow delivered and the stricken body fall? Will not the blood, the deathly pallor, the groan of agony, the death-rattle, be indelibly impressed upon my mind?
>
> From such impressions arises that ἐνάργεια which Cicero calls *illumination* and *actuality*, which makes us seem not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence.[54]

For Quintilian emotional identification is the source of enargeia, but that identification is effected through stylistic amplification. Renaissance rhetoric, although it maintains the distinction between *res* and *verba*, also considers the ability of stylistic amplification to create enargeia. Erasmus's fifth method of amplifying thought, *evidentia*, occurs when "we do not state a thing simply, but set it forth to be viewed as though portrayed in color on a tablet, so that it may seem that we have painted, not narrated, and that the reader has seen, not read. We will be able to do this well if we first conceive a mental picture of the subject with all its attendant circumstances." Amplification also helps its audience visualize the subject; in describing something, we should "place it before the reader painted with all the colors of rhetoric, so that at length it draws the hearer or reader outside himself as in the theatre."[55] Thus author and audience have comparable experiences. For Quintilian and Erasmus, the kind of amplification that induces enargeia belongs more to figurative embellishment than to proof. Although Quintilian does not acknowledge the role played by stylistic tropes in mimesis, he does describe those "illuminations" and "actuality" (*illustratio* and *evidentia*) that rise before the eyes as dreams (*imagines*) and hallucinations (*vitium animi*), emphasizing their exaggerated or stylized nature. George Puttenham uses the same vocabulary of vision to describe the effect of stylistic ornament; and Erasmus, in connection with enargeia, mentions Homer, who was for Aristotle the metaphorist par excellence because he could give "metaphorical life to lifeless things."[56]

In a judicial mood on the heath, Lear fails to recognize that enargeia or visual presence is a stylistic effect rather than an empirical certainty. When conjuring Nature to make Goneril sterile, he had represented Nature only as a listener, a repository for his complaints against unnatural daughters; he does not distinguish between a person and a convenient personification. Consequently, when Lear puts a joint stool on trial in Goneril's place, he becomes the victim rather than the fabricator of fantastic hallucinations. Having abandoned the society that speech can offer, Lear is trapped in a world of illusion without the comfort of allegory. When Lear tells the blinded Gloucester of the Centaur woman, animal from the waist down (4.6.124–25), he has finally come to resemble Coleridge's Shakespearean reader, projecting his own preoccupations into the distance. Unlike the Coleridgean reader of understanding, however, Lear cannot recognize the shadow as his own.

Gloucester, who is literally blind, responds not to Lear's portrait but to his physical touch. As he tells Lear, Gloucester now sees "feelingly" (4.6.149). Being made pregnant to good pity, he begins to look with his ears, as Lear recommends. On the Dover cliffs, Gloucester is called on to put this new talent into practice. But the power of vision, both physical and intellectual, is by now severely limited in *Lear*'s world. When Edgar contrives for Gloucester a "miraculous fall" from the cliffs of Dover, the Shakespearean audience is subjected to the same kind of disorientation that we have watched Lear and Gloucester endure. Here, finally, the testimony of our own eyes and ears parts company as *King Lear* challenges our methods for listening to, watching, and even reading Shakespearean drama.

As the proverbial madman leading the blind, Edgar and Gloucester enact a grotesque parody of the fall from Fortune's wheel.[57] They have been allegorized, and if we choose to read them through allegory, the result is irony. This scene, however, also insists on the physical presence of the characters on a stage. Jan Kott articulates the now-standard opinion that Gloucester falls flat on his face.[58] Although the scene is usually played with Edgar and his blind father standing "firmly in the middle of the platform stage throughout the Dover cliff sequence," Waldo McNeir argues that Gloucester could leap from a scaffolding about seven or eight feet above the stage.[59] Among his arguments, McNeir lists the play's imagistic concern with the "human body in anguished movement." Essential man is unaccommodated man, a poor, bare forked animal. His fall from Fortune's wheel is as much a physical as a spiritual fall; if Gloucester actually falls some distance on the stage, according to McNeir, Shakespeare hammers home the physical nature of Lear's parallel descent into madness.

McNeir and others who are bothered by the problem of Gloucester's fall think of illusion in terms of vision alone; therefore they assume that the fall must either involve some measure of verisimilitude or be recognized as merely conventional. But Gloucester's fall from the Dover cliffs is one of those both/and situations that Kenneth Burke delights in. Bert O. States describes the effect of Edgar's description as vertigo, which is not "simple fear of falling" but "a peculiar collusion of the senses through which the body overextends itself and participates in space."[60] Vertigo is a both/and situation; as the result of a hallucination, we both fall and do not fall.[61] Edgar's *topographia* therefore lures us from the safety of literary description into the vertiginous depths of metaphor; like *King Lear*'s aural proverbs, this nearly self-sufficient piece of rhetoric occupies a middle ground between ordinary and ornamented language.

Edgar's highly wrought topographia is best defined not in terms of dramatic illusion but in terms of enargeia, its ability to conjure vision with aural effects; neither sight nor hearing operates in this scene without the aid of rhetorical ornament. When Lear is faced with Gloucester's eyes, bleeding and patched with egg white, he asks, "Dost thou squiny at me?" (4.6.136–37). Lear cannot face the sight without his intervening metaphor, an allusion to blind Cupid. In a similar way, Gloucester experiences his "fall" only because Edgar provides the necessary decoration: metaphorical descriptions of fishermen who "appear like mice" and a delicate allusion to the inaudible "murmuring surge" of the sea's waves (4.6.12–24).

The "miracle" of Gloucester's fall, reinforced by Edgar's nearly hysterical image of the fiend with a thousand noses, also depends on an oral rhetoric; for the portrait of Gloucester's fall spins off Edgar's proverbial greeting:

> *Hadst thou been aught but goss'mer, feathers, air*
> (So many fathom down precipitating),
> Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg.
> (4.6.49–51; my emphasis)[62]

The single proverb goes by unnoticed here because the boundary between speech and formal rhetoric has been erased. In a brilliant essay on King Lear's own style, Winifred Nowottny argues that, as the play progresses, Lear's manner of speaking "gives a felt sense of the incommensurateness of human nature to what it must endure."[63] Although Edgar's description of the Dover cliffs is framed as a poetic tour de force, in the subsequent conversation with Gloucester his speech seems inadequate to their shared experience. To inform Gloucester's fall with motive and his miraculous "rebirth" with meaning, Edgar must invent a fiend of grotesque features and hyperbolic proportions; he fills the verbal void with inconsequential detail.

Given the discrepancy between decorative and direct language, in what ways can an audience respond to Edgar's description? Stanley Cavell argues that although *Lear*'s characters cannot see or hear us, particularly in an outdoor theater, they are "in our presence." Like the characters in the play, we are increasingly isolated.[64] Marianne Novy, by contrast, thinks that "Shakespeare not only emphasizes his characters' capacity for sympathy, but also, in his descriptions of audiences, frequently presents sympathy as an important aspect of audience response. It may be the experience of feeling sympathy for someone we cannot change, whose faults we accept as we accept our own faults, that Shakespearean tragedy brings to its highest artistic expression, both within the play and between the play and audience."[65] In identifying with Gloucester's despair through Edgar's verbal acrobatics, we find ourselves in a both/and situation. Edgar models the relationship between orator and audience in this most marginal of circumstances. He has already been made pregnant to pity by identifying with Lear on the heath; his pain becomes "light and portable" when he recognizes that Lear "childed" as he "fathered" (3.6.108, 110). That lesson bears fruit when he takes responsibility for Gloucester. Edgar models for Gloucester as he does for us the fall from the cliff, suffering vertigo to cure his father. Perhaps more important, he adopts temporarily Gloucester's despairing frame of mind, becoming consubstantial with him.[66] Because we learn only after the fact that Gloucester's fall is a delusion, like him we must trust our eyes and ears to Edgar—in effect, become consubstantial with Edgar.[67]

At the same time, Edgar's reason for deluding Gloucester, like Kent's reason for attacking Oswald, is too slight for the circumstances. Identification therefore comes very close to being self-delusion; for Edgar as for Kent, role playing tends to perpetuate itself, and both reveal themselves too late to those they love.[68] Finally, identification cannot be complete; even Gloucester can hear the change in Edgar's voice as pity mars his acting. As spectators of Gloucester's miracle, we too must fail to reach the pitch of identification posited by Havelock. To the extent that we, like Edgar, are written by the scene's rhetoric as we read it, we become "unaccommodated men." We experience the vertigo of Gloucester's descent but also the knowledge that we are being trifled with. Having been trained in the art of metaphorical reading by Lear's "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks" soliloquy, we now find ourselves betrayed by a rhetorical strategy that has worked before. In Coleridge's terms, we become readers of understanding as well as of imagination, discovering difference where identity should reign; for this reason, we are vulnerable to self-mockery. We therefore find ourselves where Lear began his journey, as the bitter fool facing the sweet fool. *King Lear* is our Galathea, whom we must see feelingly but who then traps us—as Leontes and Hermione are trapped—in mimesis.

In *King Lear* Cordelia alone escapes the negative effects of identification; almost without words, she and Lear ritualistically exchange identities as they kneel to one another at their reunion. Cordelia's private virtues, however, are limited. She can endure Lear's ravings, prison, and death, but her patience brings her to an untimely death; she is reduced to a prop in Lear's mad pieta. Those who are left behind still need language, narrative, and metaphor to distinguish between the "promised end" and its mere image. The play tries to end with ringing phrases, an assurance that "all friends shall taste / The wages of their virtue, and all foes / The cup of their deservings" (5.3.303–5). But experience refuses to succumb to this neat formulation. The comforting speech is interrupted by a cry of "See, see!" which is deictic, merely pointing to the sight of Lear bent over Cordelia's body. Those who have not lived long nor seen much inherit the wise proverbs of Lear's generation; but at this point, these proverbs have sound without substance. Unable to bring cultural generalizations before the mind's eye, proverbial wisdom in *King Lear* comes very close to being empty exhortation. *Lear*'s proverbs are not altogether fool, perhaps; but neither are they scripture.

SIX

"Who Is't Can Read a Woman?"

Rhetoric and Gender in *Venus and Adonis*, *Measure for Measure*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*

In previous chapters, speakers and audiences were perforce masculine, since the rhetorical tradition that shapes the self was designed primarily to initiate boys into a masculine culture and language. The rhetorical exercises themselves often presented a male point of view.[1] For the thesis, to cite one example, Richard Rainolde's *Foundation of Rhetoric* recommends questions such as these: whether a man should marry, whether riches are the chief good to be sought in this life, and whether policy or strength of men is more helpful in war.[2] In the *controversia* involving the priestess-prostitute, discussed in chapter 4, woman is only the occasion for a verbal contest among men; and from the fictional woman's point of view, that contest looks very much like aggression. On the other hand, there are exercises, such as the *ethopoeia* or *prosopopoeia*, which involve imitating the manners, speech, or ethical qualities of a fictional or historical character. Rainolde's *Foundation of Rhetoric* illustrates the prosopopoeia with a hypothetical oration delivered by Hecuba after Troy's destruction. Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata* exemplifies the "characterization" with a version of Niobe's words after the murder of her children.[3] Encouraged to impersonate exotic female characters even while the bulk of their rhetorical training makes communication with women problematic, young Renaissance rhetors enjoy an ambivalent relationship with women as fictional speakers and characters.

In the rhetorical tradition as in controversy over the theater, woman is associated with language's more disturbing effects. Discussions of the proper use of language tend to anthropomorphize style, and in this way ostentatious rhetoric gradually becomes identified with woman. Plato sets the terms for later discussions of style by associating rhetoric with pleasure and with the metaphor of clothing. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates makes a tentative connection between a beautiful and well-dressed body (which can mask an ugly soul) and rhetoric (which can mask base intentions with pleasurable effects). Each distorts the truth in its own way.[4] Seneca, in the 114th epistle of his *Epistulae Morales*, connects the lascivious pursuit of pleasure, fancy dress, and florid rhetoric more explicitly. According to Seneca's argument, not only a man's speech but all aspects of his life—habits, attendant, house, and even wife—will inexorably reveal his inner self. Thus we may expect a general effeminacy from the man of immoral character. He will wear loose robes and walk like a woman. When speaking, he will also indulge shamelessly in metaphor, trot out old-fashioned words, coin new ones, ramble on at length, or speak obscurely for fashion's sake.[5]

For Seneca, ornate speech, like ornate dress, specifically characterizes the effeminate man. In the history of style, however, showy rhetoric comes to be associated less with dissolute men than with richly clad women. Cicero, in the *Orator*, metaphorically equates rhetoric's tropes and schemes with jewels and cosmetics, the ornaments of women.[6] The plain style avoids excessive decoration, says Cicero. "Just as some women are said to be handsomer when unadorned," so the plain style is most pleasing when unembellished: "All noticeable ornament, pearls as it were, will be excluded; not even curling-irons will be used; all cosmetics, artificial white and red, will be rejected."[7] In the Renaissance, *Orator*'s sketchy personification of Rhetoric, with her curled hair and pink and white complexion, becomes a familiar figure. George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, for instance, argues that ornament makes poetry more decorous and agreeable to both ear and understanding. Poetry must show itself either "gallant or gorgious," according to Puttenham, leaving no limb naked and bare. For poems are like "great Madames of honour," whose beauty must be clothed in rich costumes—"silkes or tyssewes & costly embroideries"—that will not shame them at court.[8] In *The Arte of English Poesie*, rhetoric and gorgeous garments serve the general good by encouraging "decency" and social decorum. On the other hand, George Herbert, who wishes to address God directly, shuns decorative rhetoric as he would a painted woman. In "Jordan I" he asks aggressively, "Who says that fictions only and false hair / Become a verse?" Herbert prefers to address his lord "plainly"—that is, in the plain style—as "*My God, My King*."[9] Not all love poetry needs wanton ornament, is Herbert's point.

Puttenham and Herbert explore the ethics of language through feminine personification, taking opposite positions. Herbert, following a Platonic line, finds rhetoric deceitful and emasculating; his Rhetoric is a whore. Puttenham, equating social decorum with the "good," adheres to a courtly ethic; his Rhetoric is an elegant but noble lady. Their opposed attitudes toward ornamental rhetoric could be traced to subject matter, but as Daniel Javitch has suggested, the difference between humanist and courtly rhetoric in the sixteenth century can be figured in terms of gender. The humanist orator has experience, learning, and above all good character. Despite his manifest virtue, however, his profession involves him in confrontation and struggle. Operating in the sphere of public affairs, he is isolated and beleaguered unless he persuades the populace to his point of view. As Javitch points out, Cicero's discussions of the orator often resort to martial imagery; according to Crassus in *De Oratore*, after his preparatory years the orator must move "right into the action, into the dust and uproar, into the camp and the fighting-line of public debate."[10]

Within the courtly tradition to which Puttenham belongs, by contrast, women and rhetoric can help to civilize the world of men. Castiglione's *Courtier* grants rhetoric a central role in the courtier's education. Javitch notes also that the courtier, unlike Cicero's perfect orator, "lives in a milieu remarkable for the prominent role it accords to women."[11] At Urbino the nobles play elaborate language games under the tutelage of elegant ladies, discussing topics more fit for poetry than for politics. They learn to act and especially to talk well, coping successfully with whatever twists and turns the witty conversation takes. In fact, the courtier strives to mold himself as a rhetorical artifact. The connection between women and rhetoric in the courtly tradition is strengthened by the fact that "many of the artifices recommended in the *Cortegiano* for appearing graceful are derived from or resemble the figuration of language and thought that the orator employs to beautify his discourse," the same kind of ornament that has been linked metaphorically to feminine jewels and cosmetics.[12]

Courtly rhetoric, like the courtier himself, achieves *grazia* through dissimulation, which becomes more troublesome when the connection between woman and ornamental language is "unmetaphored." For much of what is said in praise of courtly rhetoric is also used to censure woman. Platonic attacks on the art of rhetoric have traditionally criticized it for encouraging loquacity and dissimulation. Renaissance antifeminist literature links women to such abuses of language by accusing them of the same vices.[13] Woman's talkativeness often signals some deeper flaw—pride, vanity, or deceitful cunning. When a woman entertains a man with "long & vayne confabulation," warns educator Juan Luis Vives, it "is eyther folish or filthy."[14] C. Pyrrye's poem, "The Praise and Dispraise of Women," succinctly numbers the vices of a talkative woman:

> Inconstancie in her doth raigne,
> She waverith full of chaunge,
> Oft blabbing, talkative and vaine
> Double tounged which semeth straunge.[15]

Being "double tounged," loquacious women not only babble incessantly but pose a moral danger to their male auditors. Rhetorically sophisticated women, to borrow a phrase from Bishop Jewel's "Oration against Rhetoric," devise "snares for captivating our ears" and through them our hearts and souls.[16]

The subject of this chapter is what we might call Shakespeare's "cross-identification" with his female characters. A substantial amount of work has been done on the subversive effects of "cross-dressing" in Shakespeare's plays, but the problem of identification is most interesting not in those plays that put their heroines into breeches but in those featuring female characters who exhibit erotic and verbal power without changing costume or sexual identity.[17] *Venus and Adonis*, *Measure for Measure*, and *All's Well That Ends Well* all feature female characters who combine sexual appeal with a command of oratory, and all examine the equivocal effect of female rhetoric on men.

Venus, from the poem bearing her name, is the earliest Shakespearean woman to have beauty, passion, and a golden tongue; for this reason, *Venus and Adonis* provides a good starting point for our examination of Shakespeare's female impersonations. Venus appears in a number of schoolboy rhetorical exercises: Rainolde, for instance, includes a "poetical narrative" about the love of Venus and Adonis that derives from Aphthonius. Shakespeare's Venus has never been a popular character. Larger than her boy lover, she can tuck Adonis under one arm and manage his horse's reins with the other. Too enthusiastic, too physical, she threatens to "smother" him with kisses: "And this flushed, panting, perspiring, suffocating, loquacious creature is supposed to be the goddess of love herself, the golden Aphrodite. It will not do," C. S. Lewis complains.[18]

Although Venus is remembered for her amorous acrobatics, for most of the poem she talks. The moments in which Venus wrestles Adonis to the ground or snatches kisses from him are welcome breaks in their one-sided verbal contest. At a low point in her attempted seduction, when she and Adonis awkwardly make the beast with two backs, the narrator uncharacteristically softens his tone to apostrophize Venus and offer his condolences:

> But all in vain, good queen, it will not be;
> She hath assay'd as much as may be prov'd.
> Her pleading hath deserv'd a greater fee;
> She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd. (607–10)

As an underpaid lawyer as well as the judge who enforces Love's laws, Venus is an orator, and her weapons are those commonly found in the schoolboy's arsenal; she starts out as a Petrarchan poet but later employs the proverb and allegory to persuade her reluctant lover.

