METAPHOR AND SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Unchaste Signification

Maria Franziska Fahey

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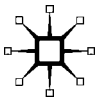

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It makes a difference whether the dawn is called "rosy-fingered" or "purple-fingered."

(Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*)

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Aristotle and Augustine speak of the pleasure of metaphor, a pleasure that they recognize is linked intimately to learning. This pleasure, and this learning, multiplies when metaphors are shared in the classroom. Indeed, it was my students' lively engagement in figures of speech that initiated this inquiry. I am grateful to have the opportunity to make a living in the classroom, and I am grateful for the support I have received from Friends Seminary, under the leadership first of Richard Eldridge and more recently Robert Lauder, especially a sabbatical grant and a leave of absence without which I would not have been able to write this book. It was a particular pleasure to benefit from my student Julia Dratel's meticulous help with the bibliographic details of the final manuscript.

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M. F. F.
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Preface

Metaphor assumed particular significance during Shakespeare's time, when the Church of England had rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation and Reformation theologians throughout Europe continued to rethink the Eucharist. If bread and wine were no longer transformed into body and blood, how were congregations to understand the *is* in "This is my body"? Just how much power do speech acts have to transform substances? Lancelot Andrewes did not accept Ulrich Zwingli's reinterpretation of the Roman *is* to mean *signifies*. Andrewes complained, "[t]o avoid *Est* in the Church of Rome's sense, he fell to be all for *Significat*, and nothing for *Est* at all" (Andrewes 1967, 14).[1] Reformer Theodore Beza worried that the Eucharist was being perceived as merely metaphoric, that it had been reduced to "either transubstantiation or a trope" (qtd. in Pelikan 1984, 201).[2] But while theologians evoked metaphor as an illusory alternative to the truly transformative power of religious ritual, playwrights made use of metaphor's powerfully performative nature in the burgeoning public theater. And English poets and rhetoricians publically recognized metaphor's power in their nation's first rhetorical treatises and literary criticism. In his late sixteenth-century "Epistle on the Excellency of the English Tongue," Robert Carew observed that "our speech doth not consist only of wordes, but in a sorte euen of deedes, as when wee expresse a matter by Metaphors, wherein the English is very frutefull and forcible" (Carew 1904, 288). This book explores the transformative, fruitful, and potentially unruly nature of metaphorical utterances as revealed in Shakespearean drama.

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[1] Judith Anderson, in her discussion of this comment, observes that "Andrewes's position regarding the 'real presence' in the Sacrament is . . . poised between metaphor and materialism, symbol and magic, and it is fundamentally verbal, even as the terms he uses to argue it indicate" (Anderson 1996, 145).

[2] Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher (2000, 145–6) and Richard McCoy (2002) have discussed the significance of this passage. McCoy points out that Beza, like most reformers, was "intent on finding an alternative to this bleak binary" (xv).

The first chapter, "Unchaste Signification," challenges the view of various twentieth-century theorists, including I. A. Richards, Paul Ricoeur, and Mark Johnson, that rhetoricians of centuries past had mistaken metaphor as a merely ornamental substitution of words. I demonstrate how classical and Elizabethan rhetoricians—from Aristotle to Quintilian to George Puttenham—discuss the tension inherent in metaphor between the need for difference, distance, and interchange and the need for likeness, proximity, and containment and how Elizabethan rhetoricians, like the classical rhetoricians on whose work they built, recognize this dual nature of metaphor. Observing that discussions of metaphor are laden with fertility imagery, I suggest that metaphor's dual nature is the very source of the fecundity that generates rhetoricians' warnings about its potential unruliness. I borrow Henry Peacham's 1593 warning against "unchast[e] signification" to refer, metaphorically, to the worry that metaphors might beget illegitimate meanings (Peacham 1954, 14). Included in this introductory chapter is a discussion of Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, seminal texts in which metaphor's power is linked crucially to its stealth. Metaphor's stealthiness is particularly relevant to understanding how, in the worlds of Shakespeare's plays, metaphors can circulate without the full awareness of individual speakers.

Scholars have long associated Shakespeare's power to move audiences with his metaphors and have published studies dedicated to his metaphors throughout the last century. Caroline Spurgeon's extensive catalog of *Shakespeare's Imagery*, which was first published in 1935 and remains in print, is concerned not only with the "fresh light" the metaphors throw on the plays but also with how their content reveals their author's mind (Spurgeon 1935, 11). Wolfgang Clemen's study of *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*, first published in English in 1951 and also still in print, asserts that Shakespeare's images are "rooted in the totality of the play" and demonstrates the degree to which "the total effect of the play" is "enhanced and coloured by images" (Clemen 1951, 3–4). In his 1978 study of *The Shakespearean Metaphor*, Ralph Berry analyzes the plays in order to explore "metaphor as a controlling structure" and to "detect the extent to which a certain metaphoric idea informs and organises the drama" (Berry 1978, 1).[3] Departing from these now classic works, I have studied the metaphors in Shakespeare's plays

[3] In their book devoted to Shakespearean metaphor, Ann Thompson and John O. Thompson effect "a series of meetings" between the study of imagery in English literary studies and the study of metaphor in linguistics, psychology,

not only to observe the literary image patterns they form or to notice the aesthetic effects of Shakespeare's dramatic composition but also to understand how the plays reveal metaphor's powers to transform the speech communities they bring to life.

I have chosen to investigate the unruly fecundity of metaphor in Shakespearean drama where discourse is scripted by the playwright but, unlike the sonnets or epyllia, not managed by a narrator. Keir Elam refers to this aspect of drama as "the conversation fiction . . . that allows the plot of the play to unfold as a series of direct speech acts" (Elam 1984, 15). I have attempted to read the dialogues that constitute Shakespeare's plays with the approach Elam describes, namely, "not as the 'lexical' representation or reporting of some non-linguistic action, but as a network of direct verbal deeds" (6).

Following the first chapter on theories of metaphor, each chapter focuses on a single play that illuminates some aspect of metaphoric performance. "Proving Desdemona Haggard" observes how Desdemona's metaphoric language transports falconry discourses into the world of *Othello* and initiates the circulation of the anxiety that a haggard falcon-wife is likely to take control of her unrewarding falconer-husband. Further developing Patricia Parker's theory of links between plays and larger discursive networks, I suggest that metaphor is an especially potent means by which such networks are linked. " 'Martyred Signs' " asserts that, in *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron's uttering of the metaphor of Lavinia-as-Philomela begins the performance of her rape and mutilation. Using René Girard's theory of the *sacrificial crisis*, I compare the substitutive nature of metaphor to the substitutive nature of sacrifice, both of which veer out of the control of their performers. "Imperfect Speech" considers metaphor in the larger context of equivocation and observes how, in the Scotland of *Macbeth*, unacknowledged equivocations, including metaphors, become unwittingly performative, likely to generate unanticipated and unacknowledged double meanings. " 'Base Comparisons' " argues that in *King Henry IV Part 1* the carnivalesque figuring of royalty brings the lofty qualities of royalty down to earth but, in the process, also reifies royalty. " 'Ears of Flesh and Blood' " explores the ghostly power of dead metaphors to haunt living speech and contends that in *Hamlet* the truth that the metaphoric ear of the state of Denmark has been poisoned slips into the lie that the literal ear of the King of

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anthropology, and philosophy, applying a single theory to each play or sonnet they analyze (Thompson and Thompson 1987, 1).

Denmark has been poisoned. Finally, "'Strange Fish'" explores how, in *The Tempest*, the peculiar resonance of Trinculo's naming Caliban a "fish" reveals that a name might be mistaken as literally signifying some truth about a stranger that instead metaphorically signifies a truth about the collectively imagined place that stranger occupies within a speech community. Although each of these chapters may be read on its own, each will make more sense in conjunction with my discussion of metaphor in the first chapter to which I refer only briefly in the chapters on individual plays.

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1

"Unchaste Signification": Classical, Elizabethan, and Contemporary Theories of Metaphor

> Briefly, a metaphor is an affair between a predicate with a past and an object that yields while protesting.
>
> (Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*)

In 1589 when George Puttenham calls metaphor "the Figure of transporte," he translates into English the moving power for which the figure was named: the Greek *meta* means "trans- or across" and *phor* means "port or carry" (Puttenham 1968, 148). For centuries, rhetoricians also have observed the alienation that accompanies such movement. Aristotle describes metaphor as "the movement [*epiphora*] of an alien [*allotrios*] name from either genus to species or from species to genus or from species to species or by analogy" (Aristotle 1991, 295).[1] Puttenham builds on this definition, observing that, where metaphor is used, "[t]here is a kind of wresting of a single word from his owne right signification, to another not so naturall, but yet of some affinitie or conueniencie with it" (Puttenham 1968, 148–9). The very movement or transport of a word from its "natural" meaning to an "alien" one that allows a metaphor its particular mode of signification—and its power—has elicited great admiration along with some uneasiness.

Metaphor's praises are sung by numerous early modern English rhetoricians. In 1550, for instance, Richard Sherry writes that "amonge all vertues of speche, [metaphor] is the chyefe. None perswadeth more effecteouslye, none sheweth the thyng before oure eyes more euidently, none moueth more mightily the affeccions, none maketh the oracion more goodlye, pleasaunt, nor copious" (Sherry 1961, 40). In 1560

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all brackets and italics in my quotations of Aristotle are the translator's, not mine.

Thomas Wilson notes that "[a]n oration is wounderfully enriched, when apte *Metaphors* are got, and applied to the matter. Neither can any one perswade effectuously, and winne men by weight of his Oration, without the helpe of wordes altered and translated" (Wilson 1909, 172–3). And in 1588 Abraham Fraunce claims that "[t]here is no trope more florishing than a *Metaphore*" (Fraunce 1969, B1v).

Yet, for as long as scholars of poetics and rhetoric have defined and praised metaphor, they simultaneously have cautioned against its misuse. Aristotle asserts that metaphors are "inappropriate if far-fetched" (Aristotle 1991, 228). The pseudo-Ciceronian *Ad Herennium* cautions that "a metaphor ought to be restrained, so as to be a transition with good reason to a kindred thing, and not seem an indiscriminate, reckless, and precipitate leap to an unlike thing" ([Cicero] 1981, 345). In the Elizabethan period, Henry Peacham follows Aristotle to advise that "the similitude be not farre fetcht"; Peacham further insists "that there be no uncleane or unchast signification contained in the Metaphore, which may offend against modest and reuerend minds" (Peacham 1954, 14). In each case the worry emerges that metaphor might allow meaning to become displaced, distorted, even offensive.[2] Shakespeare's plays reveal that metaphor's power is closely linked to the possibility that during metaphorical transport the "alien name" might escape.

Although Peacham's caution against "unchast signification" is likely a concern about obscene speech,[3] it also evokes the perennial attempts to regulate the intercourse between a word's "proper signification" and its signification "not proper, but yet nigh and like" (Peacham 1954, 3). The efforts, integral to classical and Elizabethan philosophies of metaphor, to regulate metaphorical discourse by controlling unchaste signification belie the fruitful and potentially unruly nature of metaphorical utterances. Indeed, it is the Latin word *pudentem* that Harry Caplan translates as "restrained" in the *Ad Herennium*'s caution that "a metaphor ought to

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[2] Centuries later Cleanth Brooks emphasizes this potential displacement: "The poet must work by analogies, but the metaphors do not lie in the same plane or fit neatly edge to edge. There is a continual tilting of the planes; necessary overlappings, discrepancies, contradictions" (Brooks 1975, 9–10). And Hegel similarly observes that "metaphor is always an interruption of the course of ideas and a constant dispersal of them, because it arouses and brings together images which do not immediately belong to the matter in hand and its meaning, and therefore draw the mind away from that to something akin and foreign to it" (Hegel 1975, 408).

[3] *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *unchaste*: "Not chaste; lacking chastity; impure, lascivious."

be restrained" ([Cicero] 1981, 345). The root of the Latin word *pudentem*, namely, *pudeo*, also forms the adjective *pudenda* of *pars pudenda*, the Latin for female genitalia from which the English word *pudendum* is derived.[4] This linguistic echo in the *Ad Herennium*'s caution about metaphor indicates a very old connection between metaphor and reproduction, both of which are perceived as potentially shamefully fruitful and, thus, requiring chastity-enforcing regulation.

Considering that the primary meaning of chaste is "pure from unlawful sexual intercourse" (*OED* 1), Peacham's caution about lack of chastity in metaphor can be understood, metaphorically, as analogous to cautions about lack of chastity in marriage. In a patriarchal world, unchaste coupling can cause sons to acquire false names: if he is the progeny of adultery, a son may acquire a name that has been transported from the lineage of the lawful husband of his mother to that of the father who begets him. Unchaste unions can cause the proper name of a man to be transported to an improper issue. And once (mis)named, a son might live his life as that person, the transported identity masking his undetected paternal origin. Just as the specter of a patriarchal world in which social order, and thus identity, is lost propels the concern about unchaste marriage, the specter of a world in which linguistic order, and thus meaning, is lost propels the concern about unchaste metaphor.

The suspicion that lack of chastity and loss of familial distinctions are tied to the loss of linguistic distinctions surfaces in *The Winter's Tale* when Leontes responds vehemently to Hermione's alleged adultery:

> You have mistook, my lady,
> Polixenes for Leontes. O thou thing,
> Which I'll not call a creature of thy place
> Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,
> Should a like language use to all degrees,
> And mannerly distinguishment leave out
> Betwixt the prince and beggar. (*WT* 2.1.81–7)

Leontes retaliates against his allegedly adulterous wife by replacing the proper name "my lady" with the demeaning "thou thing." It is as if Leontes imagines that by shielding the name "lady" from an adulterous

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[4] *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *pudendum*: "The external genitals; esp. the vulva" (*OED* 1) and lists as its etymology "classical Latin *pudendum*, lit. 'that of which one ought to be ashamed' . . . compare also classical Latin *pars pudenda* shameful part."

wife (by replacing "lady" with the anonymous "thing"), he defends meaningful linguistic distinctions in general. If he were to continue to misname his adulterous wife "lady," soon "barbarism . . . Should a like language use to all degrees." Indeed, addressing an adulterous wife as "lady" could result in the loss of all linguistic distinctions—even "Betwixt the prince and beggar." Leontes sees adulterous wives and adulterous words as having a powerfully contagious effect,[5] and he fancies that he can stop the adulterating effect of an unchaste wife from destroying social order, such as the distinction between prince and beggar, by preserving the chaste signification of names.

A patriarchal world without chastity might eventuate in a world where no one would know who any man really is because men's names would not signify accurately the man who begot them, and, thus, who they are. So too with language: unchaste metaphors might cause things to acquire false names and, in turn, words to signify false meanings. Unchaste metaphors could produce a world where no one would know to what thing any word properly referred because too many names of things would have been transported from their "proper" objects, to use Peacham's term.

Yet, new issues regularly are named, and metaphor has long been recognized as the trope that allows us to name things newly conceived or discovered. Aristotle advises that "in naming something that does not have a proper name of its own, metaphor should be used" (Aristotle 1991, 224), and Quintilian notes that metaphor allows us to "succee[d] in accomplishing the supremely difficult task of providing a name for everything" (Quintilian 1996, 303). Puttenham lists "necessitie or want of a better word" as one of the "causes" of metaphor (Puttenham 1968, 149). Transporting meanings across distances and differences gives birth to new senses of words, new senses that live on: as Wilson observes, "as necessitie hath forced vs to borowe wordes translated: So hath time and

[5] This same notion of the contagious nature of adultery informs Antigonus's defense of Hermione. He insists that Leontes is "abused . . . by some putter-on" (*WT* 2.1.141) and, albeit hyperbolically, asserts that if Hermione is "honour-flawed," he will "geld" all three of his young daughters (*WT* 2.1.143–7). Antigonus insists that "fourteen they shall not see / To bring false generations" (*WT* 2.1.147–8). Furthermore, the link between unchaste signification and procreation resounds in Antigonus's assertion that he "had rather *glib* [him]self than they / Should not produce fair issue" (*WT* 2.1.149–50, emphasis mine). Although he likely means "to castrate" (*OED* 2), *glib* also can mean "to render glib, smooth, or slippery," "to render glib or fluent," and "to talk volubly" (*OED* 1–3).

practize made them seeme most pleasaunt, and therefore they are much the rather vsed" (Wilson 1909, 171).[6]

Although the conception and naming of new people and things promise belonging, familiarity, and likeness—of children to their parents and words to their objects—such conception and naming also require difference and mingling. I. A. Richards, who calls metaphor "the omnipresent principle of language," notes that metaphor is "fundamentally . . . a borrowing between and *intercourse* of thoughts, a transaction between contexts" (Richards 1936, 92, 94, emphasis mine). Richards explains that the "copresence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning . . . not attainable without their *interaction*" (100, emphasis mine). Centuries earlier, Quintilian had noted that metaphor "adds to the *copiousness* of language by the *interchange* of words" (Quintilian 1996, 303, emphasis mine). In the twentieth century metaphor has continued to be described, metaphorically, in terms of fecundity and pregnancy. William Empson, for instance, observes that metaphor brings into play "a feeling of richness about the possible interpretations of the word . . . so that we regard it as 'pregnant' " (Empson 1979, 341); and Umberto Eco calls it the "most necessary and pregnant of all tropes" (qtd. in Melchiori 1988, 73). The fecundity of metaphorical discourse, more plainly observed in the twentieth century, also prompted classical and Elizabethan cautions about the trope. If the difference, to use Richards's distinction, between a metaphor's tenor and its vehicle[7] is too great or if such metaphorical intercourse is too frequent or cavalier, orderly inheritances of meanings can be lost. Viola's joke to Feste about word play also applies to metaphor: "They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton" (*TN* 3.1.14–15).[8]

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[6] More recently John Searle, offering the example, "The ship ploughed the sea," notes that there is no simple way to paraphrase the metaphor and that "metaphors often serve to plug such semantic gaps as this" (Searle 1979, 97).