The narrator, whose loyalties shift throughout the poem, alternately identifies with Venus and competes with her for control of their shared story.[19] For the first half of the poem he competes with her directly, undermining Venus's arguments to Adonis by parodying them. As allegorists, Venus and the narrator both dissimulate, using what George Puttenham called the "figure of false semblant."[20] The narrator turns a piece of scene painting into allegory by making Titan, the "hot sun," into a voyeuristic surrogate for himself and a rival for Adonis's attentions (175–80). Venus offers to Adonis a more pointed allegory or extended metaphor, in which she is a park and Adonis the deer whom she invites to "graze" on her and to "stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie" (229–34). Venus's allegory is succeeded by another from the narrator, a seductive rather than a parodic one this time. Venus had described her arms, which encircle Adonis desperately, as an "ivory pale"; the narrator, picking up on this cue, describes Adonis's hand, which is entrapped by Venus's own, as

A lily prison'd in a jail of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band,
So white a friend engirts so white a foe:
This beauteous combat, willful and unwilling,
Showed like two silver doves that sit a-billing.
(362–66)

Unlike Venus, the narrator conducts his allegory to a romantically successful conclusion with the final simile comparing the two hands to billing doves. The narrator's formal success highlights Venus's amorous shortcomings.

The interplay between Venus and the narrator involves a constant shift of figure and ground that complicates the relationship between them. Venus is often criticized for her aggressive behavior, but most of it is attributed to her by the narrator. The hostile narrator of the poem's first half undermines Venus with unflattering epic similes: She is an "empty eagle" gorging herself on her young prey, while poor Adonis is a bird tangled in a net or a dive-dapper ducking beneath the waves (55–60, 67–72, 85–90). By relying on simile, the narrator emphasizes the self-serving motives behind Venus's rhetoric; he combats her flamboyant rhetoric with his own, more "reasonable" version of events by distinguishing insistently between *res* and *verba.* The narrator also manipulates Venus herself. At times he ridicules her by casting her in distasteful allegories. For instance, when she is "in the very lists of love, / Her champion mounted for the hot encounter" (595–96), Venus is mocked doubly by the martial metaphor and the couplet's concluding jibe, which compares her to Tantalus. The sudden shift of metaphor makes Venus not only ridiculous but morally reprehensible. But the narrator's sentiments are quixotic and can shift even within a stanza. For Adonis's pleasure, Venus offers, "like a fairy," to

trip upon the green,
Or like a nymph, with long dishevelled hair,
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen.
Love is a spirit all compact of fire,
Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.
(146–50)

The wit of this stanza depends on the ambiguity inherent in the connective "like," which suggests but does not confirm Venus's ability to metamorphose into different shapes. It is not clear whether Venus is offering to dance in the guise of a nymph or fairy or whether she will just dance with the delicacy of those mythological creatures; in the same vein, it is uncertain whether her claim that she dances on sand without leaving footprints is meant to be taken literally or accepted as passionate hyperbole. Paul Fussell notes that often in this poem quatrain and couplet inhabit entirely separate worlds, and such is the case here.[21] For though Venus's desire makes her speech sound self-serving, the couplet translates her self-representation into a Neoplatonic vocabulary, dignifying her boasts by allegorizing them. The result is a bifurcated perspective on Venus and her motives.

Although Venus and the narrator are engaged in a battle of wits, Venus's status as a goddess helps her withstand the repressive rejoinders of both Adonis and the narrator. As Nancy Lindheim puts it, "The identification of Venus and love lies at the heart of Shakespeare's conception of the poem, though this identification is neither allegorical nor doctrinal. Venus is not 'Love' in the abstract way the Neoplatonists conceive it, but in the contradictory way it is experienced."[22] When Adonis first rejects her advances, Venus admonishes him with the mythological tale of Mars's love for her, which culminates in her leading him, as her prisoner, in a "red rose chain." Venus has an uncommon advantage here, because her mythological tale, unlike that of the red rose in Richard Rainolde's *Foundation of Rhetoric*, has no didactic point. Because she *is* the goddess of love, the anecdote involves reminiscence as much as storytelling, and the only lesson it offers is a radically amoral one: Carpe diem.[23] Venus's narrative therefore exceeds the limits of allegory to become myth, establishing a kinship between Venus and Shakespeare, the author of her narrative.

Ernst Cassirer locates in "metaphoric thinking" a common source for language and myth. Like metaphors, myths do not simply substitute fictions for concepts. Rather, the myth-making consciousness conflates name and essence, just as metaphor asserts an identity between frame and focus in Ricoeur's scheme.[24] Kenneth Burke complains that Cassirer, in spite of himself, considers myth's "word magic" a primitive prototype of scientific thought.

Myth, Burke says by way of correction, is built on poetic rather than semantic meaning, on language that is overdetermined and weighted with attitude; the result is not an identity between name and essence but a wealth of perspectives, many of them conflicting with one another.[25]

Venus's "word magic" works by accumulating rather than eliminating different perspectives on her tales; like Shakespeare, she invites varied, often incompatible readings of her personal myth.[26] Her speech is weighted with attitude: She questions Adonis, exhorts him, and, most important, through her endless amplification sets the terms in which he finally speaks. Venus exploits the impersonal authority of proverbial sayings which, as Quintilian says, enhance a speaker's ethos:

> "Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
> Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
> Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear:
> Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse."
> (163–66)

Somewhat later, Adonis replies to Venus's argument in similar language:

> "Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd?
> Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?
> If springing things be any jot diminish'd,
> They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth."
> (415–18)

Venus also recounts a fantastic etiological myth, in which Nature steals heaven's molds to forge a perfect Adonis, prompting Cynthia to hide her face in shame and make the night unnaturally dark. Adonis responds with his own myth of sedition, in which "Love to heaven is fled, / Since sweating Lust on earth usurp'd his name" (793–94). Coppélia Kahn, writing from a psychoanalytic perspective, argues that Adonis "is deeply alienated from his own kind, determined not to love even at the expense of being perverse."[27] On the level of language, as well, Adonis is alienated, having no voice of his own and no choice but to adopt Venus's style or stay silent: The text is too old, the orator too green.

The narrator makes Venus seem large, sweaty, and overbearing, while Adonis's rhetorical immaturity forces her to be garrulous.

As Venus's voice begins to subdue others in the poem, however, the identification between her and the narrator solidifies and her speeches seem less sophistical; at the same time, paradoxically, she is forced into a more traditionally feminine role. Venus's drawn-out search for Adonis is filled with discussion: between Venus and the dogs, between Venus and Death, and finally between Venus and herself, when she muses about why Death cannot die. The second half of the poem is also dominated by descriptive narratives such as Venus's own cautionary tale of Wat the hare. The story of Wat is usually considered to be Venus's most charming and sincere rhetorical performance; in it she identifies emotionally with the hare, representing her own fears for Adonis rather than providing a real argument against boar hunting. What has traditionally been considered the strength of this episode, its verisimilitude and the effect of pathos, nevertheless becomes a strategic weakness for Venus as an orator. The narrative is digressive: It lacks a direct application to Adonis's determination to hunt the boar and ends inconclusively when Venus loses the thread of her thought.

Venus's ethos is therefore redeemed at the expense of her rhetoric, for her later speeches are based more on direct appeals to pathos than on persuasive argument. As Heather Dubrow notes, in the second half of the poem Venus is described as a victim.[28] For instance, the narrator reverses earlier, unflattering comparisons between Venus and birds when,

> As falcons to the lure, away she flies,
> The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light,
> And in her haste unfortunately spies
> The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight,
> Which seen, her eyes [as] murd'red with the view,
> Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew.
> (1027–32)

No longer a predatory eagle or a vulture, Venus—like Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*—becomes a tamed falcon. In a generous gesture, the narrator credits as well Venus's earlier claim that she can dance on sand without leaving footprints; pointing out that the grass does not "stoop" as she races over it, he resists the temptation to undercut Venus by unpacking the metaphor. The next epic simile, comparing Venus's wounded eyes to a snail's wounded horns, is even more pathetic. Both similes, however, circumscribe Venus's sphere of action, since the first domesticates her and the second imprisons her within the snail's shell. The story of Wat, like the epic similes, gives the narrator power over Venus by prefiguring her fate. Whereas Venus interpreted the narrator's story of the horse according to her own design, as a lesson in natural love, the narrator models Venus's flight on her own story of Wat the hare: Venus, like Wat, runs in terror, snatched at by brambles as she searches for the wounded Adonis. In this way, Venus is absorbed into the narrator's story, so that her emotions, like those of Niobe in Aphthonius's ethopoeia, provide an occasion and a pattern for the narrator's histrionics.[29]

The poem concludes with Venus's funeral elegy for Adonis and her prophecy of love's future ills. In the ethopoeia Venus and the narrator finally speak with one voice. The merger of their voices empowers Venus's rhetoric, for as Adonis's eulogist she generalizes her grief into a public lament. In the prophecy, Venus's voice becomes even more detached from her personal situation, for she speaks *ex cathedra*. Because the ills she predicts for future lovers—jealousy, folly, weakness, and sorrow—have all been portrayed within the poem, the prophecy is often read ironically. But Venus, like Ophelia in *Hamlet*, looks from the perspective of prudential wisdom. She might well say, with Ophelia, "O, woe is me / T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!" (*Hamlet*, 3.1.160–61). By giving formal shape to her experience, Venus makes her own story universal. Thus, even as the narrator begins to impersonate rather than debate with Venus—when he becomes the ventriloquist behind her voice—Venus remains an authoritative speaker.

The paradoxical relationship between Venus and her narrator is not fully resolved, even at the poem's conclusion. After her prophecy, Venus apostrophizes the flower that springs up from Adonis's blood. Her speech, like the gesture of uprooting the flower, is purely ceremonial. Although Coppélia Kahn describes Venus as the nurturing mother who allows Adonis to regress into a state in which he has no separate identity, Venus represents the flower as Adonis's heir.[30] Since she determines its meaning, the flower is also the "heir" of Venus's invention. As a flower of rhetoric, it is analogous to *Venus and Adonis*, the "deformed heir" of Shakespeare's invention. In this way, Venus seems both to exemplify and to exceed feminine stereotypes, for she is simultaneously Adonis's mother and Shakespeare's peer. Venus's oratorical triumph is never complete, however, for the narrator supervises the act of plucking the flower by framing Venus's speech with reported discourse. Venus represents picking the flower as a maternal act, conferring Adonis's rights on his only heir by putting the flower in her bosom; the masculine narrator, by contrast, represents it as a murder in which Venus "crops" the flower's stalk and indifferently compares its bleeding "sap" to tears. At the end of her poem and her action, then, Venus is at last subjected to the narrator, who exiles her to Paphos to play the lamenting lover.

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Venus's penchant for amplification and the rhetorical restraints imposed on her speech have parallels in the problem plays. Isabella from *Measure for Measure* and Helena from *All's Well That Ends Well* are both accomplished orators. Both, however, have also been accused of dissimulation. Both, accordingly, are subjected to patriarchal hierarchies at the end of their plays. While a number of critics have commented on the importance of rhetoric to *Measure for Measure*, Wylie Sypher thinks of the entire play as an exercise in Jesuitical casuistry. *Measure for Measure*'s plot also has a kinship with one of the more sensational controversiae. In the case of "the man who raped two girls," the law states that "a girl who has been raped may choose either marriage to her ravisher without a dowry or his death." The man in question, however, raped two girls on a single night. One seeks his death, the other marriage.[31] Although Angelo does not actually succeed in violating two girls, when Mariana and Isabella join forces to accuse him before the Duke, the rhetorical exercise's Byzantine circumstances are replicated. Shakespeare, however, gives his women, particularly Isabella, the job of judging Angelo's case. In this way a situation that calls for deliberative rhetoric is conducted by a figure who, as we will see, argues with the rhetorical ornament associated with seductive sophistic.

Isabella, along with the Duke, is at the oratorical center of *Measure for Measure*. Her identity is defined by her talent for public speaking, since Angelo's fall from grace proves Claudio's belief that she can "play with reason and discourse" (1.2.185). Isabella is the only woman in the play who controls her own voice and therefore contributes to the shaping of her identity. Mistress Overdone's character, like that of Mistress Kate Keepdown, is written in her very name; after nine husbands, she is overdone by the last. Juliet, too, has her identity written on her body with "character too gross" (1.2.155). Mariana, as Isabella's alter ego, endures the silence and emotional restraints that Isabella desires; Mariana is defined as a listener rather than a speaker, one whose "brawling discontent" is stilled by music and the friar's counsel.

R. G. Hunter sees *Measure for Measure* as a secular allegory in which Angelo as Justice persecutes Claudio, while Isabella, or Mercy, pleads for his release.[32] But although the participants in this debate take strong ethical stands, the play subverts the allegory by exposing the role rhetoric plays in matters of justice. Angelo condemns Claudio, at least according to Lucio, to make an example of him; representing a legal and moral category, Claudio will become a negative model for potential fornicators. Isabella, by contrast, insists on the mitigating circumstances that make Claudio an individual rather than an ethical type. Her defense turns on the quality of his act. She asks not "Did Claudio commit fornication?" but "Was Claudio condemned justly?" By giving Isabella a prominent voice in the debate, Shakespeare complicates the opposition of Justice and Mercy by making woman, whose decorative rhetoric is suspect, his eloquent spokesperson for mercy. Isabella brings *Measure for Measure* to a satisfactory end, but the play also subjects her to social norms, barring Isabella from the realm of moral agency by literally putting her, along with Mariana, in her proper place.

Isabella's rhetoric, like that of Portia in her courtroom scene, depends not only on the topics of argument but also on metaphors and allegories. Her proofs are often poetic rather than judicial. Nevertheless, Isabella's pathetic appeals mask a sophist's parasitic talent for rhetorical mimicry. In Plato's *Gorgias*, Gorgias claims that he can persuade patients to take their medicine more readily than a physician can; Isabella, playing with reason and discourse, is persuasive on subjects that belong properly to the judge's domain. Unlike Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, she argues the law while dressed in woman's garb and has no male mentor; so although Sister Miriam Joseph has justly called Isabella one of Shakespeare's finest logicians, doubt is cast on the legitimacy of her ethical arguments because Isabella's gender automatically excludes her from the male-dominated institutions of Viennese justice.[33]

Isabella and Angelo nevertheless begin their debate in the judicial sphere, considering whether Claudio's case should be treated as a "legall" or "juridiciall" issue. In the first case, determining whether the deed was done is paramount; in the second case, defining the deed's nature is important. The Provost thinks that Claudio has offended "in a dream" (2.2.4), without intending to commit a crime.[34] Angelo, telling Isabella that it would be wrong to "condemn the fault, and not the actor of it" (2.2.37), insists that the only issue under consideration is the fact of Claudio's offense: He has committed fornication and must die. But although Isabella shares Angelo's frame of reference—she never questions for a moment the criminality of Claudio's offense—she does exploit for her own purposes Angelo's assumptions and his argumentative strategies. In her first encounter with Angelo, Isabella, like Portia, draws on the potential identification of judge and accused. Her position is fortified dramatically by the fact that Angelo has already proposed a reciprocal relationship between the judge and those he judges: When he offends in the manner of Claudio, Angelo tells Escalus, "Let mine own judgment pattern out my death, / And nothing come in partial" (2.1.30–31). Such an identification has also been suggested in the case of Pompey and Elbow when Escalus asks, "Which is the wiser here: Justice or Iniquity?" (2.1.172).

Although thematic repetition gives her arguments credibility, Isabella's imitative style of argument remains problematic; for, like Plato's Gorgias, she achieves her power by usurping the language of established authorities. Isabella's rhetorical strength is her ability to adopt the formal patterns of her adversary and to wield them agonistically.[35] In her first formal appeal, Isabella uses Angelo's supposition that act and actor are inseparable to suggest that a speaker and his words are coextensive. Arguing by analogy, she implies that, just as Claudio is accountable for his crime, so Angelo as judge must take responsibility for the sentence he levies on Claudio. Using the premise that exterior and interior are connected, Isabella then defines the judge's peculiar virtue with a series of synecdoches, arguing by analogy to privilege the interior quality of mercy over the external trappings of justice:

No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does. (2.2.59–63)

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Analogy becomes a master trope for Isabella, allowing her to argue that Angelo as judge and Claudio as malefactor are alike because both have the potential to fall. If Angelo had "slipped," Claudio would have forgiven him; by extension, Angelo should pardon Claudio. Since the exterior and interior of the judge are continuous, synecdoche makes Claudio's potential pardon imperative by converting the possibility that Angelo and Claudio might trade places into an affirmation of their consubstantiality: All men are equally sinful under God's judgment. Through Isabella's revisionary rhetoric, Angelo has metamorphosed from a judge into a sinner. Only by showing mercy to Claudio can he become man "new made" (2.2.79).

Angelo and Isabella continue to spar with analogy. Angelo, elaborating on Isabella's buried image of Claudio as a mirror in which Angelo sees his own likeness, represents the law as a prophet, who

Looks in a glass that shows what future evils,
Either now, or by remissness new conceiv'd,
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,
Are now to have no successive degrees,
But here they live, to end. (2.2.95–99)

Isabella responds by translating the "law" into "proud man," who sees not the future but his own image in the glass. "Like an angry ape," he "plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven / As makes the angels weep" (2.2.120–22). With this "peculiarly masculine" insight into the illusion of virtue, Isabella challenges Angelo's self-representation of himself as the law and implicitly accuses Angelo, as the ape who preens in his mirror, of being tainted with feminine vanity.[36]

Isabella speaks such "sense" that Angelo's long-repressed sexual "sense breeds with it" (2.2.141–42). Though Isabella uses analogy as a figure of thought, to illustrate the concept of mercy, Angelo treats her comparisons as figures of speech; perhaps more accurately, he treats her comparisons as tropes, in which his own sexual meaning readily replaces her legal one.[37] He attends to the ornamental pearls and cosmetic adornment of the oratory rather than to her argument, just as he perceives a sensuous beauty beneath her austere nun's habit. Employing imagery that applies equally to alluring women and sophistic rhetoric, Angelo marvels that

> Never could the strumpet,
> With all her double vigor, art and nature,
> Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
> Subdues me quite. (2.2.182–85)

Isabella, as a speaker, persuades and "moves" Angelo by mirroring him. As Aristotle says, it is easy to praise Athenians among Athenians. Angelo and Isabella, as ascetics cut from the same cloth, are from the start identified with one another. Just as Angelo, in Lucio's flippant phrase, scarce confesses that his blood flows, so Isabella demonstrates a modest reticence in pleading for her worldly brother:

> There is a vice that most I do abhor,
> And most desire should meet the blow of justice;
> For which I would not plead, but that I must;
> For which I must not plead, but that I am
> At war 'twixt will and will not. (2.2.29–33)

Isabella makes herself into a paradox of one who pleads without pleading, rather like Venus, who is "Love" and "loves" but is not loved in return. Isabella's representation of her own ethos, however sincere, is perturbing because it makes her an impenetrable riddle. On the surface, the self-portrait makes her sound like Octavia in *Antony and Cleopatra*, of whom her brother says,

> Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
> Her heart inform her tongue—the swan's down feather,
> That stands upon the swell at the full of tide,
> And neither way inclines. (3.2.47–50)

But Octavia's behavior, we should remember, is screened through the political rhetoric and ambitions of her brother; Isabella's ability to verbalize proper sentiments without actually manifesting them makes her an independent agent and raises the possibility that she manipulates Angelo without really sharing his interests.