[7] Richards's terminology has been challenged by susbsequent metaphor theorists as misleading. Christine Brooke-Rose, for instance, argues that the terms *tenor* and *vehicle* "led to an over-emphasis of the separateness of metaphor" (Brooke-Rose 1965, 9). Despite these valid concerns, I am using Richards's terms because they afford clarity of reference to the terms being transported or conjoined. Richards explains the terms: "I am calling [the tenor] the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means" (1936, 97).

[8] Madhavi Menon adapts this line for the title for her book, *Wanton Words: Rhetoric and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama*. Menon's emphasis, different from mine, is to explore the history of sexuality as it emerges in the history of rhetoric. She sets out to show how English Renaissance "handbooks of rhetoric,

Quintilian turns to an agricultural analogy to illustrate how ornament should be used in the service of chaste fruitfulness. He warns that ornament must be "bold, manly and chaste, free from all effeminate smoothness and the false hues derived from artificial dyes, and must glow with health and vigour" (Quintilian 1996, 215). Aligning superficial, cosmetic beauty with unfruitful or purely decorative plants, he asks, "Shall I prefer the barren plane and myrtles trimly clipped, to the fruitful olive and the elm that weds the vine?" (215). True beauty, Quintilian asserts, is never divided from productivity, a point he illustrates with an agricultural example: "When the tops of my olive trees rise too high, I lop them away, with the result that their growth expands laterally in a manner that is at once more pleasing to the eye and enables them to bear more fruit owing to the increase in the number of branches" (215–17). In the Elizabethan age metaphor's fruitfulness is carefully cultivated and contained within Henry Peacham's *Garden of Eloquence* (1577 and 1593) and plucked as the finest flower for George Puttenham's *Arte of Poesie* (1589).

Twentieth-century philosophers, ranging from Richards to Paul Ricoeur to Mark Johnson, charge that the study of rhetoric dwindled because of its containment in rhetoric books where tropes are pressed into mere catalogs of ornaments and the power of figures of speech fades. But Richards is only partly correct when he observes that in the history of rhetoric books metaphor "has been treated as a sort of happy extra tick with words, an opportunity to exploit the accidents of their versatility, something in place occasionally by requiring unusual skill and caution . . . a grace of ornament or *added* power of language, not its constitutive form" (90). Richards overlooks that in classical and Elizabethan rhetoric books metaphor is not presented only as exquisite.

In fact, classical and Elizabethan rhetoricians describe metaphor paradoxically as both exquisite and commonplace. Aristotle observes that metaphor can be found in everyone's speech and also asserts that metaphor is a sign of genius that cannot be learned; Quintilian calls metaphor "the commonest and by far the most beautiful of *tropes* . . . often employed unconsciously or by uneducated persons, but . . . in itself so attractive and elegant that however distinguished the language in which it is embedded it shines forth with a light that is all its own" (Quintilian 1996, 303); and Puttenham asserts that "of any other

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whose aim it is to define *linguistic* effects, end up also describing *sexual* effects that offer a surprising insight into the nature and concept of early modern desire" (Menon 2004, 4).

[figure] being choisly made" metaphor is "the most commendable and most common" (Puttenham 1968, 150). Furthermore, Richards's assertion that the history of rhetoric has treated metaphor as an "*added* power of language, not its constitutive form" does not take sufficiently into account the classical and Renaissance descriptions of metaphor as the mechanism for producing new names, for generating speech about new issues.

Just how powerful an effect a metaphor can have on speech and thought is at the crux of scholarly discussions about whether metaphor occurs at the level of the word, of the sentence, or of discourse at large. Johnson asserts that Richards's theory was ground-breaking because it departed from Aristotle's "focus on single words" and instead described how metaphor "is not a matter of language alone, nor . . . a trope at the level of individual words" (Johnson 1981, 6, 18). Similarly, Ricoeur proposes that by "connecting metaphor to noun or word and not to discourse Aristotle establishes the orientation of the history of metaphor vis-à-vis poetics and rhetoric for several centuries" (Ricoeur 1979, 16). Ricoeur blames the decline of rhetoric on "the tyranny of the word in the theory of meaning" and, like Richards before him, asserts that we "now glimpse only the most distant effects of this error: the reduction of metaphor to a mere ornament" (45).

Richards, Johnson, and Ricoeur criticize Aristotle's theory of metaphor because they take it to imply that metaphor's transformations are contained at the place of the word. Ricoeur further asserts that "if the metaphorical term is really a substituted term, it carries no new information, since the absent term (if one exists) can be brought back in; and if there is no information conveyed, then metaphor has only an ornamental, decorative value" (Ricoeur 1979, 20). Classical and Elizabethan rhetoric books, however, reveal a more complicated attitude toward metaphor: their authors do not advance the notion that a metaphorical substitution of one word for another implies that the metaphor does not transform the substance of the larger utterance.[9] Furthermore,

[9] Anne Ferry advances a substitution theory of metaphor in the sixteenth century when she argues that metaphors such as *stony heart* and *Beawties rocke* "do not evoke detailed connections between the terms, but instead invite translation into such phrases as: *heart which is cruel*, *beauty which is threatening*" and further asserts that "the borrowed noun—*ston*e, *rock*—is thought of quite strictly as a substitution for the absent word" (Ferry 1988, 101). Ferry distinguishes such common metaphors from those with "radically unlike metaphorical terms" that compel a "quite thoroughgoing process of conceptualizing" (101). I would argue, however, that Ferry is distinguishing conventional metaphors from more lively ones

Shakespeare's plays suggest that a metaphorical substitution of one word for another is not so easily reversible as Ricoeur imagines.

Although obscured by the categorical distinction common to many Elizabethan rhetoric books between "tropes of a word" and "tropes of a continued speech or sentence,"[10] the notion that even single-word tropes transform sentences and longer speeches—not just individual words—is nonetheless present. Puttenham classifies metaphor among "sensible" figures that "alter and affect the minde by alteration of sense, and first in single wordes" (Puttenham rpt. 1968, 148). If a single word metaphor can alter and affect the mind, then surely the phenomenon extends beyond a substitution of words that conveys nothing new and that could be reversed with no effect. And Peacham portrays metaphors as something more than single-word ornaments when he asserts that they "giue pleasant light to darke things, thereby remouing unprofitable and odious obscuritie"; "worke in the hearer many effects"; "are forcible to perswade"; and "leave such a firme impression in the memory, as is not lightly forgotten" (Peacham 1954, 13). Such a "firme impression" would not be so easily smoothed over even if the "absent term" were "brought back in," as Ricoeur suggests it could be (Ricoeur 1979, 20).

Furthermore, in the title to the 1577 edition of his rhetoric book, Peacham claims that "The Garden of Eloquence Conteyning the Figures of Grammer and Rhetorick . . . also helpeth much for the better understanding of the holy Scriptures," and in the title to the 1593 edition Peacham announces that he gathers his "varietie of fit examples . . . chieflie out of the holie Scriptures."[11] The potential

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rather than identifying a sixteenth-century approach toward metaphor more generally. The terms of "stonie heart" do not seem "radically unlike" only because the metaphor is familiar: a heart is, after all, radically unlike a stone. I am not convinced that even a metaphor so often used as "stonie heart" was thought of "simply as a translation" (98) or that translation ever is simple.

[10] In *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1560) Wilson divides his classification of figures into "Tropes of a worde," among which he includes metaphor, and "Tropes of a long continued speeche or sentences," among which he includes allegory (Wilson 1909, 172). Peacham in *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577, 1593), Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), and Angel Day in *The English Secretary* (1599) all draw the same distinction.

[11] Peacham's purpose in instruction on metaphor and other figurative language is not unlike St. Augustine's. In *On Christian Teaching* Augustine prefaces his instructions on the interpretation of metaphorical words by noting that it is "a miserable kind of spiritual slavery to interpret signs as things, and to be incapable of raising the mind's eye above the physical creation so as to absorb the eternal light" (Augustine of Hippo 1997, 72). Augustine's instruction about

hermeneutical use for Peacham's rhetoric book itself suggests purpose beyond the ornamental to the study of metaphors, similes, and other figures. Similarly, in the dedicatory epistle for his *A Treasurie or Storehouse of Similies*, Robert Cawdray emphasizes the importance of similes and metaphors for understanding Scripture. Cawdray points out "that there is a necessarie and profitable vse of Similes, we may easily gather, for that the holy Ghost hath so often vsed them, both in the old and new Testament" (Cawdray 1600, A2v). Although Cawrday's volume, 860 pages of cataloged and explicated similes, could be considered evidence of an effort to contain these figures, it hardly suggests that they are merely ornamental.

Twentieth-century accounts of the fate of metaphor in rhetoric books seem insufficiently grounded in the historical periods that produced the books. Judith Anderson, who has argued convincingly that we need to understand early modern language theories in their historical contexts, has challenged recent critiques of word-centered theories of language. Reminding us that early modern grammar and education centered on translations to and from Latin and were therefore word-based, Anderson asserts that "whatever bilingual habits of mind they fostered would have been word-based as well" (Anderson 1998, 237). Anderson acknowledges that "Renaissance rhetorics . . . deal with figures of thought and speech and therefore prioritize word and figure rather than sentence" (237). She nonetheless demonstrates that giving word and figure such priority "should not imply a total ignorance of sentential structure or context" and shows that rather than being "merely subordinate" to sentences, words "had claims of their own beyond those we would normally grant them" (237).[12]

Twentieth-century theories of metaphor, especially those of Richards, Max Black, and Ricoeur, place new emphasis on the interactive nature of metaphor and its functioning at the levels of the sentence and discourse. However, the idea that metaphor affects the purpose, sense, and legitimacy of an entire statement would not be new to Aristotle. Nor would it be to Quintilian, who says explicitly that the changes caused

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metaphorical language is part of his effort to allow a reader of Scripture to "arrive at the hidden meaning for himself or at least avoid falling into incongruous misconceptions" (7).

[12] Anderson goes on to challenge J. L. Austin's now-famous claim that only sentences, not words, have meaning: "If not counterintuitive . . . Austin's declaration is both challenged by history and questioned by popular usage" (1998, 237).

by tropes, especially metaphor, "concern not merely individual words, but also our thoughts and the structure of our sentences" (Quintilian 1996, 301). Quintilian, who "regard[s] those writers as mistaken who have held that *tropes* necessarily involved the substitution of word for word" (301), would hardly object to Ricoeur's judgment that if metaphor "involves taking one thing for another by a sort of calculated error, then metaphor is essentially a discursive phenomenon" or that "[t]o affect just one word, the metaphor has to disturb a whole network by means of an aberrant attribution" (Ricouer 1979, 21).

Compared to his classical and Renaissance philosopher forefathers, Ricoeur more fully recognizes the tension that inevitably accompanies metaphor's power to create what he calls a "new semantic pertinence" (Ricouer 1979, 6). He observes that "[r]esemblance itself must be understood as a tension between identity and difference in the predicative operation set in motion by semantic innovation" (6). This tension inherent in metaphor between the need for difference, distance, and interchange and the need for likeness, proximity, and containment is crucial to my argument about how metaphors perform in Shakespeare's plays. Ricoeur's articulation of metaphor's inherent tension between difference and likeness and his account of how metaphor functions at the level of discourse also illuminate an element of Aristotle's discussions of metaphor that Ricoeur does not fully observe. Aristotle describes how metaphors are most powerful when they beget new, adulterous meanings while escaping detection: the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* reveal metaphor's power to transport alien terms without an auditor's full awareness. Aristotle's theories of metaphor not only are seminal to Elizabethan theories but also illuminate my observations of how in Shakespeare's plays a metaphor's transported, alien term can become, as it were, a resident alien in the world of the play. I therefore turn, now, to a detailed discussion of how metaphor's double identity and stealthy nature emerges in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*.

Metaphor's paradoxical status as both alien and native is first apparent from its placement in the *Poetics* on a list of "kinds of nouns" that begins with "standard"—ordinary words spoken by natives—followed by "exotic"—ordinary words spoken by foreigners—followed by "metaphor"—nonstandard words spoken by natives (Aristotle

1987, 28).[13] Whereas an exotic name has been transported from one geographic domain to another, from a place where it is standard to a place where it is alien, a metaphor remains in the same geographical place, transported instead from one semantic domain to another. Metaphor is alien in its use, yet it is familiar nonetheless.

Likely because of its double identity as familiar and alien, metaphor emerges in the *Poetics* and in the *Rhetoric* as ambiguously associated with alienation, distance, foreignness, and movement. The advantages of the clarity of the familiar are balanced with the appeal of the strange. In the *Poetics* Aristotle asserts that the "virtue of diction is to be clear and not commonplace. Diction made up of standard names is clearest, but is commonplace . . . Diction that uses unfamiliar names is grand and altered from the everyday" (Aristotle 1987, 30). In order to obtain diction that is not commonplace, one must risk the potential obscurity of using "unfamiliar names," including exotic names and metaphor.[14]

But the obscurity that metaphor might cause is different from the obscurity caused by exotic names. Aristotle cautions that if a speech is composed of too many exotic names it will be gibberish; if composed of too many metaphors, the speech will be a riddle. Like a riddle, metaphor uses "an impossible combination [of names]" to say something that is "the case" (Aristotle 1987, 30). Thus, although metaphor can make diction strange, it also gives the listener, who knows the standard names of his native language, the chance to solve its riddle. Metaphor's double identity as strange and familiar is key to understanding the development of rhetoricians' mixed and sometimes ambiguous attitudes towards the

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[13] Although Aristotle's notion of *standard*, as it is translated and transformed by subsequent scholars and philosophers, eventually acquires the greater weight of *proper* or *natural*, Aristotle's definitions of standard [*kyrion*] and exotic [*glotta*] are entirely culturally relative: by "standard" Aristotle says that he means "a name which a particular people uses"; by "exotic" he means "one which other peoples use." Aristotle emphasizes that "it is obvious that it is possible for the same [name] to be both exotic and standard, but not for the same people" (Aristotle 1987, 28).

[14] Like Aristotle, Quintilian regards "clearness as the first essential of a good style: there must be propriety in our words . . . there must be nothing lacking and nothing superfluous" (Quintilian 1996, 209). And yet when Quintilian introduces the subject of ornament, he acknowledges that "a speaker wins but trifling praise if he does no more than speak with correctness and lucidity; in fact his speech seems rather to be free from blemish than to have any positive merit" (211).

trope as well as to the peculiar power of metaphoric utterances revealed in Shakespeare's drama.

Even as Aristotle praises clarity, in the *Rhetoric* he observes that deviation from prevailing use makes "language seem more elevated" because people feel the same about exotic speech as they do about strangers (Aristotle 1991, 221). "As a result," Aristotle recommends, "one should make the language unfamiliar, for people are admirers of what is far off, and what is marvelous is sweet" (221).[15] Having reminded us of the appeal of the unfamiliar, Aristotle associates the unfamiliar—"what is far off"—with poetry. However, the example he gives to illustrate how such unfamiliar language is appropriate to poetry instead illustrates what is inappropriate "even in poetry," namely, for a slave to use fine language or for a young man to speak as if he were an older man (222). Aristotle shifts his discussion of the appeal of the strange to the need for language to reflect social order: in order to be believable, fictional people need to speak in a manner suited to their social roles and rank—young or old, slave or citizen. Aristotle thus turns from the nature of appealing, elevating speech that deviates from prevailing usage to the nature of appropriate speech that reflects expected social order.

And here Aristotle introduces metaphor's tendency to operate undercover. Immediately following his assertion that a speaker's social status must match his speech, Aristotle urges that authors

> should compose without being noticed and should seem to speak not artificially but naturally. (The latter is persuasive, the former the opposite; for [if artifice is obvious] people become resentful, as at someone plotting against them, just as they are at those adulterating wines). (Aristotle 1991, 222)

Matching a speech's style to a speaker's status is part of what makes speech "natural," so Aristotle urges composers not to arouse the suspicions of an audience by making speech seem unnatural. Aristotle does not so much advise against adulterous speech as he advises that speakers not be caught in the act; thus, "authors should compose *without being noticed* and should *seem* to speak not artificially but naturally" (222, emphasis mine).

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[15] In her analysis of Cicero's *De Oratore*, Patricia Parker calls metaphor a *Gastarbeiter*, an "outsider on his best behaviour" (Parker 1982, 134); Aristotle, however, imagines strangers of higher status.

Aristotle turns to the theater to illustrate his point about stealthily adulterous speech:

> An example is the success of Theodorus' voice when contrasted with that of other actors; for his seems the voice of the actual character, but the others' those of somebody else. The "theft" is well done if one composes by choosing words from ordinary language. (222)

Aristotle thus exemplifies speaking "naturally" by an actor so skilled that he seems to speak in the voice of the very character he is pretending to be. And this undetectable ventriloquism is, in turn, linked to composing with ordinary language. Aristotle judges naturalness by the fullness of the transformation of the voice of the actor into the voice of a character. "Natural" speech occurs when artifice is so well crafted that it does not seem like artifice. When this occurs, the theft goes unnoticed; the audience does not resent the plotting against them, though such plotting has occurred; and the thief is not apprehended.[16] Like good acting or writing, effective metaphor, which makes speech appealingly strange, operates under cover. Aristotle's observation that metaphor is most effective when what is strange seems so natural that it is taken as native holds the key to how the alien term of a metaphor powerfully can influence the domain into which it is transported. Shakespeare's plays, which reveal how metaphors can influence a speech community as they circulate without the full awareness of speakers and auditors, confirm Aristotle's notion that a metaphor derives part of its power from its disguise.

Aristotle concludes, paradoxically, that "if one composes well, there will be an unfamiliar quality and it escapes notice and will be clear" (Aristotle 1991, 223). Metaphor, which begins in the *Rhetoric* as one of the kinds of words that can obscure clarity, emerges later as one of the kinds of words that can effect clarity, a clarity through which an unfamiliar quality is nonetheless sensed. Furthermore, in the *Rhetoric* metaphor eventually is allied with standard terms when Aristotle notes

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[16] Longinus makes the point even more explicitly about the kind of plotting required for effective use of figures: "[T]he cunning use of figures arouses a peculiar suspicion in the hearer's mind, a feeling of being deliberately trapped and misled. This occurs when we are addressing a single judge with power of decision, and especially a dictator, a king, or an eminent leader. He is easily angered by the thought that he is being outwitted like a silly child by the expert speaker's pretty figures . . . That is why the best use of a figure is when the very fact that it is a figure goes unnoticed" (Longinus 1991, 29).

that words in their prevailing meaning and metaphor are "alone useful in the *lexis* of prose" (222–3). Aristotle goes on to assert that "[m]etaphor especially has clarity and sweetness and strangeness" (223). How can we make sense of Aristotle's grouping of metaphors with "words in their native and prevailing meanings" and then, in the very next paragraph, associating metaphor with clarity and sweetness and strangeness—clarity and strangeness first having been depicted as at odds?

Here Aristotle turns again to rules for appropriate metaphor, using a metaphor to clarify his point: "But one should consider what suits an old man just as a scarlet cloak is right for a young one; for the same clothes are not right [for both]" (Aristotle 1991, 223). Aristotle's comparison of a metaphor and a cloak is instructive: a cloak both identifies and covers the man who wears it, and a cloak goes unnoticed if it does not obviously disrupt the social and symbolic order. After offering an example of a metaphor inappropriate because too elevated for its subject, Aristotle observes that "there is no 'theft' [if the metaphor is too flagrant]" (224). Once again, undetected theft is the goal.

Aristotle then presents an example of a metaphor he judges to be particularly successful. He notes that

> Gorgias's exclamation to the swallow when she flew down and let go her droppings on him is in the best tragic manner: he said, "Shame on you, Philomela"; for if a bird did it there was no shame, but [it would have been] shameful for a maiden. He thus rebuked the bird well by calling it what it once had been rather than what it now was. (228)

Curiously enough, Gorgias' bird-dropping rhetoric reveals the transformative power of what Aristotle considers to be an exemplary metaphor. While Gorgias' metaphor transports the name *Philomela* and substitutes it for *bird*, the metaphor also transforms an absurd speech act into a comprehensible one by allowing Gorgias to say, and do, something that would make no sense were he using standard terms: as Aristotle notes, since a bird would not feel shame, it would not make sense to rebuke a bird.[17] This metaphor, singled out by Aristotle for special praise, uncannily resolves the tension inherent in metaphor between the familiar and the unfamiliar. By turning the bird into the mythic Philomela who was herself a woman turned into a bird, the metaphor performs as much an

[17] This example refutes Johnson's claim that an Aristotelian view of metaphor focuses solely on single words (Johnson 1981, 6).

act of repatriation as alienation: the bird is returned, as it were, to its original form as a woman. For Aristotle, an exemplary metaphor turns out to be more native than alien. This insight into how the vehicle of a metaphor can come to seem more native than its tenor illuminates instances in which seemingly irrational acts committed by characters in Shakespeare's plays turn out to be authorized by the logic of a metaphor that has made itself at home in the speech community.

In the discussion of urbanities that follows, Aristotle highlights another of metaphor's transformative powers, namely, its ability to cause learning. After Aristotle reviews the basic principle that "[t]o learn easily is naturally pleasant to all people, and words signify something, so whatever words create knowledge in us are the pleasantest," he asserts that metaphor "most brings about learning" (Aristotle 1991, 244). Samuel Levin argues that "Aristotle's theory takes the form it does under the influence of his preoccupation with the teaching function of metaphor, the role it plays in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge" (Levin 1982, 25). Indeed, Aristotle's emphasis on metaphor's role in learning shapes his hierarchy among tropes. He specifies that although a simile can "do the same thing" as a metaphor, a simile is "less pleasing because longer and because it does not say that this *is* that, nor does [the listener's] mind seek to understand this" (Aristotle 1991, 244–5). For Aristotle, pleasure and learning are greatest when the mind is compelled to seek meaning.

Although Aristotle's theory of metaphor may, as Ricoeur emphasizes, focus on the word, it is nonetheless a theory of metaphor as a form of predication: Aristotle clearly acknowledges that metaphor says that *this* is *that*. And because, as Aristotle emphasizes, the hearer of a metaphor must seek to understand the *thisness* of *that*, and the *thatness* of *this*, the impact of such predication extends beyond the speaker. In describing the role of metaphor in urbanities, Aristotle asserts that through metaphor "it becomes clearer [to the listener] that he learned something different from what he believed, and his mind seems to say, 'How true, and I was wrong' " (Aristotle 1991, 250). In this way metaphor has an especially condensed power to change someone's mind, to have someone conceive a new idea. As John Searle observes about metaphor, "[t]he hearer . . . has to contribute more to the communication than just passive uptake" (Searle 1979, 123). And Ted Cohen explains that as soon as a hearer comes to understand a metaphor, she or he is complicit in the metaphoric act (Cohen 1978, 9). The need for an auditor actively to make, or complete, the meaning of a metaphor complicates the agency of metaphoric utterances: the agent of the speech act becomes hard to isolate because an auditor co-creates the meaning of a metaphor as

soon as she or he understands it. This blurred agency manifests itself in the worlds of Shakespeare's plays where metaphoric utterances sometimes exceed a speakers' intentions and escape a speaker's control with unwitting consequences.

Aristotle's focus on the witting and pleasurable conception provoked by metaphor brings metaphor into a special relationship with *mimesis*. In the *Poetics* Aristotle asserts that "[e]veryone delights in representations," even of "the most detailed images of things which in themselves we see with pain, e.g. the shapes of the most despised wild animals even when dead" (Aristotle 1987, 4). People learn as they observe, and they "infer what each thing is, e.g. that this person [represents] that one" (4). Richard Janko notes a connection between *mimesis* and metaphor: he asserts that the "emotional effect" of *mimesis* "depends on our recognition that the representation *is* a representation . . . Plot is the representation of action; similarly words themselves are representations of things, and metaphor is a word which represents another" (220). Metaphor thus derives its power from the auditor's movement between representation and reality, metaphor and literal word.

Aristotle again emphasizes the audience's agency and responsibility when, in the *Poetics*, he values plot over spectacle: the plot compels the audience actively to compare a representation to an object in order to learn, which, for Aristotle, is the most pleasurable and valuable experience. Such acts of comparison demand that the listener traverse the distance between things seemingly unlike in order to discover how they are alike. In *mimesis* and metaphor, "alien names" ultimately are transported by listeners, which can make listeners more susceptible to metaphors than they may suspect.

Although listeners might make the final transport, the first transport, according to Aristotle, should occur during composition when the poet transports himself by "step[ping] outside" of himself, putting the events "before his eyes as much as he can," and "seeing them very vividly as if he were actually present at the actions [he represents]" (Aristotle 1987, 22). Aristotle observes that, for a poet, using metaphorical names "is the most important by far," that using metaphor "alone" cannot be learned from someone else, and that it "is an indication of genius" (32). Poetry relies on the ability to use metaphor well; metaphor is associated with native talent; and native talent is associated with the ability to step outside of oneself. Here again metaphor occupies the uncanny space of native and distant, revelatory and obscure, common and uncommon.

In such territory metaphor operates as a double agent, at once familiar and strange, prompting speakers and auditors to beget meanings and conceive ideas, sometimes without full awareness. Metaphor's dual nature, the very source of its great productiveness, also is the source of the cautions about this moving figure. Just as the man who fears an unchaste wife imagines a strange child could be transported into his home, escape his notice, and usurp his name and property, so the speaker who fears unchaste signification imagines that a strange word will be transported into his domain, escape notice, and usurp proper meaning. Shakespeare's plays confirm that the worry about unchaste signification is warranted. Still, as the reluctant Benedick points out, "the world must be peopled" (*Ado* 2.3.233–4). So too must it be spoken about.

The covert qualities of metaphor observed by Aristotle centuries ago take center stage in Friedrich Nietzsche's posthumously published essay on the peculiarly metaphorical nature of truth, the oft-cited "On Truth and Falsehood in the Extramoral Sense." Whereas Aristotle associates metaphor's illuminating power with its ability to escape detection, Nietzsche charges that human beings delude themselves when they forget the nature of metaphors and disavow the inherently metaphoric nature of perception and knowledge. Nietzsche asserts that in the pursuit of truth man "forgets that the original metaphors of perception *are* metaphors, and takes them for things themselves" (Nietzsche 1997, 94). For Nietzsche, truth is

> A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they *are* illusions; worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses; coins with their images effaced and now no longer of account as coins but merely as metal. (92)

Shakespeare's plays, in their condensed and stylized representations of the workings of human relationships within speech communities, bear out Nietzsche's claim that as a metaphor circulates it eventually might be taken for the truth itself, its metaphoric nature having been obscured.

Whereas Nietzsche asserts that such worn-out metaphors are "powerless to affect the senses," however, Shakespeare's plays suggest that such metaphors have a peculiar power. Whereas Nietzsche's worn metaphors are coins worth only their metal, Shakespeare shows that even worn metaphors can retain value in the linguistic economy.

Nietzsche imagines that people accept worn-out metaphors as abstract truths because they are motivated by a desire for safety: the "rational" man "wards off misfortune by means of them" and "strives after the greatest possible freedom from pains" (99). Shakespeare's plays, however, suggest that a community's collective forgetting of the figurative nature of a metaphor rarely shelters anyone from misfortune and may, instead, bring about great suffering. Metaphors have a special power to shape and misshape perceptions of reality, to figure and disfigure it. Nietzsche's observations about the preconceived quality of such metaphors are useful here: when speakers utter and reiterate metaphors without recognizing their metaphoric nature or power, or without taking conscious part in their formulation, they can delude themselves and others. Careful observation of the language of Shakespeare's plays reveals that such unwitting metaphoric utterances can facilitate devastating acts.

Nietzsche's critique of truth emerges from his assertion that what are recognized and exchanged as truths are in fact metaphors that "after long usage seem . . . fixed, canonic and binding" (92): one of the problems for Nietzsche with these "truths" is that their metaphoric nature has been disavowed. Even as Nietzsche asserts that these truths are in fact vestiges of forgotten metaphors—vehicles that have escaped their tenors, as it were—he uses the metaphor of coins with effaced images to bring these misleadingly uninformative metaphorical remains before our eyes. Nietzsche thus vividly enacts a fundamental tension within philosophies of metaphor. On the one hand, metaphorical language can move an auditor or reader to unusually clear comprehension of something—even of illusion. On the other hand, metaphorical language can deceive an auditor or reader because it is powerful enough to obfuscate or even to take the place of the thing itself.

Nietzsche's account of how metaphors can become truths illuminates how in Shakespeare's plays a metaphorical utterance may escape the conversation in which it is spoken and heard and acquire mysterious agency in the play at large. Thus, a metaphor or simile which at first seems merely to represent or describe some reality can instead transform that reality. It is as if the metaphoric speech shifts from constantive to performative in J. L. Austin's sense, as if it becomes speech in which the "uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action"

(Austin 1975, 5). Indeed, this performative quality of metaphor was recognized in Shakespeare's day: as I have noted in the preface, in the late sixteenth century the English translator Robert Carew observed that "our speech doth not consist only of wordes, but in a sorte euen of deedes, as when wee expresse a matter by Metaphors, wherin the English is very frutefull and forcible" (Carew 1904, 288).

But the circulation of metaphors in Shakespeare's plays is more communal in nature than Austin's theory of performative speech suggests. Cultural anthropologists' observations of how metaphors function in rituals are helpful even for thinking about the fictional, everyday conversations that constitute Shakespeare's plays. In a discussion of Bwiti ritual performance, James Fernandez describes how metaphors can "bring about actions appropriate to their realization" and "imply performance" (Fernandez 1977, 104). Fernandez names this kind of metaphor "performative metaphor," which he defines as "a strategic predication upon an inchoate pronoun (an I, a you, a we, a they) which makes a movement and leads to performance" (104). J. Christopher Crocker makes the broader point that figurative language "does not just *express* the pertinence of certain cultural axioms to given social conditions, it *provides the semantic conditions through which* actors deal with that reality, and these conditions are general to all social contexts and all actors within that society" (Crocker 1977, 46). Crocker sees metaphors "not just as a way into the generative logical models of a society, but also as a way out, as ways people come to 'understand' and, then, act" (50).[18]

Ricoeur shares this understanding of the power of metaphors spoken in communities: he asserts that "metaphor is the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality" (Ricoeur 1979, 7). Furthermore, Ricoeur observes the tension that results from such a process:

> From this conjunction of fiction and redescription I conclude that the 'place' of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb *to be*. The metaphorical 'is' at once signifies both 'is not' and 'is

[18] In their book *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson propose the related idea that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 3). Asserting that "our conceptual system is largely metaphorical," they conclude that "the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (3). Lakoff and Johnson attempt to identify "the metaphors . . . that structure how we perceive, how we think, and what we do" (4).

> like.' If this is really so, we are allowed to speak of metaphorical truth, but in an equally 'tensive' sense of the word 'truth.' (7)

Ricoeur's locating the paradoxical power of metaphor at the *copula* of *to be*, evokes a linguistic relation between predication and procreation, between human coupling and conjugating. And here again metaphor is situated at the convergence of notions of linguistic and family lines that beget future generations of words and people.

Furthermore, the status of the verb *to be* and the metaphoric *is* lies at the heart of the most profound theological controversy of Shakespeare's time. As Anderson has shown, conservative and reformation theologians alike pondered the signification of the Words of Institution, "This is my body" (Anderson 2005, 42). Is the *is* copulative, an expression of essence? Or is it substantive, an expression of presence? Judy Kronenfeld (1998), Richard McCoy (2002), and Anderson (2005), all have emphasized that because most Protestant Reformers were not satisfied with Ulrich Zwingli and Johannes Oecolampadius's position that the Eucharist is a remembrance of the absent Christ, they labored to distinguish between mere signs—"vain, nude, and bare tokens," as Archbishop Cranmer called them—and sacramental signs that are conjoined to the truth they represent. Even as Reformers rejected a corporeal real presence, they affirmed a spiritual real presence (qtd. in Kronenfeld 1998, 44–5). The articulation of this *via media* is linked crucially to the status of metaphor. Anderson demonstrates that Cranmer's challenge, in his *An Answer unto a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation Devised by Stephen Gardiner*, "was effectively to convey a metaphorical conception of presence" (Anderson 2005, 4). Shakespeare's metaphors suggest understanding the *is* of "This is my body" as a metaphorical presence would hardly reduce the power of the sacrament.[19]

Nietzsche sees "the impulse toward the formation of metaphors" as a "fundamental impulse of man" (Nietzsche 1997, 97). It is through the "hardening and stiffening" of the "primitive world of metaphors," says

[19] Robert Weimann has argued that Shakespeare "was in a position to release an absolute host of energies and tensions in the metaphoric process of his language and ultimately this reflected . . . a quality of living, an element of social and cultural awareness in an age of transition and contradiction, a revolutionary position of discovery and experimental activity" (Weimann 1974, 167).

Nietzsche, that man "forgets himself as subject, and what is more, as an *artistically creating* subject" (94). Such forgetting of oneself as the subject of what one utters allows the unexpected distribution of "complicities" in "ethical discourses" Harry Berger discovers in Shakespeare's plays (Berger 1997, 288). Berger notes that "the Shakespearean text depicts tensions and negotiations between the performative desire invested in the project of representing oneself and the wayward performativity of the discourses that both structure and jeopardize the project" (292). Metaphoric utterances have a special potential to perform speech acts that go unacknowledged. And such metaphoric utterances are often the type about which Nietzsche worries, namely, worn or hardened metaphors unthinkingly accepted and exchanged as truths.

Despite his distress about the fate of worn-out metaphors, Nietzsche insists that the human impulse towards metaphor cannot be "defeated nor even subdued" by the abstract ideas out of which "a regular and rigid new world has been built as a fortress to dominate it" (Nietzsche 1997, 97). Instead, Nietzsche asserts, metaphor seeks and finds a new realm in myth and art where lively metaphor thrives. Like Nietzsche, Ricoeur emphasizes this liveliness of metaphor: indeed, the French title of Ricoeur's study of metaphor is *La métaphore vive*. In his discussion of Aristotle's concept of *mimesis*, Ricoeur asserts:

> To present men "*as acting*" and all things "*as in act*"—such could well be the *ontological* function of metaphorical discourse, in which every dormant potentiality of existence appears as blossoming forth, every latent capacity for action *as* actualized. *Lively* expression is that which expresses existence as *alive*. (Ricoeur 1979, 43)

More than half a century ago, Sister Miriam Joseph observed that "[m]any of Shakespeare's metaphors suggest the activity, aliveness, and freshness commended by Aristotle" (Joseph 1966, 145). Shakespeare's plays compel us to witness the human conditions under which metaphors can harden into dangerous truths even as they move our lively understanding of this process.