Exhibiting modesty by being voluble, Isabella is a living paradox who would have troubled others beside Angelo. Although *Measure for Measure* has no narrator to supervise its heroine's behavior, Isabella's performance is framed by commentary from the Provost and Lucio, whose contributions place her in a sexual psychomachy. The Provost prays for heaven to give Isabella "moving graces," but Lucio, by urging her to be less cold, emphasizes her potential kinship with women such as Elbow's wife and Mistress Overdone. Structural parallels also suggest unflattering dimensions of Isabella's oratory. As a manipulator of words, Isabella resembles Elbow, who like her can create a situation in which "malefactors" and "benefactors," "respected" and "suspected" persons, are interchangeable. Less lighthearted is the connection between Isabella's smooth tongue and Lucio's, for both advocate leniency for rebellions of the codpiece. Isabella, in other words, is placed somewhere between the unconscious users of language and Lucio, the play's archetypal sophist.

In her second appearance before Angelo, Isabella's paradoxes are intensified, for both her innocence and the provocative effect of her rhetoric are heightened. Angelo begins the discussion with an enthymeme:

> It were as good
> To pardon him that hath from nature stol'n
> A man already made, as to remit
> Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image
> In stamps that are forbid. (2.4.42–46)

Isabella feels herself to be in familiar territory where, as before, she and Angelo debate Claudio's case theoretically. But Angelo, having learned from Isabella's rhetorical practice, poses a *quaestione definita*; he asks not about chastity in general but whether Isabella, to redeem her brother, would give herself up to "such sweet uncleanness" as "she that he hath stain'd" (2.4.54–55). While Angelo urges Isabella to identify with Juliet, using the strategy Isabella adopted in the earlier scene, Isabella takes refuge in a technical *divisio* that limits their discussion to the martyrdom of the body rather than the soul.

Angelo complains that Isabella's "sense" does not follow his, surmising that she is either "ignorant" or seems so "craftily" (2.4.74–75). Because Isabella is a sophist playing with reason and discourse, both statements are true. Although she wants to save her brother, she speaks passionately in a cause that she cannot fully sanction. As Isabella rightly tells Angelo, "it oft falls out, / To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean" (2.4.117–18). In her second meeting with Angelo, however, Isabella is so submerged in her role as Claudio's advocate that, as she tells Angelo, they no longer speak the same language. Isabella's distaste for her task, combined with her verbal facility and her complete absorption in her role, makes her an unsettling character.

Even Isabella's virtuous ethos becomes problematic. When Angelo suggests that women are frail, Isabella responds, "Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves, / Which are as easy broke as they make forms" (2.4.125–26). Ironically, it is Isabella's casual acceptance of antifeminist commonplaces, her peculiar combination of eloquence and conventional modesty, that makes Angelo command her to put on the "destin'd livery" of sexuality. Whereas Adonis, the green orator, found Venus's old texts tedious, Angelo lusts after Isabella even while he acts tyrannically toward her. The logic of his response provides a model for understanding Isabella's fate in this play. Angelo finds Isabella's speech seductive because she speaks in an acceptable female idiom, the passionate plea of a virtuous woman. Angelo desires Isabella for the things that make her good, or because her projected ethos is effective. It is worth remembering that in *Venus and Adonis* the narrator begins to sympathize with Venus only when she abandons argument for pathetic narrative and then passionate lament. In both cases, male auditors respond to women speakers when pathos overshadows ethos in their speech.

Isabella, however, trespasses into the male domain of judicial debate and for this reason threatens both masculine rhetoric and the masculine political prerogative. Angelo himself figures his fall in terms of language use when he says, "Heaven hath my empty words, / Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue, / Anchors on Isabel" (2.4.2–4). No longer capable of invention, the first part of rhetorical composition that deals with the "matter" rather than the "manner" of speaking, he is lost in empty words.[38] Although the Duke's motives are often questioned, a real difference in political effect distinguishes Isabella's sophistry from the Duke's when he prepares Claudio for death. As Sister Miriam Joseph notes, the

Duke's speech is a well-constructed *sententia*, supported by the minor premise of an enthymeme and confirmed by a number of arguments; the speech "proves" to Claudio that life is brief, lonely, and less congenial than death, which offers the comfort of an "after-dinner's sleep" (3.1.33).[39] Willing to usurp the confessional's privileges with Claudio and later with Barnardine, the Duke of dark corners is an impersonator. His authenticity, however, is assured not only by his symbolic connection to the heavenly judge but by his alliances with other male authority figures, particularly Friar Thomas and Escalus. Appealing to Escalus when he is shaken by Lucio's casual slanders, the disguised Duke reminds us that men in this play construct themselves in response to one another. In this sense, the male bonding that figures prominently in Shakespeare's early comedies as a protection against woman's disruptive influence is also operative in *Measure for Measure*.[40]

Isabella, unlike the Duke, is a social anomaly—a novice who is not yet a nun, a nun out of her cloister, a woman who seeks silence but speaks in public. As Stephen Greenblatt shows through the case of Arnaud de Tilh, who for a time successfully appropriated the identity, wife, and property of Martin Guerre, Renaissance identity can be conferred from without by a judicial body representing community interests. Arnaud's conviction and execution deprive him of the identity he had usurped, but as becomes clear from Natalie Zemon Davis's *Return of Martin Guerre*, Arnaud impersonated Martin successfully for as long as he did because he was a more pleasant and profitable Martin than the original; not only Martin's wife but an entire community unconsciously conspired to support the impersonation.[41] In the Duke's case as well, the ends formally justify his means, and we as audience support his impersonation. Isabella's impersonation is a different case altogether, for her assumption of male speech and logic violates social norms. Although not a *haec vir* or manly woman in her dress and appearance, Isabella does have affinities with that particular monster. When she lashes out against Claudio for begging his life at the expense of her chastity, Isabella expresses her rage by questioning her mother's chastity; she shares this form of invective with Lear and Posthumus Leonatus from *Cymbeline*. Isabella's righteous anger therefore entails an unusually strong identification with a male point of view.[42]

Like Shakespeare's Venus, Isabella is eventually subjected to Vienna's patriarchy. As Kathleen McLuskie has demonstrated, *Measure for Measure* constructs its women from a masculine point of view.[43] When Angelo feels his chastity threatened by Isabella's beauty, he resorts to the traditional division between virgins and strumpets; his vision gains wider currency as the play progresses. Once Isabella's tryst with Angelo is fixed, she becomes increasingly aligned with Mariana, an affiliation that domesticates Isabella and tames her tongue. *Measure for Measure*'s exercise in feminine identity fashioning exposes Isabella and Mariana to comic irony, then to more heavily satiric invective when they petition the Duke and find themselves put on trial along with Angelo. The ethics of the Duke's bed trick have been discussed at length.[44] Although appeals to dramatic convention are ultimately unsatisfactory, when Isabella repeats Angelo's elaborate instructions for their meeting—involving two keys for opening two separate doors into a brick-walled garden—the sanctity of Mariana's *hortus conclusus* is already invaded by phallic imagery. Isabella and Angelo become the butts of a joke they themselves create in earnest. Like the narrator of *Venus and Adonis*, then, we indulge in a moment of voyeurism, enticed by the hyperbolic detail recounted in all innocence by Isabella.[45]

In *Measure for Measure*'s trial scene, the Duke completes the humiliation of Isabella and Mariana by subjecting them to his secular authority; in this way he fulfills Angelo's attempted violation by forcing each in turn to put on metaphorically but publicly the "destin'd livery" of female sexuality. The scene, as a variant on the Parliament of Heaven, should provide the women with allegorical immunity, since the debate between Justice and Mercy proceeds in an orderly way and ends with mankind's redemption.[46] Yet in Shakespeare's version Isabella and Mariana must plead for themselves before Angelo. The Duke forces Isabella to present herself as a new kind of paradox, the unchaste nun; Mariana, who obediently accepts the bed trick, is paraded about as a monster beyond the normal matrix of sexual roles. The substitution of one woman for another in the bed trick is completed here in a way that denies both women their individuality and reduces them to misogynistic stereotypes.[47] As Jonathan Dollimore has suggested, the Duke's strategy in this scene is political.[48] Though Dollimore argues that the Duke stages Angelo's trial in order to demonstrate his own integrity as a ruler, sexual politics motivate the Duke as well; for although he takes back from Angelo his seat and authority, their common political role identifies them with one another. The Duke identifies less directly with the women. Although he has assured Mariana that her marriage to Angelo is legal, in the trial she is treated more as a sinner than an abused citizen. Safe in her moated grange, Mariana was supremely virginal; but in the trial scene, when she kneels to the Duke, Mariana also begins to resemble the Virgin's theological alter ego, the penitent Magdalene, who since the Middle Ages had been represented as a beautiful hermit.[49] Like the Magdalene, whose legend highlights her close relationship with Christ, Mariana turns to patriarchal authority to still her "brawling discontent" (4.1.9). When she enters Angelo's hortus conclusus, however, Mariana reverses the Magdalene's retreat from sexuality to spiritual grace. Marina Warner notes that a figure like the Magdalene ultimately "strengthens the characteristic Christian correlation between sin, the flesh, and the female."[50] Angelo, not the Virgin, inhabits the closed garden, and Mariana makes a pilgrimage from lonely but controlled chastity into that sinister garden. Through these inversions of traditional iconography, *Measure for Measure* ironically suggests the fragility of female chastity. At this point the opposition between virgin and whore has broken down completely. Mariana, as one who is "neither maid, widow, nor wife," easily becomes the object of Lucio's joke: "My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them are neither maid, widow, nor wife" (5.1.177–80).

Isabella is also reduced to a misogynistic stereotype. Joining hands with Mariana to plead for Angelo's life, she retains her characteristic grasp of equity. While Mariana argues that "best men are moulded out of faults" (5.1.439), Isabella pardons Angelo, as she would have pardoned Claudio, on the basis of his intention: "I partly think / A due sincerity governed his deeds, / Till he did look on me" (5.1.445–47). Isabella's identification with Mariana, although it demonstrates a more healthy acceptance of woman's perspective than Isabella has shown before, also links her visually and conceptually with the woman who is neither maid, widow, nor wife. Isabella, who prides herself on her chastity and her truthful tongue, has now lied and publicly proclaimed herself unchaste. In the scenario assigned her by the Duke, Isabella has experienced, if only in play, the public shame of feminine frailty. The act of kneeling therefore deprives Isabella as well as Mariana of autonomy and control over her body.[51] Although both women kneel freely, Mariana to redeem her husband and Isabella in a gesture of solidarity with her, the Duke's script determines the range of action available to them. Put in her place as Mariana has been put in hers, Isabella leaves the stage in silence, as a proper but ordinary woman who will be tamed by marriage—and, we presume, cease to play with reason and discourse.

Helena of *All's Well That Ends Well*, like Isabella, is both an accomplished orator and a social anomaly. While Isabella is on the verge of taking religious orders, Helena, whose "Dian" is "both herself and Love" (1.3.212–13), stands on the threshold of sexual maturity. Helena also shares some of Isabella's verbal facility. Although she seems to speak "sensibly" or wisely when she cures the French King, her male auditors respond either with revulsion or with their physical "senses." The social context of Helena's rhetoric, however, differs from that of the other female Shakespearean orators, so that her verbal triumph and subsequent repression follow another pattern. Rossillion and France both have noble pasts that live in their collective social memories. Eulogizing the elder Rossillion for his son's benefit, the French King recounts how

> like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness
> Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,
> His equal had awak'd them, and his honor,
> Clock to itself, knew the true minute when
> Exception bid him speak, and at this time
> His tongue obey'd his hand. Who were below him
> He us'd as creatures of another place,
> And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,
> Making them proud of his humility,
> In their poor praise he humbled. (1.2.36–45)

In this ethical centerpiece, the elder Rossillion acts according to a courtly decorum that makes him temperate, gracious toward inferiors, and a master of proper timing, so that he knows exactly when to vindicate his honor; he even hopes to die decorously, without lingering beyond the time of his social usefulness. Rossillion also behaves courteously to his inferiors, acting as an emblem of humility to boost their collective pride.

The community supported by paragons such as Bertram's father seems to be structured as an extended family of the kind described by Lawrence Stone in his studies of English aristocratic society of this period.[52] Since Rossillion is dead, according to Lafew, the Countess will find a second husband, Bertram a new father, in the French King (1.1.6–7). The Countess, also sensitive to social obligations, keeps the "shrewd" and "unhappy" Clown because her dead husband had enjoyed him. Helena, too, has been "bequeathed" to the Countess by her father.[53] Antique communal values are espoused regularly in Rossillion and in France, but they remain powerful in theory rather than practice. The French King denies the Florentines his troops in their war against Siena simply because his Austrian ally asks him to withhold aid. Even though Florence's quarrel is "holy" and the Sienese are "black and fearful," the King of France lets his youths serve whom they will, with the Machiavellian hope that the restless gentry will find "breathing and exploit" in foreign wars (3.1.4–6; 1.2.15–17). Furthermore, Bertram's sullen refusal to play his assigned part at court, if the King's word can be accepted, typifies the new generation's lack of values.

Because Helena lives in a decaying society, clever wenches and unscrupulous parasites can easily advance themselves beyond their station. Under such conditions, the rhetoric of selfhood does not describe adequately the practice of self-fashioning. Ideally, in the closed world of Rossillion's aristocracy, inherited position and innate virtue go together. Blessing Bertram at his departure for France, the Countess prays that he will succeed his father in "manners" as in "shape" and that his "blood and virtue" will "contend for empire" within him (1.1.61–63). At the same time, according to the play's authority figures, virtue earns its own reward. When Bertram refuses to marry Helena, the King tells him that "good alone / Is good, without a name," and that "honors thrive, / When rather from our acts we them derive / Than our foregoers" (2.3.128–29, 135–37). The Countess echoes the King's attitude, rejecting Bertram for Helena when he flees the marriage. She counters Bertram's curse on Helena with her own "dreadful sentence," assuring Helena that "He was my son, / But I do wash his name out of my blood, / And thou art all my child" (3.2.66–68).

Since the symmetry between virtue and blood, manners and shape, or exterior and interior is often skewed in *All's Well That Ends Well*, human relations lack an ethical logic. Although virtue should be loved for itself, the characters often seem to form bonds on less analytical grounds. The Countess's spontaneous acceptance of Helena as her daughter, though based on a duty to Helena's father, is also supported by the Countess's memories of her own youth:

> Even so it was with me when I was young.
> If ever we are nature's, these are ours. This thorn
> Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
> Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.
> It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
> Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth.
> By our remembrances of days foregone,
> Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.
> (1.3.128–35)

The prevalence of indefinite pronouns in this passage—the Countess does not identify "love's strong passion" as the "thorn" that pricks youth's rose until six lines have passed—strengthens the sense of memory in motion. The Countess, it seems, struggles to remember not only love but the language of love. The King, as well, is indirectly moved to accept Bertram by memories of a past he shared with Bertram's father. But other liaisons seem merely quixotic. Bertram's affiliation with Parolles is honored although not explained, for Parolles is not exposed until he betrays Bertram; and at the end of the play, Lafew accepts without demur Parolles' claim on his charity. But while a benign charity keeps the peace, intimate relations are often governed by mechanical matching of person to role. It is the French King who says, self-deprecatingly, that he merely "fill[s] a place" (1.2.69), but his phrase rings true for other relationships. For Bertram, Diana is only an erotic substitute for his despised wife; even in Helena's case, one affection mechanically drives out another when passion for Bertram makes her forget her father. In Lavatch's fantasy of social relations, the man who cuckolds him becomes his drudge and finally his friend, since "he that kisses my wife is my friend" (1.3.49–50). In his adulterous version of community relations, Lavatch pinpoints the ultimate source of all affection: "I am driven on by the flesh, and he must needs go that the devil drives" (1.3.28–30).

Given the unstable relation between status and merit in this play, Helena's behavior becomes ethically more complicated than her folk origins as the "clever wench" would suggest. *Measure for Measure*'s Isabella speaks only one language, but it is admirably suited for the problems she encounters. Helena, on the other hand, is emotionally and rhetorically immature, and her syntax and vocabulary change constantly. For this reason, she often seems to have no private voice or thoughts; what she says in soliloquy can be trusted no more than what she tells the Clown, and so she contradicts herself at every turn. In fact, Helena must speak every thought aloud, for the Countess first hears of her love for Bertram when the Clown overhears and reports her virginal laments. Increasing the opacity of Helena's character is the fact that she, like many characters in this play, talks about herself through abstractions that interact of their own volition and so bring with them prefabricated conclusions. When describing her hopeless love for Bertram, Helena figures him as a star far above her, in whose "bright radiance and collateral light" she must be content to take comfort (1.1.88). She is the hind who would mate with the lion and so must die for love. In a second soliloquy within this same scene, however, Helena has completely reversed her decision; asking generally "who ever strove / To show her merit, that did miss her love?" (1.1.226–27), she assumes the impersonal tone of a purveyor of proverbs, asserting that "our remedies oft in ourselves do lie, / Which we ascribe to heaven," and concluding that "the mightiest space in fortune nature brings / To join like likes, and kiss like native things" (1.1.216–17, 222–23).

Helena's self-examinations seem radically inconsistent because her speeches are made from the stuff of rhetorical debate; she constructs her self according to the rules of argument *in utram partemque*. The two soliloquies discussed above are separated by Helena's conversation with Parolles. When she and Parolles discuss the merits and demerits of chastity, they re-create in dialogue the *suasoria*, which considers issues such as whether one should marry without reference to any particular person. Parolles assumes a familiarity with Helena by asking if she meditates on virginity.

She depersonalizes the question by rephrasing it: "Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him?" (1.1.112–13). He responds that no defense exists against men, initiating an exchange of puns on the phrase "to blow up." Parolles insinuates that man, having "undermined" woman's will in the psychological as well as the physiological sense, then "blows her up" with child. In an effort to restore the military metaphor, Helena asks whether there is "no military policy how virgins might blow up men" (121–22). Parolles beats her back with her own weapon, closing off all avenues of escape with a metaphor based on their shared pun. "Virginity being blown down," the maidenhead broken, "man will quicklier be blown up" with sexual desire (123–24). To "blow down" his erection, woman loses her "city," letting her virginity be "blown down" once again. In Parolles' neat formulation, woman's domination of man logically entails her submission to him.

In her first soliloquy, Helena had constructed a hierarchy of love reinforced by natural analogies. Parolles undermines her idealism with his intimate puns and paradoxical metaphors, which draw man and woman into sexual combat. Unfolding virginity's paradox, that it depreciates with time, Parolles breaks down the careful distance Helena has set between herself and Bertram with a prosopopoeia of ancient Virginity. "Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion," he preaches, "richly suited, but unsuitable—just like the brooch and the toothpick, which [wear] not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek; and your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French wither'd pears, it looks ill, it eats drily, marry, 'tis a wither'd pear" (1.1.156–62). Parolles makes a shambles of Helena's analogical arguments, ridiculing the "great chain of being" that justifies her pious renunciation of Bertram. If Bertram is like a distant star, a pear can with equal justice represent virginity. Thus Parolles ends triumphantly with a tautology: A withered pear *is* a withered pear. In this strophic suasoria, Parolles' ostentatious wit protects his fallacies from rebuttal so that Helena finds herself automatically on the defensive, sniped at from behind a stockade of masculine bawdry.[54]

Trapped in Parolles' seamy world, where a virgin can choose only between sexual violence or the lonely decrepitude of old age, Helena resolves their combative suasoria by vowing to pursue

Bertam to France. In France, she demonstrates a new sense of rhetorical sophistication, for in order to cure the King she must represent herself as powerful but humble; she achieves her purpose by appealing furtively to his long-dormant sexual desire. When the Renaissance educator Juan Luis Vives argues that rhetorical training only leads women astray, he confronts a number of classical exemplars who combine private virtue with public eloquence. Vives contends, however, that these women never learned the art of rhetoric but "receaved it by the familiar custome of their fathers without any paine or laboure."[55] Helena, who derives her authority from her physician father, claims to have no knowledge of her own; her speech, like her prescription, is acquired without labor from her father. Helena is therefore the perfect female speaker, eloquent through instinct and divine inspiration rather than art. Yet a skeptical analysis of Helena's encounter with the French King, one that keeps in mind her romantic goal, suggests that she insinuates herself into a male political hierarchy by adopting and transforming its discourse.

Helena comes to offer the King her secret prescription. But the King, like a patronizing father, insists gently that a young girl cannot help him:

> I say we must not
> So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
> To prostitute our past-cure malady
> To empirics, or to dissever so
> Our great self and our credit, to esteem
> A senseless help when help past sense we deem.
> (2.1.119–24)

The King would lose much credit, he reminds Helena, if he were misled by a charlatan. A chiasmus in the final phrase here, "A *senseless help* when *help* past *sense* we deem," firmly locks Helena's proffered "help" between the King's good "sense" and the senselessness of her project, so that she cannot possibly act within his rhetorical coordinates. Helena counters the King's argument by deferring to his premise that he lacks hope and she lacks art. In Frank Whigham's terms, whereas he employs the "trope of self-deprecation," she uses the "trope of deference," paradoxically demanding recognition by deferring to the King.[56] Playing on the

King's Stoic piety, Helena restates her case with a string of sententiae:

He that of greatest works is finisher
Oft does them by the weakest minister:
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,
When judges have been babes; great floods have flown
From simple sources; and great seas have dried
When miracles have by the great'st been denied.
(2.1.136–41)

Casting herself as the simple source from which a great flood flows, or the babe who makes wise judgments, Helena exploits the King's opinion of her youth and ignorance. From a rhetorical point of view, Helena's improvisatory performance not only capitalizes on the cultural association of woman with emotion but covertly testifies to her authenticity; spontaneous and unrehearsed, her speech *must* be sincere.[57] At last she preempts the King's style altogether, meeting his pessimistic chiasmus with an optimistic one of her own to confirm her credentials: "But *know* I *think*, and *think* I *know* most sure, / My art is not past power, nor you past cure" (2.1.157–58; my emphases). Within the chiasmus, the King's skeptical "thought" is contained by Helena's sure "knowledge."

Relenting, the French King responds less to Helena's vows than to her voice. He hears "some blessed spirit . . . speak / His powerful sound within an organ weak" (2.1.175–76). Proud of his own common sense, the King actually capitulates, as Angelo does in *Measure for Measure*, to his physical senses, for Helena influences him through his ears rather than his reason: "What impossibility would slay," the King's hope of cure, "sense saves another way" (2.1.177–78). There is a pun here on the difference between physical and common sense. Like the seductive rhetorician denounced by Bishop Jewel's *Oration against Rhetoric*, Helena can entice men with pleasing verse. Thus she cures the King with verbal rather than visual ornaments and cosmetics.

Lafew implies rather pruriently that Helena's medicine is sexual, since her simple touch might raise up impotent King Pippen, inspiring him to write love poetry and, by implication, to attempt more vigorous gestures of sexual appreciation (2.1.75–78). Helena cures the French King by relying on the very feature of rhetoric that

Plato feared—its power to arouse pleasure in the listener. Appropriately, the King awards Helena with a choice of husband. Although, as "Doctor She," Helena provides the court with a welcome diversion as well as a medical miracle, when her verbal license translates into real authority over the lords she becomes more threatening. When Helena goes through the ritual of selecting her husband, Lafew's framing commentary injects a note of comedy into the proceedings and invites skepticism about the sincerity of the French lords' enthusiasm for marrying her. While the lords vie with one another for the honor of Helena's hand, Lafew thinks that they reject her and rages against their lack of sexual spirit. But as Bertram's response to the King's remonstrance reminds us, the lords' courtesy to Helena is not entirely voluntary; when Bertram bridles at having his wife chosen for him and the royal honor is at stake, the King quickly produces his power.[58]

Because "he must needs go whom the devil drives," Helena's sexuality is disruptive. But her oratorical prowess is what makes her a real social threat. Helena's kinship with Parolles, the play's other sophistic orator, suggests why her rhetoric can be threatening to *All's Well*'s patriarchy. Parolles serves no man and any man, as he makes clear to Lafew, yet for a time he is secure in his role as Bertram's companion. In a similar way, Helena's meteoric rise into the Rossillion aristocracy demonstrates her ability to evade quietly the traditional categories of class and gender; in her disguise as an errant pilgrim, she is equally autonomous and resistant to patriarchal control. Unlike Parolles' facade, however, Helena's facade is impenetrable. Despite her anomalous social position, Helena so thoroughly adopts the language and values of the King and of Bertram's mother that her marriage to Bertram helps to emasculate and infantilize him. By the time he tries to seduce Diana, he has degenerated into a petulant, "ruttish" boy not unlike Venus's Adonis.[59]

At the end of *All's Well*, Helena is tamed, just as Isabella is, through her alliance with another woman. In this play, the bed trick and mock trial of the women are more perfunctory than in *Measure for Measure*, but the pattern is the same. Josephine Waters Bennett notices that, in act 5, first the Clown and then Lafew subject Parolles to a "verbal hazing, or masculine joshing."[60] The King treats his female supplicants with less permissiveness because, although Parolles' character is well known, the women's motives are opaque. Women in *All's Well* identify strongly with one another, but the trio of Diana, Helena, and the Widow is particularly potent. As Carol Thomas Neely aptly puts it, together they are "maid, widow, and wife," illustrating the range of acceptable roles for women.[61] Ironically, in this play even women who embrace sexual strictures are suspect. Diana, who has vowed to remain a maid, is treated first as a "fond" and "desperate" creature, then as a whore who has the presence of mind to keep bail on hand. The King's vituperative epithets recall both Helena's willingness to risk "searing" her maiden's name (2.1.172–73) when she cures the King and the fact that the Widow, like a "professional madam," has accepted Helena's money as payment for the bed trick.[62]

Describing *The English Gentlewoman* in 1631, Richard Brathwait suggests that "Silence in a *Woman* is a moving Rhetoricke, winning most, when in words it wooeth least."[63] In *Venus and Adonis*, *Measure for Measure*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*, Shakespeare in the end concurs. In *Venus and Adonis* Venus must retreat to lonely bereavement on Paphos, and in *All's Well That Ends Well* Bertram reserves the right to test Helena's improbable account of how she won his ring and conceived his child. Bertram controls the terms of their reconciliation as he did those of their separation. Isabella of *Measure for Measure* also loses her voice, since she leaves the stage without responding to the Duke's abrupt marriage proposal. In the end, Shakespeare silences the decorative rhetoric through which some of his boldest heroines, and he himself as actor and playwright, have won power for themselves.

Yet this conclusion calls for qualification, for these Shakespearean women are not completely stereotyped and confined to their narratives. Although in *Venus and Adonis* the masculine narrator has the final word, even here Shakespeare refuses to validate the narrator's perspective completely. In the beginning of the poem Venus, Adonis, and the narrator are locked in a triangle that replicates another triangle established in the dedication, which involves Shakespeare, the "deformed" heir of his invention, and its recipient, the Earl of Southampton. It is impossible to align neatly the figures in these two triangles, for Shakespeare is at once analogous to the narrator and to Venus: He petitions the Earl of Southampton as she pleads to Adonis. The sexual ambiguities involved in these analogies between characters within and outside the poem intensify the confusion of identities. Reading *Venus and Adonis*, then, demands a willingness to indulge in critical transvestism. *Measure for Measure*, as well, both invites and frustrates conventional responses.[64] And finally, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Helena leaves the stage with her riddle intact. As one who is both "dead" and "quick" with child—or in dramatic terms, both a female character and a boy actor—she is a paradox whose potency will not be diffused.

Recent feminist criticism of Shakespeare has debated the question of Shakespeare's own sexual politics. One group treats Shakespeare as a perceptive and sympathetic creator of female characters, a Renaissance male feminist awaiting recovery. The other group, recognizing that his characters are constructed from a masculine perspective, perform resistant readings on the plays.[65] Both positions must be accepted, however, if we take into account the nature of identification, which seeks resemblance in difference. "Who is't can read a woman?" Cymbeline asks at the end of his play. Perhaps, as he claims, no man can read a woman successfully. But in Shakespeare's works, to attempt cross-gender identification means putting oneself temporarily in the place of the other. To this extent, trying to read woman as Other is representative of all attempts to read and write literary characters.

EPILOGUE

> One need not scrutinize the concept of "identification" very sharply to see, implied in it at every turn, its ironic counterpart: division. Rhetoric is concerned with the state of Babel after the Fall. Its contribution to a "sociology of knowledge" must often carry us far into the lugubrious regions of malice and the lie. —Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*

Feminist criticism of Shakespearean drama has raised important questions, not only about how we read the plays but why we teach them. In much academic discourse about self-fashioning, as Marguerite Waller has shown, the reader, covertly figured as male, is never forced to confront the ideological construction of his own critical ground. In practice, as Jeanne Addison Roberts argues, "our school systems institutionalize for secondary school students a painfully constricted view of possible female roles."[1] Both problems arise in part from a failure to understand the operation of identification. In *The Company We Keep*, Wayne Booth dismisses as wrong-headed the question of whether Tess Durbeyfield would provide a good model for one's daughter; rather, he asks, "Would you like your daughter to marry one, even for a few hours—not one of the characters but the implied Thomas Hardy, whose patterns of desire will have become hers while she reads?"[2] But Booth, too, asks the wrong question. Marriage to a benignly patriarchal Thomas Hardy does not figure adequately the Burkean vision of identification after Babel, where we may be embroiled in malice and lies. Within Renaissance studies as well, Richard Lanham and Joel Altman both stress that a rhetorical education provides ethical training through morally neutral means. There is no exact correlation between ethical goals and rhetorical practice.

More congenial to Burke's vision of identification would be Clifford Geertz's account of how, during a professional visit to Bali, he and his wife became "persons" rather than "specters." Having been treated as invisible by the village's inhabitants, Geertz and his wife were accidentally involved in a Javanese police raid on a village cockfight. Instinctively, they followed the villagers' lead and ran from the raid, ending up at a house where they were provided with tea and an alibi. As a result, the villagers had a good laugh, and Geertz and his wife finally became persons. Geertz ran not for rational reasons but because he temporarily identified his interests with those of the Balinese villagers. Because he is a foreigner in Bali, running from the police served no utilitarian need; because he is an anthropologist, attempting to penetrate the barrier of Balinese reserve but safe from the long arm of Javanese law, Geertz's motives were simultaneously self-serving and playful.[3]

If we use Geertz, with his radically mixed motives, as our representative example of self-fashioning, Booth's effort to avoid reading Tess by striking up a friendship with her implied author seems disingenuous. Reading literary characters, as a form of ethical self-fashioning, creates consensus not by erasing difference and diffusing conflict but by going *through* drama, as Burke would say. Reading literary character disrupts our felt sense of reality, appealing to what Morse Peckham has called man's "rage for chaos."[4] From this perspective, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century character critics who avidly sought themselves in Shakespeare's exotic, evil, or merely outlandish characters were not simply perverse but truly "reading" the plays.

Having begun by examining Ophelia, a Shakespearean orator frequently condemned to silence, this book can end appropriately by examining Hamlet's encounter with the ghost of his father, which illustrates the pedagogical imperative behind the practice of character criticism. Hamlet must confront the ghost of his father in the same way as he would any orator. To evaluate the ghost's narrative and commands, Hamlet judges his physical appearance, gestures, and most important, his words. Theoretically, a ghost's nature can be inferred from its appearance. Renaissance Catholic pneumatologist Father Noel Taillepied offers a taxonomy for distinguishing good from evil spirits: An evil spirit might appear as a lion, bear, black dog, hop-toad, serpent, or "great grimalkin"; a good spirit might appear as a dove, a "man of gracious aspect," a lamb, or a figure in white surrounded by an aureole.[5] *Hamlet*'s apparition, however, resembles the elder Hamlet so closely as to be indistinguishable from him. The Danes dwell on his armor, his grizzled beard, and his offended expression, and Horatio says that the apparition is as much like Hamlet's father as his own hands are like one another. Appearance, then, provides no clue to the ghost's motives.

An apparition's speech and gestures can also reveal his true nature, if not his motives. Taillepied says that a good spirit will speak in a voice that is "soft, agreeable, musical, sweetly-sounding, consolatory, and soothing." Bad spirits talk in a "rough, harsh, and loud" voice. Words and gestures should also be scrutinized: "Does the vision speak humbly, acknowledging sins and trespasses done, with tears and sad groans: Or does it vomit pride, threats, curses, heresy and blasphemy?"[6] At first blush, the ghost's message seems as obvious as his identity: "Remember me" and "Revenge [my] foul and most unnatural murther" are what he tells Hamlet (1.5.91, 1.5.25). Having expostulated against Gertrude, he gives his narrative plainly and quickly, pressed by the approach of dawn. But ironically, although the apparition is *Hamlet*'s most forthright orator, his message cannot be taken at face value. The Protestant writer Louis Lavater, more suspicious than his Catholic counterpart, complicates the pneumatological picture by stressing that the devil can speak truth and recommends both prudent caution and more sophisticated rhetorical tests. If a spirit appears as an angel, for instance, and his words prove true, the recipient of his message should thank God. If the spirit flatters and asks for help, on the other hand, we should treat him as we would a dissembling person and give his words no credit.[7] The ghost's rhetoric, like that of spirits who demand help, invites skepticism about his motives. He speaks of being taken in the full blossom of his sins, but rather than repenting, he preaches against the sins of others, hyperbolically denouncing Claudius as an "adulterate beast," Gertrude more ambiguously as his "most seeming virtuous queen" (1.5.42, 46). His tears and groans, moreover, seem to be prompted by the memory of Gertrude and by anger against Claudius as much as by his own spiritual condition.

Evaluating the ghost's narrative is made especially difficult by his ambiguous identity. By definition, an apparition is not identical with himself, since Renaissance pneumatologists of all religions agree that although a spirit could take on the appearance of a living or deceased person, it could not *be* that person. Spirits are not the people they personate, yet their physical appearance and their words must be judged as we judge those of people. They are both persons and characters. The ghost of Hamlet senior might be described as a *prosopopoeia* of himself, since he is both author and character in his drama of revenge.[8]

Hamlet's rhetorical encounter with the ghost of his father typifies the dilemma of Shakespearean readers who attempt to identify with his characters: We are denied both the illusion that these are familiar friends and the certainty that they are fictional characters, confined within the covers of a book. In the domain of rhetoric, the price of identification is the knowledge that we are in Babel after the fall, risking malice, lies, and the knowledge of our own mixed motives. These are the hazards of rhetorical engagements but also the rewards, for only when we succumb to the rage for chaos can reading character function as equipment for living.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 6–8; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1967; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 24.

2. Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), 5.

3. Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Ingram Bywater, vol. 2 of *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Revised Oxford Translation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2.1448a1–6.

4. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6.1450a16–21.

5. Gerald F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 70.

6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 2.1103a35–1103b1.

7. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.1105a26–31.

8. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 13.1453a4–5.

9. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 13.1453a6–16.

10. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 15.1454b8–13.

11. In a complex argument that depends on the relevance of Aristotle's ethics to his poetics, Else argues that in Aristotle's ethical system one falls into either group rather than between them. Deriving his ethical criteria from literature in this case, Aristotle differs from Plato by proposing to take seriously the heroes of literature, particularly those of Homer. For these reasons, Else finds the tripartite division of men to be uncharacteristic of Aristotle and suggests that the third category, men "like ourselves," is a later addition (Else, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 79).

12. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 480.

13. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, "A Literary Postscript: Characters, Persons, Selves, Individuals," in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 307, 304, 309.

14. For discussion of the relationship between writing and speaking in rhetorical education and practice, see Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Claudio Guillén, "Notes toward the Study of the Renaissance Letter," in *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*, ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 70–101; and Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

15. Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

16. Kenneth Burke, "The Philosophy of Literary Form," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3rd ed. (1941; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 23.

CHAPTER ONE

1. All references to Shakespeare's works are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

2. Leo Kirschbaum, "Hamlet and Ophelia," *Philological Quarterly* 35 (1956): 388.

3. See Bernice W. Kliman, "*Hamlet*"*: Film, Television, and Audio Performance* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), 63–67.

4. Maurice Charney, following Bernard Beckerman, notes that soliloquies are often didactic in *Hamlet*, but neither critic thinks this soliloquy by Ophelia important for its content. Charney, although he recognizes that Ophelia "sets herself up as a spectator and audience of the tragedy," thinks of her as emoting rather than analyzing here and concludes that "we can only sympathize with her experience of loss, disintegration, and deliquescence" (*Hamlet's Fictions* [New York: Routledge, 1988], 112). Beckerman classes this soliloquy among the play's "expressions of sheer emotion" (*Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599–1609* [New York: Macmillan, 1962], 184).

5. For the first reading, see Linda Welshimer Wagner, "Ophelia: Shakespeare's Pathetic Plot Device," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14 (1963): 94–97. For the second, see R. S. White, "The Tragedy of Ophelia," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 9, no. 2 (1978): 52.

6. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, n.d.), 135–39; J. M. Nosworthy, "Hamlet and the Pangs of Love," in *The Elizabethan Theatre*, vol. 4, ed. G. R. Hibbard (London: Macmillan, 1974), 41–56; Harold Jenkins, "Hamlet and Ophelia," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 49 (1964 for 1963): 135–51; Rebecca West, *The Court and the Castle: Some Treatments of a Recurrent Theme* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 18, 19.

7. See Cherrell Guilfoyle, "'Ower Swete Sokor': The Role of Ophelia in *Hamlet*," *Comparative Drama* 14, no. 1 (1980): 3–17; and Bridget Gellert Lyons, "The Iconography of Ophelia," *ELH* 44 (1977): 60–74.

8. For a fascinating history of representations of Ophelia, showing how she has been silenced and turned into a visual emblem of female madness, see Elaine Showalter, "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985), 77–94.

9. The rhetorical scheme Ophelia uses is identified by Harold Jenkins, ed., *Hamlet*, Arden Edition (London: Methuen, 1982), 284. For the currency of Hamlet's rhetorical exercises in Renaissance England, particularly his "To be or not to be" soliloquy, see Roland Mushat Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 188. For a

more wide-ranging attempt to show the relevance of Ramist logic to Hamlet's soliloquies, see Leon Howard, *The Logic of Hamlet's Soliloquies* (Lone Pine, Calif.: Lone Pine Press, n.d.). Interestingly, Ophelia's reference to the courtier, scholar, and soldier is one of only four lines from this speech that also appear in Q1, which reads: "Great God of heaven, what a quicke change is this? / The Courtier, Scholler, Souldier, all in him, / All dasht and splinterd thence, O woe is me, / To a seene what I have seene, see what I see" (*Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto*, ed. Michael J. B. Allen and Kenneth Muir [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981]).

10. See the discussion of culture as an "acted document" in Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30; Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 1–20 and passim.

11. Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), 27.

12. Harry Levin, "An Explication of the Player's Speech," in *The Question of Hamlet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 157–64.

13. Lawrence Danson, *Tragic Alphabet: Shakespeare's Drama of Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 44–45; Howard Felperin, "O'erdoing Termagant: An Approach to Shakespearean Mimesis," *Yale Review* 63, no. 3 (1974): 372–91.

14. Danson argues that in the play Hamlet cannot kill Claudius until he has found a suitable rapprochement between words and the gesture of revenge; Felperin suggests that in *Hamlet* Shakespeare, through Hamlet's example, educates us in new ways of reading archaic models for behavior. In either case, the kind of overt rhetoric epitomized by the Player's speech is an embarrassment to be left behind. For a rich essay cautioning against too easy dismissals of mimesis in *Hamlet*, see Robert Weimann, "Mimesis in *Hamlet*," in Parker and Hartman, *Shakespeare and Theory*, 275–91. Weimann argues that Hamlet, as an improvisator akin to the Vice, is both a product and an agent of mimesis.

15. Lanham, *Motives of Eloquence*, 129–43.

16. For a good analysis of Hamlet's failure of identification with Pyrrhus as a problem of imitation, see David Scott Kastan, " 'His Semblable Is His Mirror': *Hamlet* and the Imitation of Revenge," *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 111–24.

17. Kenneth Burke, "The Philosophy of Literary Form," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3rd ed. (1941; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 61.

18. Plato, *Gorgias*, 456a–c, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). Subsequent references to Plato's *Dialogues* will be to this edition.

19. Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 21–31.

20. Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 20–35.

21. Plato, *Ion*, 535a–e.

22. Jean E. Howard, "Renaissance Antitheatricality and the Politics of Gender and Rank in *Much Ado about Nothing*," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (London: Methuen, 1987), 163–87.

23. Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 124; Sir Richard Baker, *Theatrum Redivivum; Or, The Theatre Vindicated* (1662; rpt., New York: Garland, 1973), 33.

24. For discussion of the Puritan attack on the stage, see Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 80–131. Barish uses the term "Puritan" loosely to identify a general cultural preference for sincerity and being true to one's self rather than to identify the religious orientation of antitheatrical polemicists.

25. I.G., *A Refutation of the Apologie for Actors* (1615; rpt., New York: Garland 1973), 61–62.

26. When the actor's mediation between characters and audience is considered, the mechanism of mimesis becomes a separate point of contention. Arguing against William Prynne's etymological equation between acting and hypocrisy in *Histriomastix*, Baker's *Theatrum Redivivum* makes an important distinction between act and intention: Although players may dress in women's clothes, they do so for the sake of representation. They seek not to deceive spectators but to make them "conceive"; thus the audience's virtues are reinforced, their vices discouraged, by the subject matter of plays (*Theatrum Redivivum*, 21–22).

27. Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse*, Shakespeare Society of London Publications, no. 14 (1579; London: Shakespeare Society, 1841; rpt., Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966), 19.

28. Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (1612; rpt., New York: Garland, 1973), G1v, G2r–v; for a direct response, see I.G., *Refutation*, 42–43.

29. I.G., *Refutation*, 44.

30. Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, E3v–E4r; I.G., *Refutation*, 11–12.

31. For these anecdotes, see Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), 853–57; Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 238–40; Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden* (London, 1824), 151–53, 162–63.

32. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 2:229.

33. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Philosophical Lectures*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 179.

34. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), 44.

35. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1:304. Coleridge here speaks of the primary Imagination, agent of perception, rather than the secondary Imagination, although he says that they are similar in "kind."

36. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1960), 1:70.

37. Hélène Cixous, "The Character of 'Character,'" *New Literary History* 5, no. 2 (1974): 386, 384.

38. Ibid., 385.

39. Ibid., 387, 385.

40. Paul de Man, "The Literary Self as Origin: The Work of Georges Poulet," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed., rev. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 95.

41. Ibid., 96–98.

42. Ibid., 101.

43. Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight*, 207.

44. Robert Moynihan, *A Recent Imagining: Interviews with Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hillis Miller, Paul de Man* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1986), 140.

45. See Deborah Esch, "A Defence of Rhetoric / The Triumph of Reading," in *Reading de Man Reading*, ed. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 73. Esch, using de Man's discussion in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* to consider the uses of failed texts, suggests that de Man's reader can still act in the future, "re-membering" his broken project of reading (77). But according to de Man, active projection into the future paradoxically depends on a failure to separate from the past. Consciousness, losing itself in the "intoxication of the moment," protects itself from destruction, but at the price of failure (Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1984], 58). Also relevant is Paul de Man, "Ludwig Binswanger and the Sublimation of the Self," in *Blindness and Insight*, 36–50.

46. Paul de Man, *Critical Writings, 1953–1978*, ed. Lindsay Waters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 6, 7, 9.

47. J. Hillis Miller, *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 45.

48. Ibid., 53.

49. Wayne C. Booth, "Are Narrative Choices Subject to Ethical Criticism?" in *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology*, ed. James Phelan (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 58–59.

50. Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 194.

51. See Paul de Man, "Ludwig Binswanger," in *Blindness and Insight*, 39.

52. Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 206.

53. Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (1931; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

54. Burke, "Philosophy of Literary Form," 20, 58–60.

55. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 19.

56. Ibid., 19–20.

57. Burke, "Philosophy of Literary Form," 1.

58. For a solid explication of Burke's views on "identification," see Robert L. Heath, *Realism and Relativism: A Perspective on Kenneth Burke* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986), 195–228.

59. Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 55.

60. Ibid., 22.

61. Burke's use of religious terminology can be misleading, for although Burke, like Father Walter Ong, uses religious experience as an analogy for rhetorical experience, we can think of the term "consubstantiality" as providing perspective by incongruity. In a letter to Malcolm Cowley, Burke reverses the emphasis of the equation to argue that the "religious man" is egoistic: "One may say that in religion we have a communion merging the individual with the group. Or one may say that 'the religious man thinks only of himself.' Or begad, I believe that one may say, 'dialectically,' both of these at once. And in all three there will be much justice, though I should tend to put most store by the third." Saint Augustine is Burke's example of a "typical" saint of the Western church. There is no one, he says, with a "more intense reference beyond the self—but there are few men in all history who have been more intensely individuals" (*The Selected Correspondence of Kenneth Burke and Malcolm Cowley, 1915–1981*, ed. Paul Jay [New York: Viking, 1988], 241–42).

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62. Burke, "Philosophy of Literary Form," 20.

63. Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 20–21.

64. Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (1945; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 23.

65. Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 27.

66. See Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes toward History*, 3rd ed. (1937; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 43.

67. De Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 9.

68. Nigel Alexander, *Poison, Play, and Duel: A Study in "Hamlet"* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 55, argues that the ability to look "before and after"—back into the past and forward into the future—is the hallmark of memory, which produces both eloquence and prudence. Harold Jenkins, in a note to the Arden Edition of *Hamlet*, writes that the *locus classicus* for this passage is Cicero's *De Officiis*, "which specifically links man's power to regard both past and future with his possession of the gift of reason" (Jenkins, ed., *Hamlet*, 528). Alexander argues also that the Mousetrap is Hamlet's effort to bring the past into the present and to set in motion a future plan; so in a sense Hamlet replicates Ophelia's originary act of memory (Alexander, *Poison, Play, and Duel*, 102–5). On the iconography of prudence versus fortune, see Frye, *Renaissance Hamlet*, 113–19.

CHAPTER TWO

1. John Drakakis, Introduction to *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985), 4.

2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1960), 2:181–82.

3. Ibid., 2:180–81, 178.

4. Benjamin Boyce, *The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), 19.

5. Sir Thomas Overbury, *The "Conceited Newes" of Sir Thomas Overbury and his Friends*, ed. James E. Savage (1616; rpt., Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1968), 290–91.

6. See Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597; rpt., Westmead, Farnborough, Hants: Gregg International, 1971), 70: "The name of Descant is usurped of the musitions in divers significations: some time they take it for the whole harmony of many voyces: others sometime for one of the voyces or partes: & that is, when the whole song is not passing three voyces. Last of all, they take it for singing a part extempore upon a playnesong, in which sence we commonly use it: so that when a man talketh of a Descanter, it must be understood of one that can extempore sing a part upon a playne song." Jonathan Goldberg discusses Overbury's essay in *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts* (London: Methuen, 1986), 89–92. He uses the essay "What Is a Character?" to exemplify the idea of charactery as Derridean writing.

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7. Joseph Hall, *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (London, 1608), A6v.

8. See Boyce, *Theophrastan Character*, 14–16.

9. Hall, *Characters of Vertues and Vices*, 2–3.

10. Ibid., 69.

11. Here I am relying on Gérard Genette's method of classifying narrative according to temporal relationships between narrative utterances and the events they represent. In discussing "narrative frequency," Genette distinguishes between singulative and iterative narratives, defining iterative narrative as "*narrating one time* (or rather: *at one time*) *what happened n times*" (*Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin [1972; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980], 116).

12. Theophrastus, *The Character Sketches*, trans. Warren Anderson (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1970), 11.

13. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 121 and passim.

14. Hall, *Characters of Vertues and Vices*, 113–18.

15. See Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 197–214. Havelock argues that the development of the idea of the psyche as a "thinking self" separate from poetic performance is related to the end of an oral tradition of poetic education in ancient Greece.

16. In focusing on this one portrait, I risk a synecdochic fallacy, making the part stand for the whole of Renaissance charactery. Hall's portraits of the virtues, for which he had no Theophrastan model, are if possible even more tortuous in their syntax, sometimes doubling the negative constructions in one clause and juxtaposing hyperbolic expressions of presence and absence. Virtue, as well as Vice, can be captured only by indirection in Bishop Hall's *Characters of Vertues and Vices*; it is defined by what it is not. A comparable argument about Hall's *Characters* is made by Harold Fisch, "Character as Linguistic Sign," *New Literary History* 21, no. 3 (1990): 595–96.

17. On the subject of Hall's Senecanism and its influence on both style and subject matter of the *Characters*, see the Introduction to Joseph Hall, *"Heaven upon Earth" and "Characters of Vertues and Vices,"* ed. Rudolf Kirk (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1948), 1–51.

18. Overbury, *Conceited Newes*, 161, 66.

19. Ibid., 81–82.

20. The notion of bardolatry can be traced to Robert W. Babcock's influential

book, *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry, 1766–1799* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1931). For the idea that there is an idealist strain of criticism extending from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, see John Drakakis's Introduction to *Alternative Shakespeares*, 1–25.

21. Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785; rpt., New York: Garland, 1971), 336.

22. David Hume, *On Human Nature and the Understanding*, ed. Antony Flew (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 272. For my understanding of Locke's and Hume's contributions to the discussion of identity I am indebted to Christopher Fox, *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), chaps. 1 and 2. Fox argues that Locke anticipates much of what Hume says against the possibility of a permanent self, but for the Shakespearean critics and their sources Hume is more directly influential. See also Ernest Lee Tuveson, *The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism* (New York: Gordian Press, 1974), 25–41; Tuveson attributes interest in the mental life of Shakespeare's characters to Locke's revision of the notion of personal identity.

23. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2.33, 2.31–32, 3.2.

24. Samuel Johnson, *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Sherbo, Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 7:523; Harold Bloom, *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 86, 81.

25. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 6th ed. (1785; rpt., New York: Garland, 1972), 1:91. Kames's source for his ideas of the passions is probably David Hume, although Hume argues that we must infer, rather than feel, the passions of others. Kames distinguishes between emotions and passions (which are goal-directed), but the distinction is neither consistent nor important to this discussion.

26. William Richardson, *Essays on Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters, with an Illustration of National Characters*, 6th ed. (London, 1818), 28.

27. For Kames's influence on Richardson, see R. W. Babcock, "William Richardson's Criticism of Shakespeare," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 28 (1929): 133–34.

28. William Richardson, *Essays on Shakespeare's Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff, and on His Imitation of Female Characters* (London, 1789; rpt., New York: AMS Press, 1973), 17–18.

29. Ibid., 21–39 and passim.

30. Ibid., 52–54.

31. Ibid., 54.

32. Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

33. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 236.

34. For my discussion of critical motives in this chapter, I am indebted to Richard A. Lanham, *Literacy and the Survival of Humanism* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1983); see chap. 4, "The Chaucerian Biogrammar and the Takeover of Culture," 41–57, and especially "*At* and *Through*: The Opaque Style and Its Uses," 58–86. In an essay on the early character critics, Brian Vickers argues that they were guided less by aesthetic theory than by a specific critical method, that of "attack and defense." Whereas neoclassic critics blamed Shakespeare for his characters' lack of consistency, later writers responded by praising the characters (Brian Vickers, "The Emergence of Character Criticism, 1774–1800," *Shakespeare Survey* 34 [1981]: 12). Vickers's argument supports my claim for a kinship between character criticism and the Renaissance Character, which is established by their mutual connections to epideictic rhetoric. I would argue further that the presence of epideictic rhetoric in early character criticism is related to the writers' identification with and competition with Shakespeare.

35. James White, *Original Letters . . . of Sir John Falstaff and His Friends* (1796; rpt., New York: Harper & Bros., 1924), 51.

36. This anecdote, attributed to John Mathew Gutch (a friend of White and of Charles Lamb) appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and in E. V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb*, 5th ed., rev. (London: Methuen, 1921; rpt., New York: AMS Press, 1968), 1:103–4. Lucas gives no citation, and I have not been able to find a source.

37. Charles Lamb, "The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers," in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1903; rpt., New York: AMS Press, 1968), 2:114.

38. Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (1972; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 77.

39. White, *Original Letters of Falstaff*, 88–89.

40. In order to confer on Falstaff eternal life, White exploits a feature of epistolary discourse: The "sense of immediacy, of a present that is precarious, can only exist in a world where the future is unknown. The present of epistolary discourse is vibrant with future-orientation. . . . Letter writers are bound in a present preoccupied with the future" (Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982], 124).

41. Maurice Morgann, *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff (1777)*, in *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Daniel A. Fineman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 144.

42. Ibid., 145.

43. Ibid., 208.

44. Ibid., 210.

45. Ibid., 200. Material in angle marks has been actually or implicitly cancelled in the manuscript revisions Morgann made in an interleaved copy of the 1777 *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*; this copy, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, is the copy-text for Fineman's edition of the essay.

46. See, for instance, Kenneth Muir, *The Singularity of Shakespeare and Other Essays* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1977), 135.

47. Morgann, *Dramatic Character of Falstaff*, 146–47.

48. Ibid., 148.

49. Paul de Man, "Reading," in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 58.

50. Morgann, *Dramatic Character of Falstaff*, 151.

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51. Ibid., 193. See also William Hazlitt's critique of Stephen Kemble's portrayal of Falstaff in the *Examiner* (1816): "We see no more reason why Mr. Stephen Kemble should play Falstaff, than why Louis XVIIII. [*sic*] is qualified to fill a throne, because he is fat and belongs to a particular family." Falstaff is "not a mere paunch, a bag-pudding, a lump of lethargy, a huge falling sickness, an imminent apoplexy, with water in the head"; his wit and spirits shine through his bulk. Like Morgann, Hazlitt complains against the practice of "fatting up" the actors playing Falstaff like "prize oxen" (*Examiner*, October 13, 1816; reprinted in *Hazlitt on Theatre*, ed. William Archer and Robert Lowe [New York: Hill & Wang, 1957], 104–5).

52. Charles Lamb, "The Tragedies of Shakespeare," *The Reflector*, 1811; reprinted in *Shakespeare Criticism: A Selection*, ed. D. Nichol Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 230–40.

53. Morgann, *Dramatic Character of Falstaff*, 192.

54. Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 138–39.

55. In his essay, Morgann also expresses contempt for Shakespeare's editors, including Samuel Johnson, presumably that unidentified critic who treats Shakespeare as a "sort of wild Proteus or madman, and accordingly knocks him down with the butt-end of his critical staff, as often as he exceeds that line of sober discretion, which this learned Editor appears to have chalked out for him" (Morgann, *Dramatic Character of Falstaff*, 169). Editors, like actors, substitute phantasms for the letter of the text. Interestingly, Morgann does not offer his own emendations or defend particular interpretations: He simply objects to any attempt to police the text.

56. Morgann, *Dramatic Character of Falstaff*, 191.

57. Ibid., 175–76.

58. Ibid., 176–77.

59. [Maurice Morgann], *An Enquiry concerning the Nature and End of a National Militia* (London, [1757]), 31.

60. Ibid., 48.

61. Valerie Traub, "Prince Hal's Falstaff: Positioning Psychoanalysis and the Female Reproductive Body," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989): 456–74; Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), 20–22.

CHAPTER THREE

1. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, n.d.), 42.

2. Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), especially 1–35; Marion Trousdale, *Shakespeare and the Rhetoricians* (Chapel Hill: University of North

Carolina Press, 1982), 3–21 and passim; Wesley Trimpi, *Muses of One Mind: The Literary Analysis of Experience and Its Continuity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 321–27. Other critics have argued specifically for the influence of rhetorical declamation on Renaissance drama. See Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Eugene M. Waith, *The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 86–98. For a good analysis of the influence classical rhetoric exercised on Shakespearean representations of consciousness, see Karen Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character: Dramatic Convention in Classical and Renaissance Comedy* (London: Methuen, 1985).