2

Proving Desdemona Haggard: Metaphor and Marriage in *Othello*

> [F]or we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them. (George Eliot, *Middlemarch*)

> A language, and, insofar as it can be said to have conventions . . . a culture, is the ultimate subjunctive, an "as if" made into an "is" by the seriousness of those who use it. (Roy Wagner, *Symbols That Stand for Themselves*)

As Othello considers the action he will take if he proves his wife guilty of adultery, he imagines his potentially adulterous wife as "haggard," a term which figures Othello as a falconer and Desdemona as his inadequately tamed hawk:

> If I do prove her haggard,
> Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
> I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
> To prey at fortune. Haply for I am black
> And have not those soft parts of conversation
> That chamberers have, or for I am declined
> Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
> She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
> Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage
> That we can call these delicate creatures ours
> And not their appetites! (3.3.264–74)[1]

[1] Quotations of *Othello* follow the Arden text, edited by E. A. J. Honigmann (Shakespeare 1997b).

Othello's metaphor transforms the figurative bond of marriage into the literally binding jesses, the leather bands fastened to a hawk's legs to which a falconer's leash could be attached. Depicting those jesses as his heartstrings, Othello reveals that he is prepared to cut out a part of himself to be rid of an adulterous wife.[2] To "let" Desdemona "down the wind to prey at fortune," the heartstrings tying Desdemona to Othello would be excised from Othello's body and left dangling from her ankles.

It is not Othello, however, who first introduces a falconry metaphor into the play's world. Nor, as one might suspect, is it the villain Iago. It is Desdemona herself who unleashes these threatening fantasies when, in a conversation with Cassio, she figures herself as her husband's falconer, one who will "watch him tame" (3.3.23). However playfully Desdemona might present herself as a wife who will control her husband like a falconer tames his hawk, her metaphor nonetheless initiates the grave translation of her marriage into falconry terms. Iago reiterates the metaphor when, speaking to Othello, he figures Desdemona as a falconer who was able to "seel her father's eyes up" (3.3.213), another technique for taming hawks. It is after Iago exits when Othello, suspecting his wife's unfaithfulness, figures her as potentially "haggard" and fully imagines his response if he proves her so (3.3.264).

Paul Ricoeur's observation that to "affect just one word" a metaphor "has to disturb a whole network by means of an aberrant attribution" (Ricoeur 1979, 21) applies aptly to *Othello*'s pivotal Act 3, in which a series of falconry metaphors disturbs the community in which Desdemona and Othello's marriage is spoken and acted. Desdemona's metaphor, "I'll watch him tame," activates falconry discourses about how haggard hawks are likely to take control of their unrewarding, incompetent falconers, and the metaphor thereby facilitates the circulation of the anxiety that Desdemona will take control of her husband. Here I borrow Harry Berger's definition of discourses, namely, "cultural ready-mades with their own logic and agency [that] are taken up, deployed, and 'operated' by individual speakers whose language may be interrogated for traces of discursive activity and motivation" (Berger 1997, 338).[3] Once spoken, the metaphors that cast Desdemona

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[2] *Heartstrings* were "[i]n old notions of Anatomy, the tendons or nerves supposed to brace and sustain the heart" (*OED* 1).

[3] Lars Engle offers a similar explanation of discourse as "the collection of preexistent constitutive linguistic and social and cultural modes, forms, or codes, themselves evolving and interacting, which surround, condition, and interpret the activity of subjects" (Engle 1993, 61). Engle further notes that although

alternately as a falconer and a haggard hawk take hold in the world of the play where Desdemona's pursuit of Cassio, even if intended on her husband's behalf, seems to verify her identity as desirous beyond the control of her husband. Othello and Desdemona's marriage is transformed by the terms with which they speak of it. As Berger notes, Othello and Desdemona "are more than [Iago's] victims; they are his accomplices. The words with which he poisons their greedy ears are words he appropriates from their mouths, their contexts, their intentions—and their acts of silence" (Berger 2004, 3). Careful attention to *Othello*'s falconry metaphors illuminates not only how the triangulated terms of Desdemona and Othello's desire modeled on falconer, hawk, and prey ultimately frustrate the couple's union but also how a metaphor has the power to shape the perceptions upon which people act.

In *Othello* metaphors circulate not merely because characters overhear and reiterate them: they circulate because metaphors transport larger discourses into a speech community, discourses that remain actively present. The logic and agency of these "cultural ready-mades" powerfully shape the way a community speaks about and understands itself. Metaphoric language that might seem merely ornamental or playful becomes gravely performative when speakers unwittingly adopt the logic of the discourse transported by a metaphor. A metaphor can prompt seemingly irrational beliefs and acts when the logic of the vehicle, as it were, overwrites the logic of the tenor.

Cultural anthropologist Roy Wagner demonstrates that "a metaphor expands the frame of its self-referentiality by processual extension into a broader range of cultural relevance" (Wagner 1986, 9). Wagner further asserts that "[a] trope is no longer necessarily an instantaneous flash, but potential process, and its process—the constituting of cultural frames—is simultaneously also revelation, or knowledge process" (9). The cultural frame of marriage-as-falconry is part of the "web" with which Iago "ensnare[s]" Cassio (2.1.168)—and Othello and Desdemona. Tragically, its first threads are spun by Desdemona herself when she speaks of her marriage in falconry terms. *Othello* reveals how Othello's attempt to "prove" Desdemona "haggard" (3.3.264) is not the instantaneous flash of a trope but rather the culmination of a metaphoric

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"[l]anguage is the most embracing and general of these," he also considers "institutions, systems of classification and coercion, and so on 'discursive formations' " (61).

process by which Othello comes to know Desdemona as a woman so threatening that he feels obliged to kill her.

A falconer profits when his hawk desires, pursues, and seizes its prey and returns the prey to him. Although a hawk that hunts for itself is of no use to the falconer, a tamed hawk must be tamed only to the degree that it does not devour its prey: it must be desirous enough to hunt the prey and tame enough to accept the falconer's reward in exchange for it. When Othello begins to doubt Desdemona's chastity, he imagines himself as an unsuccessful falconer doomed to release his hawk, and he then discloses that he imagines himself as an unsuccessful husband. Even if he reconsiders, "yet that's not much," Othello nonetheless enumerates how his rewards might not be sufficiently satisfying to lure Desdemona's return: he is "black"; he lacks "those soft parts of conversation / That chamberers have"; and he is "declined / Into the vale of years" (3.3.267-270).

Othello's metaphor of an adulterous Desdemona as a haggard hawk implies that a chaste Desdemona would be a tamed hawk, a woman from whose desire and hunting he will profit, a woman whose appetite he could call his. Baldassare Estense's fifteenth-century portrait of *The Family of Umberto de Sacrati* reveals more fully the metaphoric logic of a husband's desire to call his wife's appetite his: like a tamed hawk fetches prey for her falconer, a chaste wife fetches a legitimate son for her falconer-husband (see Figure 2.1). The portrait's composition emphasizes this analogy: falconer-husband holds his tamed hawk on one hand and clutches his wife with his other; chaste wife, in turn, clutches the son.

Shakespeare's use of falconry as a metaphor for marriage is not new to *Othello*: it debuts in his early comedy *The Taming of the Shrew*, the play whose falconry imagery has received the most critical attention.[4] Although editors of *Othello* generally gloss its falconry terms, little critical attention has been focused on their overall effect in *Othello*, a play in which falconry imagery is sparse yet significant

[4] Edward Berry has offered an extensive discussion in his chapter, "The 'Manning' of Katherine: Falconry in *The Taming of the Shrew*" (Berry 2001, 95–132), and Frances Dolan has called attention to the parallels between marriage and falconry in her edition of the play (Dolan 1996, 304–12). See also Maurice Pope's comprehensive survey, "Shakespeare's Falconry" (Pope 1992, 131–43).

Figure 2.1 Baldassare Estense (1401–66), *The Family of Umberto de Sacrati*

in understanding the tragedy. Furthermore, even *The Oxford English Dictionary* does not indicate the full range of meanings of *haggard* in early modern English falconry books. Its first definition for the noun *haggard* is "a wild (female) hawk caught when in her adult plumage" (*OED* 1) and the second "figurative" listing is "a wild and intractable person" (*OED* 1b *fig*).[5] But in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century falconry books *haggard* also is associated with foreignness and supreme

[5] The definitions for the adjective *haggard* are derived from the noun's: "1. Of a hawk: Caught after having assumed the adult plumage; hence, wild, untamed

desirability, significances missing from *The Oxford English Dictionary*'s listings. Because these additional notions of *haggard* are crucial to how figuring Desdemona as *haggard* helps to plot her fate, a discussion of George Turberville's 1575 *The Booke of Faulconrie or Hauking, for the Onely Delight and pleasure of all Noblemen and Gentlemen*, Symon Latham's 1614 *Falconry or The Faulcons Lure, and Cure: in Two Books*, and Edmund Bert's 1619 *An Approved Treatise of Hawkes and Hawking* precedes my analysis of the falconry metaphors in *Othello*.

In reading these falconry treatises as context for *Othello*, I borrow a method from Patricia Parker, namely, to "consider the implications of reading both Shakespeare and the texts of early modern culture with an awareness of the historical resonance of their terms, not just for the purposes of interpretation but as a way of perceiving links between the plays and larger contemporary discursive networks" (Parker 1994, 106). Shakespeare's *Othello* demonstrates, I shall argue, that metaphors have a peculiar power to activate such links between discourses—here between those of falconry and those of marriage. As a metaphor transports a word or phrase from one semantic realm to another, it can carry with it the narratives and logic of a discourse that then take up more permanent, though often unacknowledged, residence in a speech community. If, as Aristotle describes, metaphor transports an "alien" name (Aristotle 1991, 295), the vehicle of Desdemona as *haggard*, fetched from the world of falconry, becomes, as it were, a resident alien in the world of her marriage with agency of its own.

Early Modern English notions of *haggard*, as revealed in the falconry treatises of the time, include the threat of role reversal: an untamed haggard hawk threatens, as it were, to become like the falconer of her man, who, in turn, would become like the tamed hawk following after her. Falconers did in fact train and hunt with female hawks because female hawks are larger and more powerful than their male mates—and haggards were considered the very best hunters. Thus, the comparison of a woman to a hawk, a species in which the female naturally exceeds the male's physical strengths and abilities, inverts the hierarchy considered natural among human beings. The extent to which a wife

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. . . (*obs.*). 2. *transf.* and *fig.* a. Wild, unreclaimed, untrained (often with direct reference to 1). b. 'Froward, contrarie, crosse, vnsociable' (Cotgr.)" (*OED* a. 1, 2).

is like a female hawk interrupts the belief that females of the species are naturally weaker. Indeed, figuring marriage in terms of falconry, and comparing taking a wife to making a hawk, suggests that a man needs to tame his wife because she is naturally more powerful than he and naturally averse to subjugating herself to him.

Descriptions of the power and sovereignty of the female hawk occur in the hawking treatises of George Turberville and Edmund Bert, but Symon Latham's description is particularly striking. Latham describes how the "Hawgard Faulcon . . . while shee is wilde, and vnreclaimed" is

> like a Conqueror in the contry, keeping in awe and subiection the most part of all the Fowle that flie, insomuch that the Tassell gentle, her naturall and chiefest companion, dares not come neere that coast where shee vseth, nor sit by the place, where she standeth: such is the greatnesse of her spirit, she wil not admit of any society, vntill such time as nature worketh in her an inclination to put that in practise which all Hawkes are subiect vnto at the spring time: and then she suffereth him to draw towards her, but still in subiection, which appeareth at his coming, by bowiug [sic] down his body and head to his foot, by calling and cowring with his wings, as the young ones doe vnto their dam, whom they dare not displease, and thus they leaue the countrey for the sommer time, hasting to the place where they meane to breede. (Latham 1614, 5)

The male "Tassle gentle"—even during mating season—is cowering and infantilized, the female "Hawgard" temporarily subject only to nature's provoked "inclination" to mate. Edmund Bert further explains that the Haggart is "harder to be brought to subiection and obedience" because she "hath liued long at liberty, hauing many things at her command" (Bert 1619, 3).

George Turberville also describes the natural dominance of female birds of prey who are "ever more huge than the male, more ventrous, hardie, and watchfull" (Turberville 1575, 3). He suggests that the art of falconry is "a matter almost quite against the lawes of nature and kynde" and expresses astonishment that falcons, "being by kinde set free and at libertie to praye" having caught their prey "with greedie and willing minde," would then, "hauing the whole scope of the heauens, and the circuite of the earth at their pleasure to range and peruse," nonetheless "yeelde them selues in such franke maner to the pryson and custodie of man" (5–6). A wife, in her likeness to a falcon, would be "by kind" free

and only by man's "skill" and "industry" confined to the "prison" and "custody" of her husband.

The Oxford English Dictionary's definition of the adjective *haggard* features the word's association with a hawk "caught after having assumed the adult plumage; hence wild, untamed" (*OED* a.1). This definition cites—and certainly fits—Turberville's use of the word in his *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonets* (1567).[6] However, Turberville's uses of the word *haggard* in the hawking book he published eight years after *Epitaphes* feature a sense of the word not included in *The Oxford English Dictionary*'s definitions, namely, the foreignness of these birds who migrate to Italy from other parts of the Mediterranean. In *The Booke of Faulconrie or Hauking*, "Haggart" first appears as the name of "the huge and royall Eagle, whiche is the Haggart or Passenger" (Turberville 1575, 22). Of special interest when considering the geography of *Othello*, this *Haggart* is bred in "the hyghest clyues of Leuante, and speciallye in those of Cyprus" (23). Turberville reports that the *Haggart* is used by "sundry noble men" including the "great Turke of all other Princes" (23). Although at first Turberville assures us that his information has "bene reported unto [him] credibly," he later casts doubt on the authenticity of the report that the "mightie Prince the Turke" has used the bird for sport and claims: "I can affirme nothing of my selfe, but do followe mine authour . . . and am bolde to make recytall of it in this place, bothe for the hugenesse of the fowle, as also the straungenesse of the practise" (23–4). Turberville is attracted by the strange story of the strange practice even as he doubts its veracity. The word *Haggart* first appears in an English falconry book in association with Cyprus and dubious tales of noble Turks.

In the next section of Turberville's book, *Haggart* appears as the name for a type of falcon.[7] Turberville asserts that "shee should be better able to endure colde than the Falcon Gentle, because she dothe come

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[6] As the *OED* notes in its first definition for the adjective *haggard*, Turberville's first published use of the word appears in his book of poems, *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets, with a Discourse of the Friendly affections of Tymetes to Pyndara* (Turberville 1567). In his poems Turberville's use of the word *haggard* matches the *OED*'s definition. For instance, "The Lover to a Gentlewoman, that after great friendship without desart or cause of mislyking refused him" describes how "Haukes which loue their keepers call . . . Doe farre exceede the haggarde Hauke / that stoopeth to no stale; / Nor forceth on the Lure awhit, / but mounts with euery gale" (Turberville 1567, 14v–15r).

[7] Turberville announces in the subtitle of his book that he has collected material from Italian and French authors and has included "some English practices" as

from forayne partes a straunger, and a passenger, and doth winne all hir pray and meate at the hardest by mayne wing" (Turberville 1575, 26). Turberville's emphasis on how the haggard's experience at surviving long journeys makes her strong connects a haggard's power to her foreignness.

When discussing the etymology of their name, Turberville pronounces Haggart Falcons "the most excellent byrdes of all other Falcons" and repeatedly portrays the Haggart Falcon as foreign—"strangers in Italie" (33), "trauaylers" (33), "passengers" (33), "pilgrims" (34), and "forayners" (34), who "rangle and wander more than any other sorte of Falcons"(34)[8] and who are "not of Italie, but transported and brought thither from forayne places, as namely from Alexandria, Cyprus, and Candie" (34). In his study of how these falcons came to be termed "Haggart or Peregrin Hawkes," Turberville says he "first was of opinion that men so called them, for that they are brought unto us, from farre and forayne contries, and are in deede meere strangers in Italie, and (as a man may call them) trauaylers" (33). But because Turberville does not find this an adequately distinguishing reason for the terms "Perrigrine or Haggart Falcons," he outlines three additional "causes" for their name (33).

Turberville's first cause extends the association of haggard with strangeness beyond the sense of a foreign hawk living in Italy to a hawk whose origin is almost mythically unknowable:

> First, bicause a man can not finde, nor euer yet did any man Christian or Heathen, fynde their eyrie in any Region, so as it may well be thought, that for that occasion they have atchieved and gotten that name and terme of Peregrine or Haggart Falcons, as if a man, would call them Pilgrims or Forayners. (Turberville 1575, 33–4)

In this sense Desdemona's being "haggard" suggests transience and lack of origins, which is, curiously, the identity Roderigo explicitly assigns Othello—the "extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and every where" (1.1.134–5). But Desdemona, as a woman within a patriarchal society, also fits this sense of haggard. Brabantio's response to his

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well. Turberville's compilation approach to his book likely accounts for the sometimes contradictory information in it and might also account for his focus on the language of falconry and the etymology of terms. Turberville devotes his first 74 pages to a taxonomy of eagles and falcons and records Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and German names for varieties of birds.