3. Richard Rainolde, *The Foundation of Rhetoric* (1563; rpt., Menston: Scolar Press, 1972). For a modern English translation of Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, see Ray Nadeau, trans., "The *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius," *Speech Monographs* 19 (1952): 264–85.

4. Trousdale, *Shakespeare and the Rhetoricians*, 11–14.

5. Robert Y. Turner, *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 227–44.

6. Arthur C. Kirsch, "*Cymbeline* and Coterie Dramaturgy," *ELH* 34 (1967): 285–306.

7. Samuel Johnson, *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Sherbo, Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 8:908.

8. Among recent articles, the fullest discussion of "seeming" and problems of appearance and reality is in Nancy K. Hayles, "Sexual Disguise in *Cymbeline*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 41 (1980): 231–47; the most extended treatment of clothing imagery in *Cymbeline* is John Scott Colley, "Disguise and New Guise in *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Studies* 7 (1974): 233–52.

9. R. A. Foakes, *Shakespeare, the Dark Comedies to the Last Plays: From Satire to Celebration* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 95, 115. See also R. A. Foakes, "Character and Dramatic Technique in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*," in *Studies in the Arts: Proceedings of the St. Peter's College Literary Society*, ed. Francis Warner (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 116–30.

10. Homer Swander, "*Cymbeline* and the 'Blameless Hero,'" *ELH* 31 (1964): 259–70; James Edward Siemon, "Noble Virtue in *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Survey* 29 (1976): 51–61.

11. Murray M. Schwartz, "Between Fantasy and Imagination: A Psychological Exploration of *Cymbeline*," in *Psychoanalysis and Literary Process*, ed. Frederick Crews (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1970), 231–38 and passim; Arthur Kirsch, *Shakespeare and the Experience of Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 147–48. For a critique of Schwartz's argument, see David M. Bergeron, "Sexuality in *Cymbeline*," *Essays in Literature* 10 (1983): 159–68.

12. Bertrand Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 286, calls Jupiter's masque an "artistic fraud."

13. For the first explanation, see Schwartz, "Between Fantasy and Imagination," 232; for the second, see G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (London: Methuen, 1947), 140–42; and

for the third, see Maurice Hunt, "Shakespeare's Empirical Romance: *Cymbeline* and Modern Knowledge," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 22 (1980): 324–25.

14. Shakespeare sometimes uses the verb "extend" as "to stretch," suggesting physical extension in space; sometimes the word has an emotional meaning, as "to magnify or extol." In this particular instance, "extend" may refer also to rhetorical amplification, translating as "to magnify or extol." Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare-Lexicon*, rev. Gregor Sarrazin, 6th ed., 2 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971).

15. For the topics and structure of the encomium, see Nadeau, "The *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius," 273–75; for the topics of epideictic in general, see the *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), 3.6–8; for "outdoing" and the "inexpressibility topos," see Marjorie Donker and George M. Muldrow, *Dictionary of Literary-Rhetorical Conventions of the English Renaissance* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 92–93.

16. Madeleine Doran, in her thorough study of form in the Elizabethan drama, has noted the influence of Renaissance ethical theory on dramatic characterization and has identified the presence of rhetorical forms such as the encomium in the drama (*Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954], 232–41).

17. A succinct summary of how epideictic's scope and purpose change as it comes to be associated with poetry and with ethics can be found in Brian Vickers, "Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance," *New Literary History* 14, no. 3 (1983): 497–537. For the influence of epideictic theory and practice on Renaissance literature, see O. B. Hardison, Jr., *The Enduring Monument: A Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); and Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Donne's "Anniversaries" and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

18. Schwartz, "Between Fantasy and Imagination," 238–39; Harley Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (London: Batsford, 1958), 1:519.

19. Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, 1:498.

20. For the agonistic dimension of Jachimo's blazon and its connections to *Lucrece*, see Nancy Vickers, " 'The Blazon of Sweet Beauty's Best': Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985), 95–115. See also Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), 132–40.

21. My sense of the scene's pacing parallels the analysis of Hallett Smith, *Shakespeare's Romances: A Study of Some Ways of the Imagination* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1972), 183–85.

22. Leonard Powlick, "*Cymbeline* and the Comedy of Anticlimax," in *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul G. Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974), 131–41. The dynamics of this scene are complicated. Although Jachimo enjoys no sexual satisfaction, by wielding his pen against Imogen he still manages to do violence to her. On the

connections between violence and the hand that writes, see Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), chap. 2.

23. Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1963), 47.

24. On this subject, see Jonathan Goldberg, "Shakespearian Characters: The Generation of Silvia," chap. 4 of *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts* (London: Methuen, 1986), 84–86.

25. For the connections between Ovid's version of the Philomela story and *Cymbeline*, see Ann Thompson, "Philomel in *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Survey* 31 (1978): 23–32, and R. J. Schork, "Allusion, Theme, and Characterization in *Cymbeline*," *Studies in Philology* 69 (1972): 210–16; for *Cymbeline* and the Lucrece story, see Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 212–15.

26. Paul de Man, "Autobiography as De-Facement," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 78.

27. See, for instance, Schwartz, "Between Fantasy and Imagination," 238; and Marjorie Garber, "*Cymbeline* and the Languages of Myth," *Mosaic* 10, no. 3 (1977): 105–15. For a different interpretation of Jachimo's trunk as an interpretive puzzle, the "Silenus box" whose contents differ from its outer appearance, see Barbara J. Baines, "Shakespeare's Plays and the Erasmian Box," *Renaissance Papers* (1981): 33–44. All three writers agree that the trunk is enigmatic and involves reversals of surface meanings.

28. See Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," in *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 239–62. I am indebted to Jonathan Culler's explication of this essay in "Reading Lyric," *Yale French Studies* 69 (1985): 98–106. In another essay from the same volume, Michael Riffaterre notes that prosopopoeia in narrative tends to be comical, a point that applies particularly to Jachimo's effictio ("Prosopopoeia," *Yale French Studies* 69 [1985]: 116).

29. The *Ad Herennium* gives this example: "The prosecutor has said that the defendant killed a man by poison, has charged that the motive for the crime was an inheritance, and declared that there are many witnesses and accessories to this act." To keep straight the facts of the case, the defendant's counsel might imagine the victim in bed, with the defendant at his bedside, "holding in his right hand a cup, and in his left tablets, and on the fourth finger a ram's testicles." As Yates interprets the image, "the cup would remind of the poisoning, the tablets, of the will or the inheritance, and the testicles of the ram through verbal similarity with *testes*—of the witnesses" (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.20.33; Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966], 11).

30. Francis Berry, *The Shakespeare Inset: Word and Picture* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1965), 68–74, provides a useful analysis of these two companion "insets," even though he assumes the presence of an inner stage. Berry points out that the narrative scene (Jachimo in Imogen's bedroom) seems more dramatic than the truly dramatic scene (Jachimo's rehearsal for Posthumus).

31. Juvenal's "Satire Six" provides the basis for misogynistic rants in a num-

ber of plays, including Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*. See Robert Y. Turner, "Slander in *Cymbeline* and Other Jacobean Tragicomedies," *English Literary Renaissance* 13 (1983): 182–202.

32. Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 2nd ed., rev. (1954; rpt., Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 7.

33. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 99–100.

34. Ibid., 103.

35. Ibid., 147.

36. Schwartz, "Between Fantasy and Imagination," 245.

37. Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman*, in *The Complete Gentleman, The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1962), 98.

38. Annabel M. Patterson, *Hermogenes and the Renaissance: Seven Ideas of Style* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 153–75. Patterson admits that the direct influence of Hermogenes cannot be proved but demonstrates convincingly the widespread use of "speedy effects" in Renaissance poetry; see p. 163 for a comparable example from Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars*.

39. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 169–70.

40. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921), 8.3.70.

41. Judiana Lawrence, "Natural Bonds and Artistic Coherence in the Ending of *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984): 452. I follow G. Wilson Knight and J. M. Nosworthy, the New Arden editor, in accepting the masque's authenticity.

42. See, for instance, Robert Grams Hunter, *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 166–70.

43. A list of topics for the consolation appears in A. L. Bennett, "The Principal Rhetorical Conventions in the Renaissance Personal Elegy," *Studies in Philology* 51 (1954): 107–26; see also Thomas Wilson's example of "comfort" in the *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Thomas J. Derrick (New York: Garland, 1982), 147–84.

44. For the argument that Shakespeare would have used chains to represent a prison, see Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 99.

45. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 43.

46. Meredith Skura, "Interpreting Posthumus' Dream from Above and Below: Families, Psychoanalysts, and Literary Critics," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 211, 207.

47. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, vol. 2 of *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Revised Oxford Translation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1.9.1367b25–26; see also Leonard Cox, *The Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke*, ed. Frederic Ives Carpenter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899; rpt., New York: AMS Press, 1970), 57.

48. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.9.1367b30.

49. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.9.1366b23–30.

50. Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 60, 62.

51. Lewalski, *Donne's "Anniversaries,"* 19. The speaker's mediation can also be important to poetry in general, since poetry overlaps with epideictic rhetoric. Margaret Ferguson argues that in the *Apology for Poetry* Sir Philip Sidney defines poetry's moral value in terms of its representational content, the poet's feigned images of virtue and vice; but by locating the source of poetry's abuse in man's "wit," Sidney also considers the ethical role of authorial intention and of the reader's interpretation. What distinguishes the poet from the philosopher or historian is his ability to become a critical reader of himself and thus to "exercise the faculty of judgment in both roles," as reader and as writer. The "I" who speaks in Sidney's *Apology* "repeatedly stages a dialogue between a self which speaks and a self which responds critically to that speech; it also attempts both to master and to serve a reader by means of an always incomplete dialogue" (Margaret W. Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983], 150, 151).

52. See Altman, *Tudor Play of Mind*, 31. Altman develops further the idea of a Shakespearean ethics based on practice rather than precept in "The Practice of Shakespeare's Text," *Style* 23 (1989): 466–500.

53. Desiderius Erasmus, "On the Writing of Letters," trans. Charles Fantazzi, in vol. 3 of *Literary and Educational Writings*, ed. J. K. Sowards, Collected Works of Erasmus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 25:24.

54. Desiderius Erasmus, "On the Method of Study," trans. Brian McGregor, in vol. 2 of *Literary and Educational Writings*, ed. Craig R. Thompson, Collected Works of Erasmus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 24:679.

55. Hugh M. Richmond, "Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*: Romance Redeemed by History," *Shakespeare Studies* 4 (1968): 334–49.

56. Burke, *Permanence and Change*, 49.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Throughout this section I draw on Wesley Trimpi's important account of the connections among rhetoric, philosophy, and literature in *Muses of One Mind: The Literary Analysis of Experience and Its Continuity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). For the sake of clarity I am simplifying terminology, which differs from rhetorician to rhetorician, and I ignore some of the finer distinctions Trimpi makes among kinds of thesis.

2. These examples come from Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, ed. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921), 3.5.11.

3. Elder Seneca, *Controversiae, Books 1–6*, vol. 1 of *Declamations*, trans. M. Winterbottom, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 1.2.3. A Renaissance version of this tale can be found in Alexander Silvayn's *The Orator*, translated in 1596 by Lazarus Piot; see vol. 6 of *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 546–48. The connection between rhetoric

and jurisprudence goes back to the Greek city-states, where citizens were expected to speak in their own behalf. When Greek rhetoric was adopted by the Romans, legal amateurism of the kind that fostered technical rhetoric was no longer possible, but the study of rhetoric and literature still provided direct opportunities for a legal career. The need for legal orators diminished steadily during the early Christian period and Middle Ages, but the progymnasmata and controversiae, basically unchanged since the fifth century, became quite popular during the Renaissance. Thus Shakespeare's contemporaries learned oratory through the sensational dilemmas used to train Greek and Roman lawyers, despite the fact that they no longer served a practical purpose. See George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 23–24; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (1948; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 286–91; and Brother E. Patrick Parks, *The Roman Rhetorical Schools as a Preparation for the Courts under the Early Empire*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 63, no. 2 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1945). For the influence of the controversia on English Renaissance drama, see Eugene M. Waith, *The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952); Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Karen Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character: Dramatic Convention in Classical and Renaissance Comedy* (London: Methuen, 1985), especially chap. 2.

4. Seneca, *Controversiae*, 1.2.4, 1.2.20.

5. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 4.2.34.

6. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 4.2.52.

7. The case of the priestess-prostitute has been discussed in connection with *Pericles* by Lorraine Helms, "The Saint in the Brothel: or, Eloquence Rewarded," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 319–32. Helms focuses on the "rhetoric of rape" and the social construction of woman.

8. Madeleine Doran, "The Idea of Excellence in Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 27 (1976): 135.

9. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 191–92.

10. Ibid., 192.

11. See also Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Thomas J. Derrick (New York: Garland, 1982), 364–65; Henry Peacham says that *superlatio* has no "purpose to deceive by speaking untruly" (*The Garden of Eloquence*, ed. William G. Crane [1593; rpt., Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1954], 31).

12. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 8.6.73–76.

13. Brian Vickers, "Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance," *New Literary History* 14, no. 3 (1983): 514.

14. *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), 4.33.44.

15. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 365.

16. For the change that occurs in metaphor's relation to simile between Aristotle and Quintilian, see Marsh H. McCall, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

17. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, vol. 2 of *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Revised Oxford Translation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 3.11.1413a20.

18. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 178.

19. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 8.6.5–6.

20. Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Ingram Bywater, vol. 2 of *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Revised Oxford Translation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 21.1457b7–9.

21. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.11.1412a10–14. Compare Cicero: "When something that can scarcely be conveyed by the proper term is expressed metaphorically, the meaning we desire to convey is made clear by the resemblance of the thing that we have expressed by [*sic*] the word that does not belong" (*De Oratore*, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948], 3.38.155).

22. See the discussion of Homer's metaphors in Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.11.1411b24–33.

23. *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 4.48.61.

24. John Hoskins, *Directions for Speech and Style*, ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), 8.

25. Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 40.

26. Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1963), 43.

27. See, for instance, Victoria Kahn, "Humanism and the Resistance to Theory," in *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 373–96; and Nancy S. Struever, "Shakespeare and Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 6 (1988): 137–44. In her essay, Kahn distinguishes between humanist rhetoric and the more scientific view of method that grew up in the sixteenth century.

28. Erasmus, *Copia*, 17.

29. Marion Trousdale, *Shakespeare and the Rhetoricians* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 81–94; for a more restrained view of verbal games that nevertheless thinks of wit as communicative, see Jane Donawerth, *Shakespeare and the Sixteenth-Century Study of Language* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 108–36.

30. Kenneth Burke, "Four Master Tropes," in *A Grammar of Motives* (1945; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 503–17; see also Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 2nd ed., rev. (1954; rpt., Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1965), passim.

31. The connection between legal rhetoric and poetic in Aristotle's work has been discussed by Kathy Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). See especially chap. 2, "Poetry and Equity: Aristotle's Defense of Fiction," 25–61.

32. For discussion of similarities between Portia and Shylock, who are made outsiders by their race and gender, see Marianne Novy, *Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 63–82.

33. This is the argument of Lisa Jardine, "Cultural Confusion and Shakespeare's Learned Heroines: 'These are Old Paradoxes,' " *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (1987): 12–18. Karen Newman makes the somewhat different point that the reversal of gender hierarchies that occurs when Portia takes on a masculine guise elides the poles of sexual difference. In early modern England, a woman occupying the position of "a lawyer in a Renaissance Venetian courtroom, or the lord of Belmont, is not the same as a man doing so" (Karen Newman, "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 [1987]: 33). Newman's argument turns on the idea that Portia is never the "unlessoned" girl she represents herself as to Bassanio; at the end of the play she resumes her position as the sexually anomalous Lord of Belmont, so that Bassanio can never completely possess her "ring," sexually or economically.

34. For discussion of the importance of equity as a legal concept to *Merchant*, see the excellent article by E. F. J. Tucker, "The Letter of the Law in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Survey* 29 (1976): 93–101. Other relevant works are cited by William Chester Jordan, "Approaches to the Court Scene in the Bond Story: Equity and Mercy or Reason and Nature," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1982): 49–59. Jordan, in a source study of the bond story, argues that the tale concerns itself less with the opposition between equity and mercy than between reason and nature; in the version published in *Orator*, a late sixteenth-century collection of controversiae, the Jew marshals technically equitable arguments to his advantage: He insists that the condition that he must take strictly one pound of flesh, no more and no less, is unfair because it cannot be met. In most versions the Jew is defeated because his demand for the merchant's pound of flesh is simply "unnatural." Jordan's argument reinforces Frank Whigham's argument (see n. 35, below) that the Venetians represent their laws as "natural law." For an argument that Portia represents neither the law nor mercy but an exemplum of Aristotelian justice, see David N. Beauregard, "Sidney, Aristotle, and *The Merchant of Venice*: Shakespeare's Triadic Images of Liberality and Justice," *Shakespeare Studies* 20 (1988): 33–51. For the purposes of this argument I am less interested in the influence of legal theory and practice on *Merchant* than in the role played by judicial rhetoric; discussion of legal rhetoric is available in many sources, from Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* to Abraham Fraunce's *Lawyer's Logic*, so I do not presuppose that Shakespeare had detailed knowledge of the law or that he was representing legal practice in any way. It is also important to stress that Portia, rather than the Venetians in general, introduces to her court the concept of equity by counseling Shylock to consider God as the original author of the moral injunction against taking a pound of flesh. Lawrence Danson notes rightly that Shylock's argument has the impact it does because the Venetians

hold strictly to the claims of the common law (*The Harmonies of "The Merchant of Venice"* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978], 82–125).

35. Frank Whigham, "Ideology and Class Conduct in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 10 (1979): 110.

36. Portia's identification with "Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia" (*Merchant*, 1.1.166) stresses that she shares the political ideals of her father and husband, as the classical Portia did (see Newman, "Portia's Ring," 27). For a related argument, which suggests indirectly the extent to which this play valorizes cultural homogeneity by "celebrating the power of trust in personal relationships and underlining the inadequacy of formal undertakings to express it," see Alan W. Bellringer, "The Expression of Trust in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 19 (1983): 346. See also D. J. Palmer, "*The Merchant of Venice*, or the Importance of Being Earnest," in *Shakespearian Comedy*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and D. J. Palmer, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, no. 14 (London: Arnold, 1972), 97–120. Palmer, although he is primarily interested in comic structure, notes that *Merchant* is the most sententious of all the comedies before the problem plays and shows how various characters in the play moralize freely to gain ascendancy over one another.

37. Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 422.

38. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 245.

39. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 233. Patricia Parker discusses this speech in her intelligent and useful account of the connection between rhetorical amplification or "dilation" and judicial accusation in *Othello* ("Shakespeare and Rhetoric: 'Dilation' and 'Delation' in *Othello*," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman [London: Methuen, 1985], 54–74).