[8] The *OED* defines *rangle*: "Chiefly *Falconry*. *Obs*. to stray, to rove to wander."

daughter's eloping, "I had rather to adopt a child than get it" (1.3.192), implies that once a daughter leaves her father's house—and especially if she has followed her own desires to do so—her origins might as well be unknown. Brabantio further remarks, "I am glad at soul I have no other child, / For thy escape would teach me tyranny / To hang clogs on them" (1.3.197–9). Turberville uses the word *clog* specifically for a hawk's luring bells: he advises that when a haggard "rangle[s] out from hir keeper . . . Then shal you *clogge* hir with greater lewring bells . . . to teache hir holde in, and knowe the man" (151, emphasis mine). A *haggard* Desdemona is thus unknowable and in need of restraint.

Turberville's second "cause" for the term haggard is

> bycause these Falcons do rangle and wander more than any other sorte of Falcons are wonte to do, seeking out more straunge and uncouth countries, which in deede may giue them that title of Haggart and Peregrine Hawkes, for their excellencie, bycause they do seeke so many straunge and forayne coastes, and do rangle so far abrode. (Turberville 1575, 34)

Again, this sense of haggard applies easily to Othello, who reports to the senate that, when a guest at Brabantio's house, he "would all [his] pilgrimage dilate" (1.3.154). Othello's "travailous history" (1.3.140) of journeys to foreign lands inhabited by "cannibals" and "men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders" (1.3.144-5) was one that Desdemona, understandably, "swore . . . was passing strange" (1.3.161). Othello's identity as an experienced traveler is even more clearly pronounced in the play's first quarto which prints "trauells" and first folio which prints "Trauellours" where editor E. A. J. Honigmann prints "travailous." But Desdemona too is like a haggard who "rangle[s] so far abrode" (Turberville 1575, 24), first when she "g[ets] out" (1.1.167) from her father's house and then when she insists on accompanying her husband to the foreign coast of Cyprus.[9]

Turberville's third "cause" of the term haggard, "their beautie and excellencie" (Turberville 1575, 34), which also applies to Desdemona,

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[9] In her discussion of "*Othello* as an Adventure Play," a genre in which "loss of identity is at the heart of the plays' anxieties," Jean Howard remarks of *Othello* that "Shakespeare's genius in this play is to imagine what it might be like to make a black man the hero of a tragic tale of cross-cultural encounter, to imagine, so to speak, what the process Englishmen were undergoing might look like from the other side" (Howard 2005, 93, 95). In moving the couple to Cyprus, Shakespeare also imagines a woman as the tragic heroine of a cross-cultural encounter.

follows the unknowably foreign and traveling nature of the Haggart Falcon, indicating a link between the suspicion of and attraction toward foreign and mysterious haggards.

Turberville remarks on how the very qualities that make the "Haggart" such an effective hawk—its great appetite and independent skill at hunting—also make the hawk a challenge for her keeper. He notes that falconers need not train a haggard to hunt because they "haue bene accustomed to praye for themselues, and doe by experience knowe one fowle from an other" (Turberville 1575, 152). A "Haggart," who before being captured as a mature hawk, has not "bene subiect to the order of any keper" is accustomed "to gorge hir selfe" (37). Figuring Desdemona "haggard" affirms Iago's portrayal of her as a woman, newly subject to her keeper, whose "eye must be fed" (2.1.223). But, Iago asserts, eventually Desdemona's "blood" will be "made dull with the act of sport," and since Othello is "defective" in "manners and beauties" (2.1.224–8), Desdemona will eventually be unsatisfied and "begin to heave the gorge" (2.1.230–1).

Turberville emphasizes that a Haggart's "gadding moode and gallantnesse of mind" leads her to "rangle" out from her keeper (Turberville 1575, 151). Since the hawk's appetite cannot be suppressed, merely redirected, Turberville warns the keeper that he must "aboue all things . . . lette hir take hir pleasure of hir rewarde. And (as Falconers tearme it) to bee euer well in bloude. For otherwise she will not long be at your commaundement, but make you followe hir" (Turberville 1575, 151–2). Here Turberville articulates the danger that an unsatisfied Haggart will obtain control of her falconer: if the Haggart is uncertain that she will have the pleasure of a reward, she won't return to the falconer, and the falconer instead will be compelled to follow the hawk as he tries to reclaim her. This potential that a haggard will, by acting directly on her own desire, cause a role reversal by taking control of her falconer is activated by Desdemona's metaphoric portrayal of herself as her husband's falconer and Iago's portrayal of Desdemona as a falconer who tamed her father, scenes to which I shall return for fuller analysis.

Even though Symon Latham expresses impatience for the taxonomic projects of naming hawks and distinguishes his book from Turberville's as more practical and more closely tied to current oral traditions of falconry,[10] he nonetheless names the haggard falcon as "the birde, and

[10] Latham says that he will call hawks "by such as in our memories as at this present are most familiar, and ordeinarily vsed amongst vs" and will show how

hawke, that (in these daies) most men doe couet," the bird "more able to endure both wind, weather, & all sorts of other extraordinary seasons" than any other (Latham 1614, 1–2, 4). In fact, the young haggard falcon is so hardy that she can become a danger to herself. Latham notes that "the yong Hawgards" are of such "great mettall and spirit, that for want of vnderstanding their owne harme, do venture vpon such unwealdy pray, who not withstanding will afterwards learne to know their own error, & by being brusht & beten by those shrewd apponents, will desist and leaue off to meddle with them any more" (Latham 1614, 5–6). Desdemona, not understanding her own potential harm, does not get the chance to "leave off to meddle" with her "unwealdy pray."

Latham stresses how the hawk's "stomacke" is the key to reclaiming her, "for it is that onely that guides and rules her, it is the curbe and bridle that holds and keepes her in subiection to the man, & it is the spurre that pricketh her forwarde to perform the duty she oweth to her keeper" (Latham 1614, 10). Latham repeatedly stresses the significance of rewarding a falcon and notes the consequences of a keeper's failure to satisfy his hawk's desire. If the keeper has given his hawk "a very slight reward, or none at all," such as "the pelt of a pigeon, or some other dead thing, in which shee takes no delight," Latham asserts that "neither are such slight matters anything worth, to win a Hawgards loue withall" (15). Haggards need live and attractive rewards: mere pelts of pigeons won't do.[11] Latham further describes how a hawk who has been "long debarred of her naturall desire and delight" will, when coming upon the lure of a live dove, "for feare you should depriue her of her vnaccustomed yet long desired pleasure . . . rise, and carry it away" (15).[12]

Latham admits that the pleasure a haggard takes in her reward is the "only cause that moues a hawke to come vnto the man (which euery Fawlconer must confesse is true)," and in so confessing Latham implies

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to reclaim a Haggard falcon "and make her subiect to the man "according to the order and method used" in his own "practice" (Latham 1614, 4, 8).

[11] Latham's observation that a symbolic substitute does not reward desire also is illuminating: just as a falconer cannot reclaim his haggard with the "slight matter" of a pigeon's pelt, Othello will not be able to reclaim Desdemona with the slight matter of a handkerchief.

[12] Like Latham, Edmund Bert stresses the falconer's need to treat his hawk well and asserts that the haggard will be "very louing and kinde to her keeper, after that he hath brought her, by his sweet and kinde familiarity, to vnderstand him" (Bert 1619, 4).

that the alternatively imagined "cause" of the hawk's return would be love or loyalty for her man (Latham 1614, 15). This idea that a haggard returns to her man only for tangible reward, not for loyalty or love, illuminates the insecure Othello's willingness to believe Iago's account of Desdemona's behavior. Othello suspects he lacks the qualities rewarding to a Venetian wife. If he also imagines his allegedly adulterous wife as a haggard (3.3.264), and by implication himself as an unsuccessful falconer, then he will suspect his wife will fulfill her desire with Cassio, whom Othello imagines to be more rewarding than himself. Even though no character in *Othello* explicitly extends the falconry metaphor to Cassio, the metaphor's logic and the fuller falconry discourse extends to him. The logic of the metaphor's vehicle—an insufficiently rewarded haggard hawk will likely carry away a live dove—is transported onto its tenor—an insufficiently rewarded Desdemona will fulfill her desire with Cassio. The logic of a metaphor's vehicle (the behavior of a haggard) moves Othello to draw conclusions about the metaphor's tenor (the behavior of his wife).

Even Edmund Bert, who warns that if the haggard "fall into any vice, shee is most hardly reclaimed from it," suggests that although a haggard is potentially incorrigible, a sufficiently skilled, loving, and rewarding falconer could reclaim his haggard (Bert 1619, 4). So why does Othello plan to cut the "jesses" of his haggard-wife and "let her down the wind" (3.3.265–6)? What makes him feel reclaiming her is impossible? The various meanings of haggard recovered from falconry books reveal how figuring Desdemona haggard not only transforms her into an uncontrollably desirous wife who, if insufficiently rewarded, threatens to control her husband but also into a "stranger" of uncertain origins. The associations of haggard with foreignness, and particularly with the Mediterranean and Cyprus, metaphorically transport onto the Venetian Desdemona the foreignness that is attributed to Othello in the world of the play and imply that she is a powerful, adventuresome stranger of uncertain origins. As haggard, Desdemona not only threatens to be uncontrollably desirous and to take control of her man; she also threatens to assume Othello's status as the "wheeling stranger" (1.1.134). Othello stands to lose not only the conventional patriarchal status as the man in control of his wife, but also his special status as the strange warrior who had lured the desirable Desdemona. Whereas a man's fear of cuckoldry typically relates to its threat to his lineage—of his identity in the hereafter—Othello's murderous response to his fear of Desdemona's adultery is provoked by its threat to his identity in the here and now.

In his lament about the "curse of marriage" (3.3.272), Othello does not speak as the particular husband of a particular wife: he speaks for all husbands when, having just entertained the possibility that his wife is haggard, he complains that "*we* can call these delicate creatures *ours* / And not their appetites" (3.3.273–4, emphasis mine). Iago provokes Othello's doubt of Desdemona, in part, by insinuating that Othello has not considered the consequences of her marrying a Moor rather than one of "many proposed matches / Of her own clime, complexion and degree" (3.3.233–4). But Othello's statement as a generic husband indicates that although Othello may be perceived, by himself and others, as somehow foreign, he nonetheless speaks within marriage discourse, related to falconry discourse, on the dangers of being involved with desirous women, dangers first described by Desdemona's father.

Indeed, Othello's response to the fear that he cannot control his wife echoes Brabantio's response to the revelation that he cannot control his daughter.[13] When Brabantio discovers Desdemona has "got . . . out" (1.1.167), he advises all fathers about all daughters: "Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds / By what you see them act" (1.1.168–9). Eventually Othello also imagines himself serving the public good when he announces his murder of Desdemona: "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men" (5.2.6). The belief, shared by Brabantio and Othello, that one woman's behavior infects an entire society of women and men culminates in Othello's attempt to construe Desdemona's murder as a "sacrifice" (5.2.65), as if it were an offering that could restore patriarchal authority.

Shakespeare's *Othello* reveals how Othello's anxiety about what it means to be married to any woman makes possible the murder of a particular woman who has not committed adultery. The play also reveals that even though Desdemona escapes from her father's house and defies Venetian notions of a proper marriage, she does not escape the deadly conception of marriage as a relationship in which one spouse profits from the control of the other. The qualities that identify Desdemona's desirability with that of the haggards Turberville describes—that she pursues her own desires "with greedie and willing minde," that she is likely to "rangle and wander," that she possesses "beautie and

[13] Emily Bartels notes how Othello is aligned with Brabantio even in the play's first scene. After quoting Iago's direction to Roderigo—"Call up her father, / Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight" (1.167–8), Bartels observes that "the slippery pronouns render the distinction between Brabantio and Othello . . . almost indecipherable" (Bartels 2008, 164–5).

excellencie"—condemn her even as they make her desirable (Turberville 1575, 5, 34).

Othello's remark that he has not the "soft parts of conversation / That *chamberers* have" (3.3.268–9, emphasis mine), recalls that Othello envisions himself out of place in the domestic space of marriage: he tells the Duke that, since he was seven years old, he has lived in the "tented field" (1.3.86), and he tells Iago that he would put his "unhoused free condition" into "circumscription and confine" only because he loves Desdemona (1.2.26–7). Although in his metaphor of Desdemona as haggard Othello assigns himself the role of falconer and Desdemona the role of the confined hawk, Othello also recognizes that marriage will "house" and confine him, and he expresses a reluctance to be so confined. As a falconer inherently risks being confined by having to lure, reward, and chase after a haggard hawk, a husband inherently risks being confined by having to attract, satisfy, and keep track of his wife.

But the play also troubles the stereotype Othello expresses about the confining nature of marital house and home. Othello makes his first home with Desdemona at the site of a battle, and furthermore the idea of a house that "circumscribes and confines" a "free condition" has already been complicated by the failure of Brabantio's house to confine Desdemona. Indeed, it is in his effort to persuade Othello that he should not trust Desdemona that Iago describes her as behaving like the falconer in her father's house:

> She that so young could give out such a seeming
> To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak —
> He thought 'twas witchcraft. (3.3.212–14)

In Iago's narration, Desdemona tames her father by seeling his eyes.[14] This image of Desdemona as falconer would be available to an Early Modern English audience through the verb *to seel*: *The Oxford English Dictionary* lists as its first definition, "to close the eyes of (a hawk or other bird) by stitching up the eyelids with a thread tied behind the head; chiefly used as part of the taming process in falconry." Furthermore, Iago's shrewdly ambiguous sentence, with its unclear referent of the pronoun "[i]t," allows Brabantio's charge of witchcraft—that Othello

[14] James Edmund Harting comments that "it is more probable, considering the use of the technical term 'seel'…that Shakespeare wrote 'close as hawk's"' (Harting 1871, 71). Even if Harting is not correct, "as oak" and "as hawk" would sound enough alike to be heard as a pun.

must have "enchanted" Desdemona and "practised on her with foul charms" (1.2.63, 73)—to shift to Desdemona herself who could "give out such a seeming" and "seel her father's eyes up" that Brabantio "thought 'twas witchcraft."

Iago's image has the power to persuade Othello because the comparison of Brabantio to a tamed hawk who unwittingly brought his prey-Othello to the falconer-Desdemona matches Othello's own account of their courtship. Othello tells the senate that on occasions when Brabantio invited him to his house and "questioned [him] the story of [his] life," Desdemona would "dispatch" with "house affairs" to catch fragments of his stories (1.3.130, 148–9). The effectiveness of Iago's figuring Desdemona as her father's falconer who seels his eyes shows how a young woman who chooses a husband according to her desires instead of her father's is forever suspect.[15] The facility with which Iago can induce Othello's fear that Desdemona will go on to tame any man seemingly in control of her demonstrates the powerful way in which the metaphor imports the full cultural significance of *haggard*.

Could any husband reclaim a Venetian woman haggard enough to escape from her father's house and elope with a Moor? When we first meet Othello, he seems capable of containing such an independently minded woman in part because he displays himself as more powerful than Brabantio, whose unsheathed sword is impotent against Othello: "Good signior, you shall more command with years / Than with your weapons" (1.2.60–1), responds Othello to Brabantio's threats. And if Othello publically describes Desdemona as so desirous that she would "Devour up [his] discourse" (1.3.150–1), he also describes his experience with "the cannibals that each other eat" (1.3.144). As Katherine Eisaman Maus notes in her discussion of Othello's stories of cannibals and "men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders" (1.3.145–6), "Othello's courtship of Desdemona suggests that monstrosity has a positive valence—the allure of the marvelous or the exceptional" (Maus 1995, 122). Once the battle for Desdemona is won, however, Othello struggles to maintain his status as the powerful and exotic warrior.

Othello anticipates the senate's worry that bringing his wife to battle will turn the battlefield into a domestic space unfit for warfare. He assures the Duke that he does not request Desdemona's company

[15] Although we learn nothing definitive about why Desdemona elopes with Othello, Desdemona's elopement suggests that she suspected her father would not have sanctioned her choice of husband.

> To please the palate of [his] appetite,
> Nor to comply with heat, the young affects
> In [him] defunct, and proper satisfaction,
> But to be free and bounteous to her mind. (1.3.263–6)

Although this self portrait may convince us that Othello will rule himself, his army, and his wife, it also reminds us of Othello's age and declining sexual desire. If Othello's "young affects" are "defunct," how will he satisfy Desdemona's desire sufficiently? How, to use Turberville's terms, will he be like a falconer who can ensure "hir pleasure of hir rewarde" and continue to lure his haggard hawk's return (Turberville 1575, 152)?

Othello continues:

> No, when light-winged toys
> Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dullness
> My speculative and officed instrument,
> That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
> Let housewives make a skillet of my helm . . . (1.3.269–73)

As Othello states and refutes the idea that Desdemona will turn the battlefield into a house, an even more powerful anxiety emerges in the play: houses might be battlegrounds where women fight with their most potent weapon, namely, dissembling. It is just this anxiety that Iago exploits: Cupid won't seel Othello's eyes but Desdemona will. After all, she already had seeled her father's eyes, thereby demonstrating her skill at quietly usurping the falconer's role. This threat only increases with Othello's proclamation of the waning sexual appetite that accompanies aging, allowing us to imagine that, unrewarded by her man, the young Desdemona might instead hoodwink and control the aging Othello just as she has controlled her father.

Othello arrives on Cyprus without having had the opportunity to prove himself a warrior: he is victorious only because he has survived the storm that destroys the Turks. Furthermore, Othello's first utterance as general-in-action betrays his assurance that he would not mix war and home: he publicly addresses Desdemona as his "fair warrior" (2.1.180) and carries on about her enough to worry that he "prattle[s] out of fashion" (2.1.205). Indeed, something rings conceivable in Iago's remark to Roderigo that Desdemona "first loved the Moor / but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies" (2.1.220–1). Although Iago's interpretation is motivated by his need to foster Roderigo's desire for his own profit,

there is nonetheless something unsettling in the terms with which Iago describes the fragility of Desdemona's attraction to Othello: "Will she love him still for prating?" (2.1.222).