40. F. R. Leavis, "Diabolic Intellect and the Noble Hero: A Note on *Othello*," *Scrutiny* 6, no. 3 (1937): 259–83.

41. See Robert B. Heilman, *Magic in the Web: Action and Language in "Othello"* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1956), especially chaps. 3 and 4.

42. Wolfgang Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1977), 121.

43. Madeleine Doran, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Language* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 63–91.

44. Joel B. Altman, "'Preposterous Conclusions': Eros, *Enargeia*, and the Composition of *Othello*," *Representations* 18 (1987): 129–57.

45. Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 414. This passage is discussed by Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and by Newman (see n. 46, below).

46. Karen Newman, "'And Wash the Ethiop White': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (London: Methuen, 1987), 151.

47. The most complete feminist account of Desdemona and her critics is Carol Thomas Neely, "Women and Men in *Othello*," in *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 105–35. See also

W. D. Adamson, "Unpinned or Undone? Desdemona's Critics and the Problem of Sexual Innocence," *Shakespeare Studies* 13 (1980): 169–86.

48. Antoinette B. Dauber argues that because Othello uses allegory unselfconsciously he becomes vulnerable to irony ("Allegory and Irony in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Survey* 40 [1987]: 123–33). Dauber argues as well that allegory needs "the bracing effect of irony as a reminder of its fictionality" (133). Othello's increasing isolation makes him incapable of perceiving the irony in Iago's account of the dream.

49. Rosalie L. Colie, *Shakespeare's Living Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 11.

50. Winifred M. T. Nowottny, "Justice and Love in *Othello*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (1952): 330–44.

51. See, for example, Hugh G. Dick, "Thomas Blundeville's 'The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading Hystories' (1574)," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1940): 149–70. Blundeville's work is reprinted on pp. 154–70.

52. See Virginia Mason Vaughan, "Between Tetralogies: *King John* as Transition," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984): 408. For the idea that the historian perceives the past through generic literary categories, see Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, ed. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 41–62. For a general discussion of ideas that shaped Renaissance history writing, see Herbert Weisinger, "Ideas of History during the Renaissance," in *Renaissance Essays from the "Journal of the History of Ideas,"* ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller and Philip P. Wiener (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 74–94. On Shakespearean historiography, see David Scott Kastan, " 'To Set a Form upon That Indigest': Shakespeare's Fictions of History," *Comparative Drama* 17 (1983): 1–16. I agree with Marsha Robinson ("The Historiographic Methodology of *King John*," in *King John: New Perspectives*, ed. Deborah T. Curren-Aquino [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989], 29–40), who argues that the Bastard focuses on the experience of the present rather than seeing current events through the teleological mirror of fictions about the past. I do not agree with her assumption that *King John* parodies standard devices of epideictic historiography. Rather, I think that in this play Shakespeare offers an alternative way of reading the present through epideictic categories. On the play's debate structure, see Douglas C. Wixson, " 'Calm Words Folded Up in Smoke': Propaganda and Spectator Response in Shakespeare's *King John*," *Shakespeare Studies* 14 (1981): 118–20. Wixson links the play's structure to political polemic.

53. For a succinct summary of judgments about the Bastard's character, see Alexander Leggatt, "Dramatic Perspective in *King John*," *English Studies in Canada* 3, no. 1 (1977): 1. To his list can be added Jacqueline Trace, "Shakespeare's Bastard Faulconbridge: An Early Tudor Hero," *Shakespeare Studies* 13 (1980): 59–69.

54. James L. Calderwood, "Commodity and Honour in *King John*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1960): 341–56. See also the more detailed

anatomy of Michael Manheim, "The Four Voices of the Bastard," in Curren-Aquino, *King John: New Perspectives*, 126–35.

55. The term "improviser" is applied to him by John W. Blanpied, *Time and the Artist in Shakespeare's English Histories* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 102. Julia C. Van de Water, "The Bastard in *King John*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960): 143, argues that at the beginning of the play the Bastard is a Vice figure.

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56. Sigurd Burckhardt, "*King John*: The Ordering of This Present Time," *ELH* 33 (1966): 133–53.

57. See the excellent analysis of Joseph A. Porter, "Fraternal Pragmatics: Speech Acts of John and the Bastard," in Curren-Aquino, *King John: New Perspectives*, 136–43.

58. Burckhardt, "*King John*: Ordering," 138. Jane Donawerth also notes that references to speech in *King John* are mimetic rather than discursive—that is, they figure speech as the physical production of sound rather than as a tool for rational analysis (*Shakespeare and Language*, 165–88).

59. For discussion of this "synoptic image" as an example of Shakespeare's mastery of "poetic language," see Robert D. Stevick, "'Repentant Ashes': The Matrix of 'Shakespearean' Poetic Language," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13 (1962): 366–70. In an essay on the relationship between *King John* and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, A. R. Braunmuller notes that although Holinshed juxtaposes inconsistent explanations of Arthur's death, Shakespeare follows his source in being "selectively nonselective": "Shakespeare and Holinshed wrote confusing texts because each believed that confusion was not sedition." But as Braunmuller demonstrates, Shakespeare also chooses details that contribute to dramatic effect or to the play's metaphorical patterns ("*King John* and Historiography," *ELH* 55 [1988]: 318–21). I would agree with the point that in the scenes involving Arthur and Hubert, Shakespeare is exploiting and commenting on the illogic of his chronicle materials.

60. B. Ifor Evans, *The Language of Shakespeare's Plays*, 3rd ed. (1964; rpt., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 60.

61. On the two kinds of truth in this play, see Robert C. Jones, "Truth in *King John*," *Studies in English Literature* 25 (1985): 397–417.

62. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 233–34.

63. Donawerth, in chap. 2 of *Shakespeare and Language*, discusses language's quasi-medical function in venting the passions. For a good discussion of the psychology of Leontes' style, see Jonathan Smith, "The Language of Leontes," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 19 (1968): 317–27. For an alternative view of style as a grammatical puzzle rather than the mind's mirror, see Russ McDonald, "Poetry and Plot in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1985): 315–29.

64. Joseph H. Summers, *Dreams of Love and Power: On Shakespeare's Plays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 27–28.

65. Anne Barton, "Leontes and the Spider: Language and Speaker in Shakespeare's Last Plays," in *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, ed. Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank, and G. K. Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 131–50.

66. For the Senecan dimension of this speech in particular, see S. R. Maveety, "What Shakespeare Did with *Pandosto*: An Interpretation of *The Winter's Tale*," in *Pacific Coast Studies in Shakespeare*, ed. Waldo F. McNeir and Thelma N. Greenfield (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1966), 269–70. I am indebted to A. R. Braunmuller for calling my attention to the narratology of this scene in his unpublished essay.

67. Most readers assume that Hermione has been in retirement for sixteen years, but James Edward Siemon, discussing generally the ambiguity of appearance in *The Winter's Tale*, makes a strong case for the reality of her death ("'But It Appears She Lives': Iteration in *The Winter's Tale*," *PMLA* 89 [1974]: 10–16).

68. Carol Thomas Neely, "*The Winter's Tale*: The Triumph of Speech," *Studies in English Literature* 15 (1975): 321–38.

69. Carol Thomas Neely argues that in this scene Leontes responds to and acknowledges Hermione, something he had previously been unable to do, and that the limitations of speech are therefore overcome in this final scene (ibid., 335–38).

70. Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 201–46.

71. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 80–81.

72. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.9.1368a4–7.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. The language of Florizel and Leontes functions as *deixis* (literally, "pointing"), gesturing to persons and objects on stage and thereby connecting them to the speaker. See Keir Elam, *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980), 26–27, 72–73, and passim; and *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse: Language-Games in the Comedies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 50–54. The language of gesture replaces discourse so that in the final scene Hermione and Leontes speak a common language of action; on this process, see William H. Matchett, "Some Dramatic Techniques in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 22 (1969): 104–5. For a good account of how language works with gesture in the last scene, see A. F. Bellette, "Truth and Utterance in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 31 (1978): 65–75. See also C. L. Barber's perceptive comment that in the climactic moments of the late romances, poetry praises and does reverence to the principal people, so that the dramatic actions involve "the transformation of persons into virtually sacred figures who yet remain persons" (C. L. Barber, "'Thou That Beget'st Him That Did Thee Beget': Transformation in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 22 [1969]: 59).

2. On the relevance of the Pygmalion myth, especially the idea that the transformation of stone to flesh inverts an Ovidian topos in which turning to stone signifies the wasting away of human feelings, see Leonard Barkan, "'Living Sculptures': Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter's Tale*," *ELH* 48 (1981): 639–67.

3. As Carol Thomas Neely puts it, the final scene symbolizes "Leontes's

acceptance of Hermione as fully his wife"; he explicitly wants her "warm life," and his move to kiss her shows Paulina that he is finally ready for their reunion ("Women and Issue in *The Winter's Tale*," *Philological Quarterly* 57 [1978]: 181–94; revised in *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985], 206–7). Also relevant is Murray M. Schwartz's argument that *The Winter's Tale* is a play about how the fantasy of perfect mutuality can survive the impact of great social and sexual differences ("Leontes's Jealousy in *The Winter's Tale*," *American Imago* 30 [1973]: 250–73; continued in "*The Winter's Tale*: Loss and Transformation," *American Imago* 32 [1975]: 145–99).

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4. Erving Goffman, *Strategic Interaction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 12–13. In labeling Leontes' reaction a kind of impression management, I suggest that although Leontes' sexual anxiety may remain unresolved, as some critics argue, he is now enmeshed in a broader social dynamic; thus his coping mechanisms are simply a necessary part of social interaction rather than evidence of a lasting pathology.

5. The statue scene has traditionally been read as Shakespeare's meditation on the relationship between his own art and nature. In more recent accounts, Hermione's transformation into a statue and back into a woman is revealed as a strategy of containment that silences and immobilizes woman by idealizing her; when she returns to life, Hermione is doubly bound by the masculine will and language that effect her rebirth. See Peter B. Erickson, "Patriarchal Structures in *The Winter's Tale*," *PMLA* 97 (1982): 819–29; revised in *Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 148–72; and Valerie Traub, "Jewels, Statues, and Corpses: Containment of Female Erotic Power in Shakespeare's Plays," *Shakespeare Studies* 20 (1988): 215–38.

6. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 2:1224–31. For discussion of the Pygmalion myth in this period, see J. L. Carr, "Pygmalion and the *Philosophes*: The Animated Statue in Eighteenth-Century France," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 (1960): 239–55. See also Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 160–87.

7. Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 44–45.

8. Havelock discusses the democratic social structure behind the kind of oral performance he describes in *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957). For the most succinct version of Father Ong's elegy for the lost harmony of oral culture, see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982). Ong's thesis that the technology of writing and print changed Western habits of thought is problematic, but I am using his terms metaphorically.

9. Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Forrest G. Robinson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), 57.

10. For a brief, sensible interpretation of Dr. Johnson's contempt for dramatic illusion, see Jacob H. Adler, "Johnson's 'He That Imagines This,'" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960): 225–28.

11. Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," in *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed.

Arthur Sherbo, Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 7:76–77.

12. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 4:642.

13. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1960), 1:178.

14. See the discussion of Timothy Corrigan, *Coleridge, Language, and Criticism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), 9–18. Furthermore, reading and watching drama call into play the same faculties—imagination, judgment, and the senses—in roughly the same proportions. Finally, since Nature is herself a symbol, imitations of nature, either visual or verbal, function also as symbols. Without "arbitrary signs," thinking itself would be impossible; Coleridge therefore proposes to abolish the "old antithesis of *Words & Things*, elevating, as it were, words into Things, and living Things, too" (*Collected Letters*, 1:625–26).

15. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957–73), 2:2086.

16. Ibid., 1:74.

17. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. Barbara E. Rooke (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 2:32.

18. Both Laurence Lockridge and Owen Barfield have recognized the will's inevitable hostility to God. To exult in one's selfhood is an act both of freedom and of evil, because the very act of consciousness and the detachment that produces selfconsciousness separate the individual from God. The artist in particular, who *willfully* reconstructs reality, totters at the brink of heresy (Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought* [Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1971], 155; Laurence S. Lockridge, *Coleridge the Moralist* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977], 54–77).

19. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures, 1808–19: On Literature*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 5.1:352.

20. For the glory, see Coleridge, *Notebooks*, 1:258; for the Brocken specter, 1:430; for the fata morgana, 1:431. The glory's relevance to Coleridge's poem "Constancy to an Ideal Object" is discussed by Edward Kessler, *Coleridge's Metaphors of Being* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 127–31.

21. Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed., rev. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 207. Raimonda Modiano argues that, though Coleridge first appreciates the picturesque in nature because it takes the mind one step closer to the sublime, later on it is only encounters with human beings that matter to him; by 1826 Coleridge showed little interest in nature. What she says generally about notebook entries and poems from the period of Coleridge's Shakespeare lectures also applies to this passage: "Even where the physical surroundings are pleasant, the narrator does not gain any powerful experiences from them but uses such encounters to stabilize his emotions and cast away his deceptions. And even in this respect nature has a limited role, for clearly the only thing that breaks the endless cycle of his fall into and recovery from 'Passion's

dreams' is an encounter with a human artefact" (Raimonda Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature* [Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1985], 93).

22. Michael G. Cooke, "The Manipulation of Space in Coleridge's Poetry," in *New Perspectives on Coleridge and Wordsworth*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 165–94.

23. On the problematic nature of Coleridge's tendency to value the symbol over allegory in his rhetoric, see John A. Hodgson, *Coleridge, Shelley, and Transcendental Inquiry: Rhetoric, Argument, Metapsychology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), especially chap. 1.

24. Stephen Booth, *"King Lear," "Macbeth," Indefinition, and Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 5.

25. Paul A. Jorgensen, *Lear's Self-Discovery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 117.

26. For an essay that rehearses the same ground as I do from a different point of view and arrives at a different conclusion, see Judith Dundas, " 'To See Feelingly': The Language of the Senses and the Language of the Heart," *Comparative Drama* 19, no. 1 (1985): 49–57. Dundas thinks that the senses are abandoned in favor of feeling in the course of the play.

27. Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 106. Two other important essays that deal with the indeterminateness of *King Lear*'s language are Sigurd Burckhardt, "*King Lear*: The Quality of Nothing," in *Shakespearean Meanings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 237–59; and James L. Calderwood, "Creative Uncreation in *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 5–19. Sheldon P. Zitner, however, points out that, although language in *Lear* is often inadequate to its task, even Lear's mad speech continues to have an oratorical organization ("*King Lear* and Its Language," in *Some Facets of "King Lear": Essays in Prismatic Criticism*, ed. Rosalie L. Colie and F. T. Flahiff [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974], 3–22).

28. For an essay on *King Lear*'s rhetoric that shares many of my assumptions, see Michael Hays, "Reason's Rhetoric: *King Lear* and the Social Uses of Irony," *Boundary* 2 7, no. 2 (1979): 97–116.

29. Walter J. Ong, "Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style," in *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971), 23–47.

30. Marion Trousdale, "Shakespeare's Oral Text," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 12 (1981): 101.

31. Discussing the proverb play in the history of English drama, Paula Neuss analyzes *All's Well That Ends Well* as an example of the genre ("The Sixteenth-Century English 'Proverb Play,' " *Comparative Drama* 18, no. 1 [1984]: 1–18). For an analysis of the role played by proverbial and sententious language in *Lear*, see Martha Andresen, " 'Ripeness Is All': Sententiae and Commonplaces in *King Lear*," in Colie and Flahiff, *Some Facets of "King Lear,"* 145–68. See also Charles G. Smith, *Shakespeare's Proverb Lore* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).

32. According to Robert Dent's index to *Shakespeare's Proverbial Language*,

King Lear contains 197 instances of proverbs or proverbial expressions, more than any play except *Romeo and Juliet*. Among the later tragedies, only *Hamlet* comes close. R. W. Dent, *Shakespeare's Proverbial Language: An Index* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). Throughout I accept Dent's judgments about the proverbial nature of sayings and, for the purposes of this chapter, do not distinguish strictly among proverbs, proverbial sayings, aphorisms, maxims, and *sententiae*: All contribute a sententious tone to the play. Where required for clarity, I have italicized proverbial sayings in my quotations from Shakespeare's text. *The Riverside Shakespeare*, following F1, assigns this speech to Edgar, although in Q1 and Q2 it belongs to Albany. The textual problems of *Lear* have received a good deal of attention. See Gary Taylor and Michael Warren, *The Division of the Kingdom: Shakespeare's Two Versions of "King Lear"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); and Steven Urkowitz, *Shakespeare's Revision of "King Lear"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

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33. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 34.

34. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 36–60.

35. Ibid., 197–233.

36. Charles Sears Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic to 1400* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 27. The best general introduction to the proverb is the article by B. J. Whiting, "The Nature of the Proverb," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 14 (1932): 273–307.

37. Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3rd. ed. (1941; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 2–3.

38. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921), 6.3.98. For commentary on Plato and proverbs, see Whiting, "Nature of the Proverb," 274–76.

39. Dent finds that as many as seven proverbs may underlie this speech, although he is uncertain about the last four: "To love as one's own eye"; "That thing which is rare is dear"; "As dear as life"; "The grace of God is worth a fair"; "Health is a jewel"; "A good name is better than riches"; "A fair face is half a portion."

40. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.21.1395b1–9.

41. Dent marks this proverb with a question mark.

42. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.21.1395a18–33.

43. Burckhardt, "*King Lear*: Quality of Nothing," 239.

44. Madeleine Doran argues that Lear's style—"with its plain and emphatic declaratives, its commanding or hortatory imperatives—fits the fairy-tale world of absolutes: good and evil, truth and falsehood, love and hate" (*Shakespeare's Dramatic Language* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976], 100). I would argue that this style belongs primarily to Lear and Cordelia and that the predominance of imperatives and questions in Lear's speech signals his ignorance of the rhetorical context of speech acts. Doran agrees that Lear discovers through experience the world of contingency.

45. Dent lists these proverbs: "To ride and run," and "A good tale ill told is marred."

46. Siegfried Wenzel, "The Wisdom of the Fool," in *The Wisdom of Poetry:*

Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982), 225–40.

47. Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), especially 88–133. Finnegan also provides a salutary warning against making too sweeping generalizations about the features of "oral style."

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48. Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwartz (1967; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 41–44.

49. From Dent: "He that gives all before he dies is a fool"; "Speak not all you know, do not all you can, believe not all you hear."

50. Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagia*, in Whiting, "Nature of the Proverb," 288.

51. Eric A. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 303–4; see also Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 189.

52. Margaret Hotine notes that the first recorded performance of *King Lear* took place at court on Saint Stephen's Day, December 26, 1606, and suggests that the play's insistent concern with justice and good government may recall the two Old Testament readings, from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, prescribed for Saint Stephen's Day in the 1559 Book of Common Prayer ("Two Plays for Saint Stephen's Day," *Notes and Queries* 227 [1982]: 119–21). Hotine finds Proverbs 28:23–28, quoted from the Bishop's Bible, to be particularly applicable; although no evidence suggests that Shakespeare wrote the play for a specific performance on this day, he would certainly have known the passages. In her excellent essay on biblical echoes in *King Lear*, Rosalie L. Colie argues that such echoes both question and affirm received opinion ("The Energies of Endurance: Biblical Echo in *King Lear*," in Colie and Flahiff, *Some Facets of "King Lear,"* 117–44).

53. Stanley Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*," in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 267–353.

54. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 6.2.29–32.

55. Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1963), 47.

56. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.11.1411b32.

57. Guy Butler, "Shakespeare's Cliff at Dover and an Emblem Illustration," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47 (1984): 227–31, links the stage image of Edgar leading Gloucester to an emblem in Guillaume de Perriere's *Theater of Fine Devices*. In that emblem, which shows blind Fortune leading a blindfolded old man toward a precipice, the text reads: "They that follow fortune's guiding, / Blindly fall with often sliding." Harry Levin, discussing *Lear*'s recurrent references to Fortune's wheel, suggests that "the ultimate meaning of Gloucester's fall is its symbolic gesture of expiation, reenacting his own original sin, as well as the fall of man and his consequent progress toward self-knowledge" ("The Heights and the Depths: A Scene from *King Lear*," in *More Talking of Shakespeare*, ed. John Garrett [New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1959], 100). A less sanguine

interpretation of the repeated motif of plunging from a great height can be found in James Black, "*King Lear*: Art Upside-Down," *Shakespeare Survey* 33 (1980): 35–42.

58. Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 101–7.

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59. Waldo McNeir, "The Staging of the Dover Cliff Scene in *King Lear*," in *Studies in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Waldo F. McNeir (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 87–104.

60. Bert O. States, "Standing on the Extreme Verge in *King Lear* and Other High Places," *Georgia Review* 36 (1982): 425.

61. The related argument that this scene forces spectators to look from two opposed perspectives is advanced by Jonathan Goldberg, "Dover Cliff and the Conditions of Representation: *King Lear* 4.6 in Perspective," *Poetics Today* 5 (1984): 537–47.

62. This one line may allude to no fewer than three proverbial phrases: "As light as any gossamer"; "As light as a feather"; and "As light as air."

63. Winifred M. T. Nowottny, "Some Aspects of the Style of *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Survey* 13 (1960): 49–57. Marvin Rosenberg raises but then dismisses the idea that Edgar does not reveal himself to Gloucester because emotion overwhelms him (*The Masks of "King Lear"* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972], 266).

64. Cavell, "Avoidance of Love," 332.

65. Marianne Novy, "Patriarchy, Mutuality, and Forgiveness in *King Lear*," *Southern Humanities Review* 13 (1979): 290; reprinted in *Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 162.

66. See Winfried Schleiner, "Justifying the Unjustifiable: The Dover Cliff Scene in *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1985): 337–43.

67. This point is made by Derek Peat, " 'And That's True Too': *King Lear* and the Tension of Uncertainty," *Shakespeare Survey* 33 (1980): 48.

68. This point is made about Kent by Hugh Maclean, "Disguise in *King Lear*: Kent and Edgar," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960): 49–54; and Booth, *"King Lear," "Macbeth," Indefinition, Tragedy*. Stephen Greenblatt makes the related argument that in this scene Edgar's "exorcism" of Gloucester is a theatrical performance emptied of meaning and deprived of institutional validation ("Shakespeare and the Exorcists," in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 94–128).

CHAPTER SIX

1. Walter J. Ong comments on "Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," in *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971), 113–41. To the extent that education in the vulgar tongue is modeled on Latin language education, Ong's conclusions are applicable to English rhetoric. See also Law-

rence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977): "Although the mid-sixteenth century saw the emergence of a number of highly educated noblewomen, in general access both to sacred truth and to new learning was monopolized by men, thus increasing their prestige and influence and reducing that of women" (158). Notable exceptions to Stone's rule would be those middle-class women who participated in the "woman controversy." For instance, Rachel Speght, who wrote her *Mouzzell for Melastomas* in response to Joseph Swetnam's *Arraignment of Lewde, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*, was probably the learned daughter of a London minister. See Ann Rosalind Jones, "Counterattacks on 'the Bayter of Women': Three Pamphleteers of the Early Seventeenth Century," in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 49. For a survey of women's education, see Carroll Camden, *The Elizabethan Woman: A Panorama of English Womanhood, 1540–1640* (London: Cleaver-Hume Press, 1952), 39–58.

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2. Richard Rainolde, *The Foundation of Rhetoric* (1563; rpt., Menston: Scolar Press, 1972), 53r–v.

3. Ibid., 50v–51r; Ray Nadeau, trans., "The *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius," *Speech Monographs* 19 (1952): 278–79.

4. Plato, *Gorgias*, 502b–e and 523a–524d, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

5. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, trans. Richard Gummere, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920), 3:300–319.

6. Elsewhere Cicero uses the clothing metaphor without specifically feminizing it. See *Brutus*, trans. G. L. Hendrickson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 75.262, 79.274; *De Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton and completed by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), 1.54.235, 2.28.123–24.

7. Cicero, *Orator*, trans. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 23.78–79.

8. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 137.

9. George Herbert, *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, ed. Mario A. Di Cesare (New York: Norton, 1978), 25–26.

10. Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.34.157. Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 25 and chap. 1, passim. On the humanist orator's ethical character, see Hanna H. Gray, "Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963): 497–514. On the relationship between the courtly tradition and rhetorical construction of the self, see Richard A. Lanham, "The Self as Middle Style: *Cortegiano*," in *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 144–64; and on the relationship between *The Courtier*'s self-examination and the debate structure of

Cicero's *De Oratore*, plus the equivocal role played by woman, see Thomas M. Greene, "*Il Cortegiano* and the Choice of a Game," in *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 46–60.

11. Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness*, 27.

12. Ibid., 37.

13. For a bibliography of Renaissance antifeminist literature, see Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent, & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475–1640* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1982). Other useful works include *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540–1640*, ed. Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Patricia Parker, "Motivated Rhetorics: Gender, Order, Rule," in *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), 97–125; and Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540–1620* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

14. Johannes Lodovicus Vives, *The Office and Duetie of an Husband*, trans. T. Paynell (London, [1553]), Q2v–Q3r.

15. C. Pyrrye, "The Praise and Dispraise of Women" (London, [1569]), A5v–A6r.

16. Hoyt H. Hudson, "Jewel's Oration against Rhetoric: A Translation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 14 (1928): 383. Relevant to the entire discussion of woman's connection to rhetoric's disruptive powers is the excellent essay by Patricia Parker, "Motivated Rhetorics," in *Literary Fat Ladies*, 97–125.

17. For the argument that Renaissance theatrical representations of femininity can not only encourage a metatheatrical awareness of the boy actor beneath his female role but also engage with moral and social definitions of woman, see Kathleen McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1989), 100–122.

18. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, Oxford History of English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 499.

19. Huntington Brown, "*Venus and Adonis*: The Action, the Narrator, and the Critics," *Michigan Academician* 2, no. 2 (1969): 73–87, makes the case for the narrator as an objective chorus. Most critics consider the narrator as an objective observer, but Richard A. Lanham thinks that he is satirized along with Venus and Adonis (*Motives of Eloquence*, 90). Besides Lanham, critics who have considered the poem from the standpoint of its rhetoric are Heather Dubrow, *Captive Victors: Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Sonnets* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987); Clark Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); John Doebler, "The Many Faces of Love: Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*," *Shakespeare Studies* 16 (1983): 33–43. Lucy Gent, "*Venus and Adonis*: The Triumph of Rhetoric," *Modern Language Review* 69 (1974): 721–29, calls Venus an "arch-sophist."

20. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 186.

21. Paul Fussell, Jr., *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (New York: Random House, 1965), 142.

22. Nancy Lindheim, "The Shakespearean *Venus and Adonis*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 193.

23. Interpretations of this scene vary. Robert P. Miller's heavily moralistic reading suggests that Venus cleverly turns the story of her adulterous shame into proof of her sexual attractiveness in "The Myth of Mar's Hot Minion in *Venus and Adonis*," *ELH* 26 (1959): 470–81. For a more positive allegorical reading of Venus's union with Mars as a *discordia concors*, see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1968), 81–96, and Raymond B. Waddington, "*Antony and Cleopatra*: 'What Venus Did with Mars,'" *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966): 210–27.

24. Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Harper, 1946), 92–99.

25. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 40–42. In a slightly different argument based on Claude Lévi-Strauss's definition of myth, Clark Hulse suggests that *Venus and Adonis*'s ability to reconcile opposites in paradox is mythic (*Metamorphic Verse*, 172–73).

26. The allegorical readings of this poem, which depend on sources ranging from Neoplatonic philosophy to the Ovid moralisé tradition, are too numerous to mention. For a recent summary of the criticism and its sources, see Lennet J. Daigle, "*Venus and Adonis*: Some Traditional Contexts," *Shakespeare Studies* 13 (1980): 31–46.

27. Coppélia Kahn, *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 40.

28. Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, 68–69. Dubrow's is the best recent treatment of the poem; however, she stresses the ethical judgments passed on Venus more than I do, tending to see her as more self-centered and the narrator as more balanced than I do.

29. On the "proleptic" qualities of *Venus and Adonis*'s plot, see Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse*, 171.

30. Kahn, *Man's Estate*, 45–46. For the idea that *Venus and Adonis*, by stressing Venus's maternal urges, works out a Renaissance ambivalence toward women that is especially notable in the courtly tradition of Castiglione, see Wayne A. Rebhorn, "Mother Venus: Temptation in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*," *Shakespeare Studies* 11 (1978): 1–19.

31. Wylie Sypher, "Shakespeare as Casuist: *Measure for Measure*," *Sewanee Review* 58 (1950): 262–80; Elder Seneca, *Controversiae, Books 1–6*, vol. 1 of *Declamations*, trans. M. Winterbottom, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 1.5. A variant on the case of the man who raped two women can be found in Alexander Silvayn, *The Orator*, trans. Lazarus Piot (London, 1596), 276–80. Silvayn's version concerns "a maiden who being ravished, did first require her ravisher for her husband, and afterwards requested his death" (276). Interestingly, this story matches the scenario

the Duke proposes at the end of *Measure for Measure*, when he marries Angelo to Mariana, then orders his death. For a thorough analysis of *Measure for Measure*'s pervasive interest in decorative rhetoric, which permeates even the language of seamy sexuality, see Joanne Altieri, "Style and Social Disorder in *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25 (1974): 6–16.

32. Robert Grams Hunter, *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 206–7.

33. Sister Miriam Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 232.

34. On these distinctions, see Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Thomas J. Derrick (New York: Garland, 1982), 189–92.

35. Marion Trousdale, "Recurrence and Renaissance: Rhetorical Imitation in Ascham and Sturm," *English Literary Renaissance* 6 (1976): 156–79, argues that the practice of imitation in rhetorical education not only affected literary practice but also encouraged a general preoccupation with formal patterning. Some Renaissance accounts define imitation in terms of competition with an original. See G. W. Pigman, III, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980): 1–32.

36. Lawrence Sargent Hall links Isabella's use of the mirror image to the mirror Richard II uses to analyze his lack of self and to Hamlet's use of a mirror to show "unreflecting Gertrude" her essential self ("Isabella's Angry Ape," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15, no. 3 [1964]: 157–65).

37. On the distinction between figures of thought and of speech, which depend on words rather than ideas, see Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921), 9.1.

38. This point is made by John L. Harrison, "The Convention of 'Heart and Tongue' and the Meaning of *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 5 (1954): 7.

39. Miriam Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of Language*, 182–83. T. W. Baldwin remarks that this argument follows the rules for a sententia, as prescribed by Aphthonius (*William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944], 2:88).

40. For a psychoanalytic reading of this phenomenon, see Janet Adelman, "Male Bonding in Shakespeare's Comedies," in *Shakespeare's Rough Magic: Renaissance Essays in Honor of C. L. Barber*, ed. Peter Erickson and Coppélia Kahn (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 73–103. Much recent criticism stresses the Duke's inadequacy as a ruler and father figure. See David Sundelson, *Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Richard P. Wheeler, *Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies: Turn and Counter-Turn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); and Leonard Tennenhouse, "Representing Power: *Measure for Measure* in Its Time," *Genre* 15 (1982): 139–56, who sees the Duke as a trickster. Other critics see the Duke, despite his shortcomings, as a truly providential figure. See Arthur C. Kirsch, "The Integrity of *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Survey* 28 (1975): 89–105; Darryl J. Gless, *"Measure for Measure," the Law, and the Convent*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Muriel Bradbrook, "Authority, Truth, and Justice in *Measure for Measure*," *Review of English Studies* 17 (1941): 385–99. However, it becomes possible to bridge the gap between these two readings of the Duke if we acknowledge that in this play authority is won by persuading others rather than derived from established hierarchies.

41. Stephen Greenblatt, "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture," in *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 210–24; Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

42. For the role played in masculine identity crisis by the absent mother, see Coppélia Kahn, "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 33–49. Also related to my discussion of Isabella's "masculine" dimension is David Sundelson's discussion of the discomfort created in *Measure for Measure* when androgyny yields to female sexuality in the absence of a powerful father figure (*Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father*, 89–102).

43. Kathleen McLuskie, "The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare: *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure*," in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 88–108.

44. For a recent summary of commentary on the bed trick and the unusual argument that the bed trick demonstrates the women characters' control and resourcefulness, see Eileen Z. Cohen, "'Virtue Is Bold': The Bed-trick and Characterization in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*," *Philological Quarterly* 65 (1986): 171–86.

45. Marilyn L. Williamson, quoting a passage from Philip Stubbes's *Anatomy of Abuses*, suggests that Shakespeare may have wanted to tie this passage to Puritan attacks on sexual license. Stubbes describes secluded gardens like Angelo's as convenient locations for sexual assignations (*The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies* [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986], 84–85).

46. For the Parliament of Heaven, which involves a debate between female personifications of Justice and Mercy, see Samuel C. Chew, *The Virtues Reconciled: An Iconographic Study* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1947), 35–68. Following Muriel Bradbrook's suggestion that *Measure for Measure* enacts the Parliament, John D. Cox finds medieval antecedents in several kinds of plays, particularly *The Woman Taken in Adultery* and *Mary Magdalene*; both involve a female figure who pleads for mercy. Interestingly, both medieval plays, like *Measure for Measure*, define women in terms of their sexuality. See John D. Cox, "The Medieval Background of *Measure for Measure*," *Modern Philology* 81, no. 1 (1983): 1–13.

47. For the argument that substitution in the problem comedies is used to deny characters individuality, see Nancy S. Leonard, "Substitution in Shakespeare's Problem Comedies," *English Literary Renaissance* 9 (1979): 281–301. Leonard is more interested in Angelo, but her remarks are germane to Isabella as well.

48. Jonathan Dollimore, "Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*," in Dollimore and Sinfield, *Political Shakespeare*,72–87.

49. For a discussion of the Magdalene's history and her symbolic relationship to the Virgin Mary, see Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 224–35.

50. Ibid., 234.

51. Irene Dash, *Wedding, Wooing, and Power: Women in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 251. See also Marcia Riefer, " 'Instruments of Some Mightier Member': The Constriction of Female Power in *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984): 157–69.

52. Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage*; and Lawrence Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

53. The play also depends on folk motifs, most notably in the circumstances surrounding the King's fistula and its cure. For a sociological analysis of the interaction between aristocratic politics and communal values derived from folk drama in Elizabethan drama, see Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwartz (1967; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

54. Helena's rhetorical situation resembles that of Venus at the beginning of *Venus and Adonis*, where the narrator's opening simile of the sun leaving the weeping morn at daybreak creates a martial world with no place in it for Venus.

55. Vives, *Office and Duetie*, Q2v; see also Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), 72–73.

56. Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 102–12, 130–36.

57. See the excellent discussion of improvisatory *copia* and its association with inspiration in Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 125–56.

58. Robert Ornstein makes an interesting comparison between Bertram and Hermia of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a woman forced to marry against her will, which emphasizes Helena's usurpation of the masculine role in courtship (*Shakespeare's Comedies: From Roman Farce to Romantic Mystery* [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986], 183).

59. For Bertram as a prodigal son, see Williamson, *Patriarchy*, 66–67; on the emasculating incestuous overtones in Bertram's forced marriage to a woman so closely allied with his mother and on the Oedipal implications of Bertram's struggle against the King, see Richard P. Wheeler, *Shakespeare's Development*, 34–45.

60. Josephine Waters Bennett, "New Techniques of Comedy in *All's Well That Ends Well*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18 (1967): 349.

61. Carol Thomas Neely, *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 75.

62. This phrase is used by Ian Donaldson, "*All's Well That Ends Well*: Shakespeare's Play of Endings," *Essays in Criticism* 27 (1977): 48.

63. Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631), 90.

64. Jean E. Howard, "*Measure for Measure* and the Restraints of Convention," *Essays in Literature* 10 (1983): 149–58.

65. For an account of the debate and its participants, see McLuskie, "Patriarchal Bard," and Martha Andresen-Thom, "Thinking about Women and Their Prosperous Art: A Reply to Juliet Dusinberre's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*," *Shakespeare Studies* 11 (1978): 259–76.

EPILOGUE

1. Marguerite Waller, "Academic Tootsie: The Denial of Difference and the Difference It Makes," *Diacritics* 17 (1987): 2–20; Jeanne Addison Roberts, "Making a Woman and Other Institutionalized Diversions," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 367.

2. Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 206.

3. Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic, 1973), 412–17.

4. Morse Peckham, *Man's Rage for Chaos: Biology, Behavior, and the Arts* (New York: Schocken, 1967).

5. Father Noel Taillepied, *A Treatise of Ghosts*, ed. Montague Summers (London: Fortune Press, n.d.), 163.

6. Ibid.

7. Louis Lavater, *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght, 1572*, ed. J. Dover Wilson and May Yardley (1572; Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Shakespeare Association, 1929), 196. On the impossibility of deciding the ghost's identity and the folly of relying too heavily on either Protestant or Catholic pneumatology, see Robert H. West, "King Hamlet's Ambiguous Ghost," *PMLA* 70 (1955): 1107–17.

8. Using a Freudian framework, Stanley Cavell analyzes the unsettling possibility that the ghost does not tell the truth. He concludes that the ghost is an illusion born of Hamlet's psyche as a defense against the power of his own imagination. As a psychologically motivated prosopopoeia, the ghost's performance of his tale of murder and incest transforms Hamlet's remembered fantasy of the primal scene. I am oversimplifying Cavell's subtle argument, but his analysis could be seen to reinforce my sense of a complicated rhetorical relationship between Hamlet and the ghost (Stanley Cavell, "Hamlet's Burden of Proof," in *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 179–91).

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