Before the senate, Othello says he will "confess the vices of [his] blood" (1.3.125) while they wait for Desdemona to arrive and speak for herself. Whatever confession we might anticipate from the newlywed—especially after Iago's maliciously lewd descriptions of his wedding night (1.2.87–8)—Othello's confession turns our attention from blood as passion or sensual appetite (*OED* n. 5, 6) to blood as lineage, race, stock, or nationality (*OED* n. 8, 9). Othello does not confess any act: he confesses confessing his "travailous [traveler's] history" (1.3.140) which builds his identity as, what Roderigo calls, the "extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and everywhere" (1.1.134–5). Indeed, in Othello's confession, which includes his stories of cannibals and Anthropophagi (1.3.144–5), the predatory sensual appetite is ascribed neither to the cannibals nor to Othello, but rather to Desdemona who, Othello reports, "with a greedy ear / Devour[ed] up [his] discourse" (1.3.150–1).

Brabantio claims that Othello's ability to conjure a self that captures his desired object is empowered by witchcraft and insists that Othello has "enchanted" his daughter (1.2.63). For Brabantio, only "chains of magic," "foul charms," or "drugs or minerals" (1.2.65, 73, 74) could account for Desdemona's elopement. He will not accept that his daughter, who rejected the "wealthy, curled darlings of our nation, / Would ever have . . . / Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom" of Othello (1.2.68–70). Brabantio's incredulity, however, does not withstand the pressure of his own assertion: when first alerted to his daughter's absence, Brabantio admits to himself, "This accident is not unlike my dream, / Belief of it oppresses me already" (1.1.140–1). Brabantio's comment reveals a prophetic knowledge that his daughter would not be restrainable; it also emphasizes that the very "belief" in a woman's transgression is itself oppressive, especially when patriarchal authority depends on effective control of women.

This notion that the mere belief of a woman's transgression can oppress a man illuminates Othello's eventual claim that he would have

> been happy, if the general camp,
> Pioneers and all, had tasted [Desdemona's] sweet body,
> So I had nothing known. (3.3.348–50)

But the falconry discourse that circulates in *Othello*'s speech community reveals that it is not possible for a husband to know nothing of

his desirable wife's wildness because a woman's desirability, like a haggard's, is inextricably linked to her wildness. Like Brabantio, every man knows—he suspects in his dreams—that a woman like Desdemona is wild by nature. It seems the best a man can hope for is to be able to repress this oppressive knowledge or successfully manage his wife's desire. In the context of these lurking, oppressive beliefs, Othello threatens Iago: "be sure thou prove my love a whore" (3.3.362). Othello urgently needs to remove his doubt with proof, but the play reveals that in such a world the only way to remove doubt about a wife's, or daughter's, being a whore is to prove she is a whore: it is not possible to prove she is not a whore in a society that invents "wife" as a tamed creature who remains wild enough to bring prey back to her husband, a female creature whose most desirable qualities also provoke the greatest patriarchal anxiety.

Brabantio, unable or unwilling to acknowledge publicly his daughter's agency that he has suspected all along, instead charges Othello with witchcraft. Othello's statement that telling his life story is the "only" witchcraft he has used (1.3.170) may be an ironic rebuttal of Brabantio's charge of his use of drugs, minerals, and charms, but Othello nonetheless embraces the association of telling Desdemona exotic stories with practicing witchcraft. The representation of wooer-husband as witch reiterates the power dynamic of the representation of wooer-husband as falconer. Each representation starts with a clear vision of the husband's power in the marriage: Othello is the witch, Desdemona the one charmed; Othello is the falconer, Desdemona the one tamed. With the gentlest push from Iago, however, the anxiety is quickly unleashed that the roles actually are reversed: Desdemona is the witch and falconer; Othello and Brabantio are the charmed and tamed. Iago is able to effect this reversal so easily because the threat of such reversal, integral to falconry discourses, already has been transported with the falconry metaphors.

With a striking compression, Iago conflates the representations of Desdemona as the *haggard* who is like a falconer in control of her man and the *hag* who is like a witch who can charm him. When Iago asserts that Desdemona "so young could give out such a seeming / To seel her father's eyes up . . . He thought 'twas witchcraft" (3.3.212–14), his metaphor of Desdemona as a falconer who has seeled her father's eyes runs seamlessly into his metaphor of Desdemona as a witch whose "seeming" so beguiled Brabantio that it appeared to him like witchcraft. Iago hereby makes explicit a connection that likely already existed in the English language: for its third, obsolete, definition of *haggard*, *The*

Oxford English Dictionary lists "A hag, a witch." The cultural connection between haggards and hags is further revealed by Frances Dolan's observation that the procedures used for "watching" a hawk to tame it also were used to secure confessions from accused witches (Dolan 1996, 312–14). Iago's metaphors figure Desdemona as both haggard and hag, and in each role she takes over the position of power in her marriage.

Brabantio's response to his daughter's marriage demonstrates his reluctance to accept Othello's differences, yet these differences, in and of themselves, are not portrayed as obstacles to his functioning within Venetian society. Iago uses Othello's being a Moor in his incendiary remarks to Brabantio about Desdemona's elopement and in his manipulation of the hopelessly foolish Roderigo; however, Iago cannot ruin Othello just by calling attention to the fact that he is a Moor any more than Brabantio can have Othello arrested just for being a Moor who marries his daughter.[16] In fact, Othello's status seems most at risk when his strangeness, including his association with witchcraft, starts to be eclipsed by the allegedly ever-adventurous, ever-hungry Desdemona. Although some of the Italians in the play-world seize upon Othello's exotic background and color in their efforts to alienate and denigrate him, even more troubling, perhaps, is Desdemona's ability to usurp even her husband's exotic features and powers: she becomes the traveler, the haggard, the hag.

Paradoxically, the sign of what is perhaps Othello's most obvious difference—his self-proclaimed blackness—is the very quality that could relieve his worries about being unwittingly cuckolded. In *Titus Andronicus* Aaron the Moor relishes in his newborn son by Tamora, noting that his "seal [is] stamped in his face" (4.2.129) and asserting that

> Coal-black is better than another hue
> In that it scorns to bear another hue;
> For all the water in the ocean
> Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,
> Although she lave them hourly in the flood. (*Titus* 4.2.101–5)

[16] In her study of the Moor's complicated place in Venice, Emily Bartels observes: "To be sure, Iago does everything in his power to turn Othello into a disenfranchised 'stranger,' to alienate him not only from himself, but also from the military and domestic anchors that give him, and Venice, definition . . . Yet what gives Iago's corrosive . . . discourse both its challenge and its edge, and what contributes crucially to the drama's defining tension, is the all too likely prospect that a Moor *in* Venice could be as well a Moor *of* Venice" (Bartels 2008, 159).

In stark contrast to Aaron's celebration of his son's dark hue, Othello never considers that his blackness could be the ocular proof against his Venetian wife's alleged adultery with a Florentine. That even Othello's blackness somehow is effaced is further evidence that the falconry logic transported by the metaphor of Desdemona as haggard overtakes the way Othello thinks about his marriage: the metaphor so powerfully conveys that his power as Desdemona's wooer and husband is likely to be usurped by her that it obscures the logic of a child's resembling its father.

Othello reveals the tragic effects on Desdemona and Othello of a society in which they can be accused of witchcraft when their desires stray outside the boundaries set by a Venetian patriarch for a woman and a Moor. But, perhaps more tragically, Desdemona and Othello, in their respective attempts to live outside of those boundaries, end up enacting those very accusations. Although Othello and Desdemona elope, they cannot escape the figuring of their marriage as an institution that demands that one spouse play the witch-falconer-husband and the other play the charmed-tamed-wife. Desdemona defies the expectation that she restrain her desires and actions as a daughter and a wife, but she does so in a manner that ultimately inverts the established roles for men and women. Desdemona not only refuses to sacrifice her desires to the role of obedient daughter and wife but also presumes that she can control her husband, a man who is excluded from certain privileges extended to the wealthy, curled Venetian darlings.[17]

These unsettling power reversals are enacted most dramatically in Act 3, scene 3 in Desdemona's determination to grant Cassio's suit. However well-intentioned she might be, when Desdemona strays into the business of her husband and the state, she assumes her husband's role, becoming, as Cassio already has designated her, the "captain's captain" (2.1.74). Desdemona gives Cassio "warrant of [his] place" (3.3.20), something she only can presume to give by imagining Othello under her control. Desdemona claims that she advances "Cassio's suit" (3.3.26) for her husband's profit. She insists to Othello that this "suit" is not "to touch your love" (3.3.80–1) but rather

[17] In her analysis of speech patterns in the play, Lynne Magnusson has shown how Desdemona's speech indicates her privileged status as "an aristocratic speaker whose discourse is full of the assurance and self-confidence of her class habitus" (Magnusson 1997, 94). Magnusson notes that Desdemona's "discourse history is . . . emphatically suggested by Desdemona's conversation with Cassio in 3.3 regarding her commitment to mediate on his behalf with Othello" (94).

> 'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
> Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
> Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
> To your own person. (3.3.77–80)

The repetition of the word *suit*, which can mean "that which is pursued (in hunting), the scent . . . or quarry" (*OED* n. 5b), helps to keep the falconry-hunting metaphor active. Even as Desdemona claims that she pursues Cassio to bring something valuable to her husband— like a manned hawk returning to its falconer with valuable prey—she causes Othello to feel that the roles have been reversed—that he unwittingly has brought Cassio to Desdemona, even as Brabantio had brought Othello to Desdemona.

That Desdemona figures herself a falconer before Iago or Othello ever utters a falconry metaphor emphasizes Desdemona's participation in the discourse with which she unwittingly disfigures her marriage. Before Othello suspects her of being "haggard," Desdemona announces to Othello's discharged lieutenant, however playfully, that in order to grant Cassio's request she intends to tame her husband as she would tame a hawk:

> My lord shall never rest,
> I'll *watch him tame* and talk him out of patience,
> His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift,
> I'll intermingle everything he does
> With Cassio's suit . . . (3.3.22–6, emphasis mine)

"Watch" used in conjunction with taming is a falconry term meaning "to prevent (a hawk) from sleeping in order to tame it" (*OED* v. 16). Furthermore, Desdemona's motivation to help Cassio is never satisfactorily revealed. Even if she "sue[s] . . . to do a peculiar profit to [Othello's] own person" (3.3.79–80), her suit seems to stem partly from a desire to be powerful by displaying power over her powerful husband. Not surprisingly "ill at ease" (3.3.32) to be receiving such an assurance about his job from his general's wife, Cassio departs from his private meeting with Desdemona when Emilia announces Othello's arrival. As if unable to see clearly for himself, Othello asks Iago, "Was not that Cassio parted from my wife" (3.3.37), suggesting that Desdemona has begun to seel her husband's "speculative and officed instrument" (1.3.271).

We then hear for the first time that Cassio has played an instrumental role in Desdemona and Othello's courtship. In her determination to grant her suit to reinstate Cassio, Desdemona emphasizes:

> What, Michael Cassio
> That came a-wooing with you? and so many a time
> When I have spoke of you dispraisingly
> Hath ta'en your part, to have so much to do
> To bring him in? (3.3.70–4)

Desdemona's announcing and Othello's casual remembering that Cassio "went between" (3.3.100) them during their courtship suggests that the falconry metaphor may indeed escape the context in which it is uttered and take over the plot. In Act 1 Cassio's initial response to the news of Othello's marriage hardly indicates that he has inside information: when, after Cassio fails to understand Iago's metaphoric portrayal of Othello's elopement, Iago plainly tells Cassio that "[Othello]'s married," Cassio asks "To whom?" (1.2.52). Cassio is transformed from a character in Act 1 who is a "fellow almost damned in a fair wife" (1.1.20) and who is surprised to hear that Othello is married into a character in Act 3 who, seemingly unmarried, was the go-between in Othello's courtship of Desdemona. By the end of the scene in which Desdemona, alone with Cassio, introduces the language of falconry, Iago has invited Othello to remember how Desdemona "seel[ed] her father's eyes" (3.3.213), Othello is planning his response if he "prove[s] her haggard" (3.3.264), and Cassio has become retrospectively the go-between in Othello's suit of Desdemona. The Act 3 revelation of Cassio as go-between—and its accompanying incongruity with Cassio's behavior in Act 1—suggests that the falconry metaphor may have influenced Shakespeare as he scripted and changed Cassio's character.[18]

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[18] Other scholars instead imagine that Cassio lies to Iago in 1.1. William Empson, for example, asserts that when Othello says that Cassio "went between them very oft," Iago "learns that Cassio lied to him in front of Brabantio's house when he pretended to know nothing about the marriage" and that Iago thus "feels he has been snubbed" (Empson 1979, 222). Although this explanation is possible, it does not account for the entire incongruity, nor does it observe that Iago hears from Desdemona that Cassio "came a-wooing" with Othello before Othello, after Desdemona exits, confirms that Cassio "went between" them (3.3.71, 100). Berger emphasizes what he sees as the deferred disclosure about Cassio's part in their courtship. He notes that what Desdemona and Othello "casually recall and openly mention is a latent structure that mediates all their dealings with

Made desperate by the revelation that he is married to a delicate creature whose appetite he cannot control, Othello reasserts his identity as an enchanter by telling Desdemona the fantastic story of the charmers and sibyls responsible for the magic of the handkerchief which Desdemona refuses to fetch. Othello tells two contradictory versions, exposing the story as improvised and embellished, if not entirely invented. In the first version, Othello says an Egyptian charmer gave the handkerchief to his mother (3.4.57–9), but later he describes the handkerchief as "an antique token / [his] father gave [his] mother" (5.2.214–15). As Othello feels he is losing control, he reasserts his identity as an enchanter, as if he might reclaim Desdemona by charming her once again with exotic stories, by feeding, once again, her "greedy ear" (1.3.150).

Othello's travailous / traveler's history provoked Desdemona's pity and propelled her escape from her father's house, but upon hearing Othello's story of the handkerchief's origins and power Desdemona rejects the token entirely: "Then would to God that I had never seen't" (3.4.79). But what exactly does Desdemona reject? And how different is her reaction to Othello's exotic handkerchief story from her reaction to Othello's exotic war stories?

Othello narrates that the Egyptian told his mother that while she kept the handkerchief

> 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
> Entirely to her love; but if she lost it
> Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
> Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
> After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me
> And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
> To give it her. (3.4.61–7)

The alleged function of the handkerchief could be integrated easily into Venetian conceptions of marriage—with a twist. In Othello's story, his

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each other and Cassio: a structure of contaminated intimacy in which they have inscribed themselves" (Berger 2004, 12). But in order to make this interpretation, Berger must conjecture that when before the senate Othello asks Iago to fetch Desdemona so that "the auditors on stage think" that Iago knows "the trysting place" better than Cassio (17). Berger also characterizes Cassio in 1.2 as "poker-faced . . . the soul of discretion" (18), not an immediately convincing description. Neither Empson nor Berger accounts for Cassio's "fair wife."

mother needed the handkerchief to maintain herself as the object of her husband's appetite. The handkerchief was a gift from a woman who knew that husbands were bound to stray and, thus, that women needed some object that would magically bind their husbands to them. Whereas in Othello's parable the wife attempts to keep her husband from "hunt[ing] / After new fancies" (3.4.64–5), in Othello's marriage the roles are reversed: Desdemona's loss of the handkerchief indicates to Othello that his wife's spirits are hunting after new fancies. Curiously, Desdemona loses the handkerchief when, after Othello announces that he has "a pain upon [his] forehead" (3.3.288), he rejects Desdemona's offer to "bind it hard" (3.3.290).

Since Desdemona knows that she has lost the handkerchief, her refusal to fetch it is understandable. But Desdemona does more than excuse herself from fetching a lost handkerchief. In response to Othello's demand that she fetch the handkerchief, Desdemona persists in her effort to have Othello fetch Cassio or to allow her to fetch Cassio for him:

OTHELLO	Fetch't, let me see't.
DESDEMONA	Why, so I can, sir; but I will not now.
	This is a trick to put me from my suit.
	Pray you, let Cassio be received again.
OTHELLO	Fetch me the handkerchief, my mind misgives.
DESDEMONA	Come, come,
	You'll never meet a more sufficient man.
OTHELLO	The handkerchief!
DESDEMONA	I pray, talk me of Cassio.
OTHELLO	The handkerchief! (3.4.87–95)

Desdemona rejects her husband's demand to fetch a symbol of her loyalty, and in so doing she refuses to fetch his story of marriage. But while Desdemona refuses to fetch the handkerchief, the sign that her appetite is his, she simultaneously demands that Othello play the role she dicates for him in her suit for Cassio.

Whereas before their marriage Desdemona allegedly devoured Othello's exotic stories, here she rejects the story of the magical handkerchief and, in so doing, denies Othello his heritage and power as an enchanter. But how new is Desdemona's response here to Othello's enchanting stories? As Othello describes it, even during their courtship her desire is wonderfully, and threateningly, ambiguous: Othello says of Desdemona's reaction to his story that

> She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished
> That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me
> And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
> I should but teach him how to tell my story
> And that would woo her. (1.3.163–7)

Just as Desdemona now wishes she had never seen Othello's handkerchief, Desdemona before had wished she had never heard Othello's story. Desdemona's simultaneous revulsion and attraction to Othello's first exotic story also causes her to wish that "heaven had made her such a man," a phrase with which Desdemona likely intends to indicate that she would like to have a man like Othello but a phrase which also could mean she would like to be a man like Othello. Although Desdemona's inquiry about Othello's "friend" might very well be coy, the method of flirtation is nonetheless significant. Desdemona does not ask to be wooed by a man who has lived a life like Othello's and therefore has such a story to tell: it would be enough for her if Othello were to teach another man his story. The particular man—even one as exotic as Othello—is thus expendable. Desdemona unwittingly enacts the fantasy that a woman can unman her husband as she speaks and acts the triangulated desire of falconer, hawk, and prey.

What motivates Othello to murder Desdemona may, in the end, be as difficult to determine as what motivates Iago to prompt him to do so. Nonetheless, the falconry metaphors that take up residence in *Othello*'s speech community provide important clues to how seemingly irrational thoughts and acts can be prompted by an unacknowledged metaphoric logic. Falconry discourses, imported into the play-world by falconry metaphors, powerfully shape Desdemona and Othello's image of their own marriage. However, neither Desdemona nor Othello fully understands or acknowledges the consequences of the terms with which they speak about their courtship and marriage. This unacknowledged, and unwitting, figuring of their marriage may help to make sense of Desdemona's cryptic response to Emilia's effort to identify Desdemona's murderer. "[W]ho," as Emila asks, "hath done / this deed" (5.2.121–2)? Desdemona's paradoxical response—"Nobody. I myself" (5.2.122)—expresses the truth that, as *Othello*'s characters speak and act within fated marriage discourses, they enact unacknowledged desires and fears. Desdemona can in this sense be both "I" and "nobody."

And, in this sense, both nobody and Desdemona—even as nobody and Othello and nobody and Emilia—enact the deadly tragedy.

Michael Neill emphasizes the significance of Emilia's dead body in the play's final scene and sees in the "tableau of death" a "covert suggestion of something adulterous in this alliance of corpses" (Neill 1989, 407). Neill goes on to explore his idea that the alliance of dead bodies is adulterous in relation to the presence of Othello's black body. But Neill, in asserting that "[i]t is Iago's special triumph to expose Othello's color as the apparent sign of just such monstrous impropriety" (408), does not consider that the loading of the marriage bed with an extra body suggests that Shakespeare did not imagine that Othello's black body next to Desdemona's white body would be an apparent enough sign of an adulterous marriage—even after we have been reminded repeatedly of Othello's color: shortly before being murdered by her husband, Emilia disparages Othello by calling him "the blacker devil" (5.2.129), declaring that Desdemona was "too fond of her most filthy bargain" (5.2.154), and charging that Othello is "ignorant as dirt" (5.2.160).

The third body on the bed suggests that the very terms of Othello and Desdemona's marriage—not just a societal disapproval of what would otherwise be a happy marriage—precludes not only a dyadic union while the spouses live but even the nostalgia for such a union after they die. Unlike the ending of *Romeo and Juliet*, the ending of *Othello* interrupts the fantasy that this couple might have had a happy marriage: we are not allowed a last monumental vision of the dead couple because a third body is displayed. Even if the handkerchief confusion had been cleared up and Othello and Desdemona had withstood any malicious prejudgments of their mixed marriage, the ending of *Othello* demands that we understand that a marriage cast with falconers, hawks, and prey could not have brought even a glooming peace. In her defense of Desdemona, Emilia says: "For if she be not honest, chaste and true / There's no man happy" (4.2.17–18). But *Othello* presents a far bleaker and more problematic view of the roles in their marriage. In such a marriage even if a wife is honest, chaste, and true, there's no man happy. No woman either.

3
"Martyred Signs": Sacrifice and Metaphor in *Titus Andronicus*

> It is obvious without my mentioning it that the use of tropes, like all beauties of language, always tends to excess. (Longinus, *On Great Writing*)

> Sacrifice . . . involves excess: a frightening inner violence, consuming passion, and defiance of social norms. (Debora Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible*)

As many scholars of Reformation theology have observed, Protestant reformers recoiled from the sacrificial elements of the Roman Catholic Mass. Deborah Shuger, for instance, notes that "the problematic nature of sacrifice—at once the astonishing revelation of divine love and savage ritual—lay at the center of a cluster of theological and ethical controversies fissuring the intellectual landscape of the late Renaissance" (Shuger 1994, 7). Altars were removed from churches when the celebration of the Eucharist, for Roman Catholics a ritual that invited its participants to partake in a sacrificial meal, was transformed by Protestants into a ritual to commemorate the Last Supper.[1] The disavowal of the doctrine of transubstantiation indicated a growing doubt that religious ritual, including ritual speech, could transform bread and wine into body and blood. Whereas the Roman Catholic Mass was to perform a miracle, the Protestant ritual was only to represent the miracle Jesus once performed. Malcolm Mackenzie Ross has noted that the Lutheran revision "specifically eliminated the Catholic dogma of sacrifice, reduced the liturgy to the status of a pious stimulus, and shattered the ancient

[1] Shuger reports that "Reformation Protestants typically claim that the absence of sacrifice distinguishes Christianity from other religions" (1994, 76).

eschatological reach of the Mass. Christ's death happened a long way off a long time ago. It is to be remembered. It cannot be experienced. Eternity cannot puncture time" (Ross 1954, 48). More recently Stephen Greenblatt has observed that English Protestant reformers insisted that "[t]here was no miraculous transformation of the substance of the bread, as the Catholics claimed, only a solemn act of commemoration, which should be conducted not at an altar but at a table" (Greenblatt 2004, 90). In such revisions of the liturgy, retelling and reenacting became distinct from redoing.

Yet, the rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the disempowerment of eucharistic ritual that such rejection implied, was not accepted by all Reformers. As Richard McCoy reports, even as Protestant theologians rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, many also rejected the views of the most radical Reformers. They feared, as Theodore Beza charged of Ulrich Zwingli's position, that the Eucharist was being reduced to "either transubstantiation or a trope" (qtd. in McCoy 2002, xv), and they attempted to articulate a *via media* (12). Beza's reluctance to accept that the central Christian religious ritual could be merely a trope implies he believed that a trope would not be adequate or effective in the celebration of religious mystery. Amid these theological debates about transubstantiation and its relationship to trope, Shakespeare stages *Titus Andronicus*, a play that showcases the potentially transformative, sometimes lethal, power of figures of speech.

Titus Andronicus contains two direct allusions to English Reformation politics: a Goth who strays from his troops "To gaze upon a ruinous monastery" (5.1.21) discovers Aaron with his baby son, and later Aaron claims that he knows Lucius is religious because he has observed Lucius' "conscience" with its "twenty popish tricks and ceremonies" (5.1.75–6).[2] But aside from these specific references, the play's extravagant sacrificial acts also can be considered in the context of the official religious recoil from sacrifice: they include a dismembering sacrifice of an eldest son, a banquet at which a fly is transformed into a Moor and then murdered on a dish with a knife, and a banquet at which a mother consumes her sons baked in a pie. In *Titus Andronicus*' darkly comical stagings of sacrifice, cannibalism, and revenge, Roman religious sacrificial rituals collapse into what Tamora calls "cruel, irreligious piety" (1.1.133).

[2] Quotations of *Titus Andronicus* follow the Arden Shakespeare text edited by Jonathan Bate (Shakespeare 1995b).

Although *Titus Andronicus* may parody sacrificial ritual in its excessively bloody acts, the play does not merely make a ghoulish parody of sacrifice: it also suggests that, contrary to what Beza implies, turning a transubstantiating ritual into trope does not necessarily curb its transformative powers. Most strikingly, Lavinia is described during the course of the play in more than thirty-five metaphors and similes, and eventually the body of the extravagantly figured Lavinia is extravagantly disfigured. In *Titus Andronicus* tropes—especially metaphor and simile but also synecdoche—have the power to turn words into deeds and to move plots into acts. Furthermore, the play reveals that the proliferation of violent acts is connected to the proliferation of figurative speech. Metaphor, it turns out, can do a kind of sacrificial work of its own. A discussion of the relationship between metaphor and sacrifice, drawing on René Girard's theories of sacrifice, thus precedes my analysis of sacrifice and metaphor in the play.

Like sacrifice, metaphor is a phenomenon perched between distinction and conjunction. Girard's observation about sacrifice applies fittingly to metaphor: "the proper functioning of the sacrificial process requires not only the complete separation of the sacrificed victim from those beings for whom the victim is a substitute but also a similarity between both parties" (Girard 1977, 39). A metaphor's vehicle also must be separated from the tenor for which it substitutes even as it is similar to it. Girard notes that the "dual requirement" for a sacrificial victim to be both separate from and similar to those for whom it substitutes "can be fulfilled only through a delicately balanced mechanism of associations" (39).[3] Metaphoric process likewise demands this delicate balance: while a metaphor's vehicle must blend sufficiently with its tenor for the transport of meaning to occur, the tenor must remain sufficiently distinct from the vehicle in order for the metaphor's meaning to be decipherable.

Girard sees sacrifice as a way for a society to "deflect upon a relatively indifferent victim . . . the violence that would otherwise be vented on its own members" (4). Once attention is focused on the sacrificial victim,

[3] Shuger relates that in 1604 the Italian Protestant Alberico Gentili "took up the problem of penal substitution . . . In particular, Gentili emphasizes that substitution presupposes a '*conjunctio*' between the offender and the victim, since 'one person cannot be held for another . . . if he is wholly other' " (Shuger 1994, 69).

Girard notes, "the object originally singled out for violence fades from view" (5). In this way sacrificial substitution "implies a degree of misunderstanding": the sacrifice's "vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based" (5).[4] Although Girard observes that the sacrificial process tends to conceal the original object of attention for which the sacrificial object is substituted, he also asserts that sacrifice "must never lose sight entirely . . . of the original object, or cease to be aware of the act of transference from that object to the surrogate victim; without that awareness no substitution can take place and the sacrifice loses all efficacy" (5). Girard's observation that a sacrifice would be ineffective if a sacrificial substitution were, in a sense, too convincing or complete also applies to metaphoric substitution: although an auditor must take a metaphor's vehicle for its tenor sufficiently for the metaphor to be meaningful, the auditor must not entirely lose track of its tenor or the intended meaning of the metaphor would be lost. Effective metaphor, like effective sacrifice, relies on a degree of misunderstanding—of (mis)taking *this* as *that*—while simultaneously understanding that *this* and *that* are distinct.[5] But, as *Titus Andronicus* shows, whoever speaks a metaphor or performs a sacrifice risks the possibility that *that* won't stay distinct from *this*.

Sacrificial victims can be sacrificed without consequence—without demanding reprisal—Girard explains, because their status as foreigners, enemies, slaves, or children has prevented their full integration into the community (Girard 1977, 12). Like a sacrificial victim resident in, yet

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[4] Susanne Wofford's investigation of the displacement and obfuscation on which heroic ideology depends further illuminates the process through which figurative substitutions can be concealed. In her discussion of Homer's *Iliad*, Wofford argues that the "assertion of metaphorical equivalence serves an ideological function because it involves suppressing difference and evading the recognition of the limits of the analogy" (Wofford 1992, 42). Wofford observes the ways in which figure can conceal the displacement on which it is based: "Heroic ideology . . . can be said to constitute a set of moves or displacements and substitutions that occur at the level of the poetic figures, substitutions that function like metaphors . . . The moment of obfuscation, in which differences are hidden and resemblances asserted, is the moment of ideology" (43).

[5] Paul Ricoeur recalls a tradition among Majorcan storytellers of beginning a tale by saying, "Aixo era y no era" (Ricoeur 1979, 256). This assertion, "it was and it was not," is for Ricoeur crucial to understanding the nature of metaphor. One might say that a metaphor's vehicle is and is not its tenor. And once the figurative and literal blend—as is essential to the functioning of any metaphor—it is not so easy to extract the figurative from the literal. Once vehicle and tenor conjoin as metaphor, the vehicle has a way of lingering in the literal realm.

alien to, a particular social realm, a metaphor's vehicle is a resident alien in the linguistic realm where it has been transported. Even as a metaphor's transported vehicle does its substitutive work, it is expected not to become fully integrated into the linguistic realm of its tenor. If it were to become fully integrated, auditors would mistake the figurative for the literal, the figurative and literal realms would collapse, and meaning would be lost.

Girard, who emphasizes that "[o]rder, peace, and fecundity depend on cultural distinctions" (1977, 49), asserts that if the distinctions between sacrificial victims and community members are lost a sacrificial crisis will ensue in which distinctions between "impure" and "purifying" violence disappear and reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community (49). Girard asserts, furthermore, that because a sacrificial crisis is a "crisis of distinctions" (49), "[l]anguage itself is put in jeopardy" (51), along with all other aspects of cultural order. Girard's theory of the *sacrificial crisis* illuminates how in *Titus Andronicus*' Rome distinctions between purifying and polluting violence break down. However, whereas Girard asserts that the accompanying linguistic crisis cannot be grasped by language, which "finds it almost impossible to express undifferentiation directly" (64),[6] *Titus Andronicus* makes the crisis intelligible in its scripted instances of the collapse of figurative and literal realms. Furthermore, the play reveals that it is this potential collapse of figurative and literal that gives a metaphor its transubstantiating power—its power to do, not just to tell. When, as I shall describe, Aaron's metaphor of Lavinia as Philomel is performed by Chiron and Demetrius who rape and mutilate Lavinia, word becomes deed.

Girard's theory of sacrifice depends on his premise that "[v]iolence is not to be denied but . . . can be diverted to another object" (4). If one accepts this premise, then one can accept his argument that establishing likeness leads only to more violence. However, Girard's theory neglects the potential reconciliatory effects of the lost distinctions that also characterize empathy—of how establishing likeness between adversaries might, in some cases, stop violence. Particularly in the late romances, Shakespeare shows the transforming potential of such empathic collapses.

The Winter's Tale, for instance, vividly depicts the powers of empathy, along with its dangers. Whereas in *Titus Andronicus* the collapse of

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[6] Girard further explains that "[n]o matter how diligently language attempts to catch hold of it, the reality of the sacrificial crisis invariably slips through its grasp" (1977, 64).

linguistic order is symptomatic of the collapse into violent destruction, in *The Winter's Tale* the grief-induced loss of language allows reordering and resurrection. When Perdita hears the story of Hermione, she is left speechless with grief. Remarking on Perdita's reaction to the story of her mother's death, the Third Gentleman reports:

> how attentiveness wounded [Leontes's] daughter; till from one sign of dolour to another she did, with an 'Alas!', I would fain say bleed tears; for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there changed colour. Some swooned, all sorrowed; if all the world could have seen't, the woe had been universal. (*WT* 5.2.84–90)

Here the transformative power of grief brings not sane people to madness but dead people back to life. Perdita's extraordinary grief—her bloody tears—makes the gentleman's heart weep blood and is thus ultimately life affirming: hearts need to bleed for bodies to be alive, and, indeed, anyone marble would "change colour," that is, come alive with blood. The magic by which the marble statue of Hermione comes to life is thereby connected to the expression of her daughter's deep grief. The dangerous power of grief to collapse identities is, however, still present: if all the world had seen it, the grief would have been universal. Additionally, the sorrow threatens to collapse Perdita's identity with the stony statue. Leontes describes the effect of the statue on Perdita: "There's magic in thy majesty, which has / . . . From thy admiring daughter took the spirits, / Standing like stone with thee" (5.3.39–42). Although, in the end, Perdita's grief has the power to turn stone to flesh, Perdita's grief first brings her dangerously close to being as stony as the statue of her mother for whom she grieves.

The consequences of failed empathy, however, are prominent in Shakespeare's tragedies, and Girard's theory illuminates the violent chaos that can ensue from such failings. The revelations of one genre should not, however, be confused with universal truths. Although *Titus Andronicus* shows how quickly the undifferentiated state of grief can lead to the undifferentiated chaos of revenge, it hardly proves that revenge is the only possible response to loss or that violence never can be averted.

Titus Andronicus liberally confirms Girard's observation that "[t]ragedy begins at that point where the illusion of impartiality, as well as the illusions of the adversaries, collapses" (1977, 46). Upon Titus' victorious

return to Rome, the distinction between Roman and Goth collapses. In the play's first scene Saturninus marries the Queen of the Goths, who had been Titus' prized prisoner, and, by its final scene, Titus' son Lucius has raised an army of Goths to attack and conquer his native Rome. When Titus honors Lucius' request to sacrifice "the proudest prisoner of the Goths" (1.1.99), an effort to "appease" the "groaning shadows" of "their brethren slain" (1.1.129, 126), he imagines this substitution will restore order:

> These are their brethren whom your Goths beheld
> Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain,
> Religiously they ask a sacrifice. (1.1.125–7)

But, with distinctions between native and foreign, friend and enemy already blurred, the sacrifice of Alarbus instead starts a cycle of reciprocal violence.

Girard notes that because a warrior is tainted with the slaughter of war, a returning warrior "risks carrying the seed of violence into the very heart of his city" (1977, 41). In *Titus Andronicus* the repetition of the word *brave* signals the transfer of violence from foreign war to domestic strife. Marcus, referring to his brother, Titus, announces that a "braver warrior / Lives not this day within the city walls" (1.1.25–6). But, as the word *brave* is repeated, the brave warrior inside fails to remain separate from the enemy outside. *Brave* repeatedly describes the squabbling brother prisoners, Chiron and Demetrius, whom Titus has brought into Rome as prisoners of war: the stage direction of Act 1, scene 1, announces that they enter "braving" (1.1.524 sd); Chiron complains that Demetrius has "to bear me down with braves" (1.1.529); Demetrius asks Chiron, "Ay boy, grow ye so brave?" (1.1.544); and Aaron calls them "brave boys" as he encourages them to attack Lavinia (1.1.629). Titus' noted "bravery" in fighting against the enemy Goths thus disintegrates into the Gothic brothers' "braving," newly incorporated into Rome.

The Roman brothers, Saturninus and Bassianus, do some domestic braving too. Indeed, Chiron and Demetrius' quarrel over Lavinia, whom they both claim to "love" (1.1.571), disturbingly follows Saturninus and Bassianus' quarrel over her. Titus asserts that "Lavinia is *surprised*" (1.1.288, emphasis mine) when her "betrothed" Bassianus bears her away (1.1.290), and Titus eventually asks Lavinia, after she has been raped by Chiron and Demetrius, "wert thou thus *surprised*, sweet girl?" (4.1.51, emphasis mine). Titus' language thus muddies the distinction

between lawful marriage and rape: Lavinia is said to be "surprised" first for lawful marriage to a Roman and then for brutal sexual assault by two Goths.[7] Furthermore, Lavinia's brother Lucius foreshadows Lavinia's murder when, refusing to "restore Lavinia to the emperor" (1.1.301), he says he would only return her "Dead . . . but not to be his wife / That is another's lawful promised love" (1.1.302–3). Lavinia's brother and father both champion her death as preferable to her life of shame from unchastity, even an unchastity forced upon her. But the idea of chastity is remarkably strained when both the prospective marriage of Lavinia to the Roman emperor, who has obtained her father's consent, and the violent assault of Lavinia in the woods by Goth prisoners are presented as unchaste.

A dizzying series of substitutions in the play's first act emphasizes the collapse of distinctions in Rome. The emperor is himself a substitution—Saturninus for Titus—crowned after Titus requests that the people of Rome and their tribunes bestow their suffrages on Titus and then to "accept whom [Titus] admits" (1.1.226). The empress Tamora is likewise a substitute—for Lavinia whom Bassianus bears away. Tamora's son Alarbus is sacrificed as a substitute for Titus' slain sons, but only minutes later Titus slays his own son Mutius.

As Girard might have predicted, in such an environment sacrifice does not contain the spread of violence: Tamora fails in her efforts to stop the sacrifice of her son by establishing the similarity of her situation to Titus'. In her plea for her son's life, Tamora obliterates the difference between Roman and Goth, captor and captive, and father and mother, as she emphasizes how she and Titus are alike: "And if thy sons were ever dear to thee, / O, think my son to be as dear to me" (1.1.110–11). The assonance, repeated words, and rhyming couplet stress the similarities. Tamora argues that her sons' purposes are just like Titus' and, by implication, that her country's values are just like Rome's:

> But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
> For valiant doings in their country's cause?

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[7] David Willbern observes that the abduction by Bassianus "not only prefigures Lavinia's actual ravishment; it also suggests the unconscious equation of marriage and rape, sexuality and violence, which permeates the play" (Willbern 1978, 163). Heather James argues that Lavinia's rape "functions logically in the poetics of cultural disintegration, for Rome was mythically founded on rape" including "Aeneas' dynastic marriage to Lavinia, which threatened to repeat the rape of Helen of Troy" (James 1997, 44).

> O, if to fight for king and commonweal
> Were piety in thine, it is in these. (1.1.115–18)

Although Tamora begs for mercy, crying "tears in passion for her son" (1.1.109), Titus advises, "Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me" (124), in a reply remarkably free from rancor. Titus imagines that by explaining to Tamora that a disinterested logic of religious sacrifice has informed his decision, rather than some personal violent impulse to revenge, he will be able to persuade her to transform her suffering from passion into patience and thereby to contain it. Titus does not understand that in vain he authorizes a sacrifice in a city where distinctions are collapsing.

From Girard's point of view, Tamora's claims of likeness would merely contribute to the inefficacy of the sacrifice, facilitate a sacrificial crisis, and bring on the ensuing chaos. Maybe so, but Titus' denial of Tamora's plea also shows how easily the likeness which has the potential to provoke empathy can be redirected to revenge. When, in the woods, Lavinia makes the mistake of soliciting Tamora's pity by reminding her that Titus "gave [Tamora] life when well he might have slain" her (2.2.159), Tamora fuels her sons' lust for Lavinia with her own lust for revenge:

> Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain
> To save your brother from the sacrifice,
> But fierce Andronicus would not relent.
> Therefore away with her and use her as you will. (2.2.163–6)

Having failed to persuade Titus to see himself as like her and grant mercy, Tamora plots a revenge that will force Titus to see himself as like her and beg for mercy: Tamora tells Saturninus that she intends to "make them know what 'tis to let a queen / Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain" (1.1.459–60). And, sure enough, at the opening of Act 3, "*Andronicus lieth down*" in the dust, pleading for his condemned sons (3.1.11 sd). Futilely, he attempts to convince the earth to accept his tears as substitute for his "dear sons' blood" (3.1.22).[8]

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[8] Lawrence Danson argues that the play "presents to us an image of a world in which man's words go unheeded and his gestures unacknowledged, a world unresponsive to his cries, demands, prayers . . . [I]n *Titus* the nightmare is that widely familiar one of the unutterable scream, the unattainable release from horror through outcry or gesture" (Danson 1974, 1). But the nightmare also

Titus has not acknowledged his sons' bloodthirstiness: he does not seem to register that Lucius plans not only to sacrifice Alarbus but also first to dismember his body. Lucius asks for the prisoner so that he "may hew his limbs and on a pile / *Ad manes fratrum* sacrifice his flesh" (1.1.100–1); soon after Lucius suggests, "Let's *hew* his limbs till they be clean consumed" (1.1.132, emphasis mine); and finally he announces that "Alarbus' limbs are *lopped*" (1.1.146, emphasis mine). Lucius' repetition of the dismemberment plan—plus the darkly comical alliteration in his last statement of it—ensures that the audience does not miss this grotesque detail. The repetition of *hewed* and *lopped* and *limbs* also links the chopping off of Alarbus' arms to the eventual chopping off of Lavinia's, a point to which I shall return for fuller discussion. Rather than containing the violence perpetrated against their brother at war, the sacrifice of Alarbus unleashes violence against their sister Lavinia.

Furthermore, Marcus' figure of Lavinia's lost hands as "those sweet ornaments / Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in" (2.3.16–19) is itself a reduction of the notion of Lavinia in her entirety as "Rome's rich ornament" (1.1.55), a metaphor with which Bassianus has described her. And literally lost hands are soon to become the subject of synecdochical confusion: the loss of Lavinia's ornaments—and one of his own—sends Titus into a passionate state in which he does not distinguish linguistic ornaments from objects, "false shadows" from "true substances," to use Marcus' terms (3.2.81).[9] The word *hand*, a synecdoche so common in the English language that its speakers and auditors do not usually register its figurative nature, demands attention in the context of Lavinia and Titus who have violently lost their hands. As the name of this now-missing body part no longer

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occurs because in *Titus*' world man's words and gestures are more powerful and uncontrollable than anyone imagines.

[9] Marcus' figuring Lavinia's hands as ornaments further complicates the relationship of the figurative and physical realms. Physical hands which make gestures, it turns out, can ornament speech as much as any figurative words. Indeed, Titus reveals how necessary hands are to speech when he tells Marcus that "Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands / And cannot passionate our tenfold grief / With folded arms" (3.2.5–7). And later Titus tells Tamora that because he is missing a hand he cannot speak to her: "No, not a word. How can I grace my talk, / Wanting a hand to give it action?" (5.2.17–18). Furthermore, in Ovid's tale the importance of Philomela's hands to her "speaking" goes beyond her renowned weaving: once with her sister, Procne, Philomela "was fayne / To use hir hand in stead of speache" (Ovid 2000, 6.772–3). Philomela's hands allow her to assert her innocence.

substitutes seamlessly for some whole, auditors are compelled to speak more precisely—and literally—about agency, an agency elided when Marcus uses the word *hand* in his inquiry into Lavinia's handless condition: "what stern ungentle *hands* / Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare" (2.3.16–17, emphasis mine).

In the Rome of *Titus Andronicus*, just as violence cannot be directed or sufficiently controlled to distinguish a sacrifice in remembrance of a brother and countryman from a dismembering murder so language cannot be sufficiently controlled to distinguish a figure of speech from a word which, if taken literally, signifies dismemberment. The play's absurdly excessive attention to severed and missing hands—in staged horror, grotesque props, and darkly comical punning—links the collapse of martyred bodies and martyred signs.[10] The potential that the substitutions of sacrifice and figurative language will spin out of control leaves some characters so disoriented that they are unsure of whether what they are speaking and hearing is figurative or literal: what is meant as figurative can, unexpectedly, become violently literal. In the case of the dismembering and remembering of *hands*, the operation of synecdoche—in which some part of a whole is substituted for the whole without physical harm—collapses into a horrifying reality of dismemberment. As Gillian Murray Kendall notes, in *Titus Andronicus* "to lend one's hand is to risk dismemberment" (1989, 299),[11] but the relationship in *Titus Andronicus* between actual hands and the word *hand* is even more complex than Kendall suggests.

Titus loses his hand when Aaron fools him into thinking that his hand can substitute for his sons' live bodies, but instead it only substitutes for other body parts—their severed heads. The conversation leading up to the decision to go along with Aaron's proposal might have been warning enough: the argument over whose hand will be sent to the emperor repeatedly reminds us that the word *hand* when used as synecdoche

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[10] The word *martyr*, whose etymology is traced by the *Oxford English Dictionary* to an Aryan root meaning "remember" comes to mean in the Elizabethan period, "To inflict wounds or disfiguring blows upon (a person); to mutilate" (*OED* 2b). Thus, the word itself contains both notions of remembering and dismembering.

[11] Kendall's full sentence is: "In *Titus Andronicus* reality begins to take vengeance on metaphor: in this text to lend one's hand is to risk dismemberment" (1989, 299). I agree with Kendall's observation that figurative language—in this case a synecdoche, not a metaphor—becomes literal through unexpected violence. However, I find her assigning "reality" the agency to take vengeance on metaphor problematic and confusing.

separates the body part from the full person's agency.[12] Lucius objects that Titus should not send "that noble hand . . . That hath thrown down so many enemies" (3.1.163–4). Marcus agrees, asking "Which of your hands hath not defended Rome" (3.1.168), and asserting that his own "hand hath been but idle" (3.1.172). When Titus fools Marcus and Lucius into believing he has decided to spare his hand, he says to Aaron: "Lend me thy hand and I will give thee mine" (3.1.188). And here, in a single sentence, Titus' proposition wittily captures the shift from figurative to literal, from synecdoche to the thing itself: whereas "Lend me thy hand" stands for *help me by using your hand*, "I will give thee mine" means just what it says, namely, *I will give you the hand that has been chopped from my arm*.

Soon Titus' grief-induced madness is depicted as his inability to distinguish between literal and figurative speech, an alleged inability he later exploits to trap Tamora and her sons. Titus not only laments that he and his daughter lack the hands to express their grief but also that Lavinia lacks the means to fight back her grief: she cannot strike her heart when it "beats with outrageous beating" (3.2.13). Among the alternatives Titus recommends is that Lavinia drown her heart with tears. He instructs her:

> get some little knife between thy teeth
> And just against thy heart make thou a hole,
> That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall
> May run into that sink. (3.2.16–19)

Marcus insists that Titus should not instruct Lavinia in such a violent means of grief, that he should not teach her to "lay / Such violent hands upon her tender life" (3.2.21–2). Titus, taking Marcus' instruction literally, responds, "What violent hands can she lay on her life?" (3.2.25).[13] Titus deduces that sorrow has made Marcus "dote already" (3.2.23) or else he could not have forgotten that the mutilated Lavinia had no hands to "lay on her life" (3.2.25).

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[12] Katherine Rowe has described how "The lopped, wandering hands of *Titus Andronicus* function with a Renaissance tradition of manual semiotics based largely on Galen's medical and philosophical treatise *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* . . . and articulated through sixteenth-century emblem books, heraldry, genealogical charts, and ritual gestures. In this semiotics the hand is the preeminent sign for political and personal agency" (Rowe 1994, 280).

[13] As Coppelia Kahn observes, "Lavinia renders even commonplace metaphors dysfunctional" (Kahn 1997, 61).

Although Titus' reaction to Marcus' statement may well reflect more about Titus' state than Marcus', one cannot help but wonder—especially since Titus has just given a long speech about Lavinia's handless grieving—why Marcus would not have been more careful about his use of figures. In fact, with this oversight, Marcus unwittingly echoes Demetrius and Chiron's perverse mocking of the mutilated Lavinia. Chiron had told Lavinia to "Go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands" (2.3.6), and Demetrius had mocked that in her situation Lavinia would hang herself "If [she] ha[d] hands to help [her] knit the cord" (2.3.10). Careless use of figures becomes cruelly indifferent in a world where bodies, and thus figures of bodies, are no longer intact.

When Titus takes Marcus' instruction literally, Titus carries on about hands, and, as he repeats and puns on the word, he also changes his opinion about its significance:

> What violent *hands* can she lay on her life?
> Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of *hands*
> To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o'er
> How Troy was burnt and he made miserable?
> O *handle* not the theme, to talk of *hands*,
> Lest we remember still that we have none.
> Fie, fie, how franticly I square my talk,
> As if we should forget we had no *hands*
> If Marcus did not name the word of *hands*. (3.2.25–33, emphasis mine)

Although Titus' initial mad response is to accuse Marcus of having forgotten Lavinia's handless condition, he subsequently reveals that he does not want Marcus to speak of hands because such speech will make him remember that he and Lavinia lack hands, a condition he rather would forget.[14] But Titus seems to wear out the significance of the word *hand* which he speaks six times in nine lines. With "As if" (3.2.32) Titus eventually acknowledges that not naming "the word of hands" (3.2.33)

[14] Lavinia's martyred reality is, curiously, both figured and forgotten. Titus' peculiar allusion to Dido's asking Aeneas to retell the story of Troy makes it seem that he has forgotten that they have not yet heard Lavinia's account of how she lost her hands: at this point Lavinia has not yet told them what she has suffered by "quot[ing] the leaves" of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (4.1.50). Is Titus imagining himself as Aeneas? Is Lavinia, the "map of woe" (3.2.12), like the paintings of Troy in Dido's temple for Juno, images that cause Aeneas to weep? Even so, what story would Titus tell? After all, Titus has not been witness to Lavinia's fall.

cannot allow him to forget their handless condition. In his wonderfully paradoxical observation, "how franticly I square my talk" (3.2.31), Titus acknowledges that his attempt to shape or regulate his speech is what is frantic or mad, after which he acknowledges that his attempt has failed. Titus denies that not naming could mean not being: he denies that the absence of speech about their handless condition magically could erase it. The allegedly mad Titus comprehends the distinctions between language and reality.

Whereas Titus briefly imagines that Marcus' grief has made Marcus forget the reality of the family's situation, Marcus, who either misses or dismisses Titus' conclusion about the difference between language and reality, continues to suspect that Titus' grief will allow hearing words to turn an object into the thing to which it is compared. Marcus puts his theory into practice when he uses speech to transform Titus' perception of a fly. Titus cannot accept Marcus' murder of the "innocent" (3.2.56) fly until Marcus' story makes the fly guilty and deserving of revengeful murder. When Marcus tells Titus that he killed the fly because "it was a black ill-favoured fly, / Like to the empress' Moor" (3.2.67–8), Titus praises Marcus for having done a "charitable deed" (3.2.71). Concluding that Titus accepts the story for reality, Marcus attributes Titus' inability to distinguish literal from figurative to his overwhelming grief, a grief that has "so wrought on him / He takes false shadows for true substances" (3.2.80–1). But whereas Marcus' simile establishes sufficient likeness between the fly and the Moor to elicit Titus' murderous behavior, Titus' "as if" and subjunctive mood indicate that he understands the distinction between the fly and the Moor even as he is willing to treat one as the other:

> Give me thy knife; I will insult on him,
> Flattering myself *as if it were* the Moor
> Come hither purposely to poison me. (3.2.72–4, emphasis mine)

Titus' initial feelings for the fly parodically contrast with the empathy he lacked when he condoned the sacrifice of Tamora's son. "How if that fly had a father and a mother?" (3.2.61), Titus asks Marcus, empathizing with the fly-parents who would grieve for their murdered fly-child. But Titus' mad or satiric empathy—his ability to collapse his own identity as a grieving parent with that of the fly-parents—is turned easily to revenge. As soon as Marcus identifies the black fly as "Like to the empress' Moor" (3.2.68), Titus joins the murder efforts. And in this farcical scene Titus, once again, rejects the substitutive process of empathy

for the substitutive process of revenge-as-sacrifice. Soon the Andronicus banquet turns into a mock sacrificial supper at which the fly-son is killed on a plate with a knife, yet it prefigures the quite real sacrificial supper for which Tamora's sons are killed and served on plates: the shadow of a sacrifice foreshadows the true substance of the sacrifice to come. Figures of speech—even when known to be figures—nonetheless have performative powers.

Titus' acting out the assault on a fly according to Marcus' narrative about it leaves Marcus unsure of Titus' sanity. For Titus, it seems to Marcus, speech has become too universally performative in J. L. Austin's sense.[15] The consequences of Marcus' ability to use a simile to transform a fly from innocent to villainous—to liken the fly sufficiently to the Moor to become a legitimate target of Titus' revengeful assault—might seem comically frivolous. But this seemingly trivial case of the transformative power of figurative speech highlights the less trivial ways in which words plot assault in the play. "Tut," says Aaron, "I have done a thousand dreadful things / As willingly as one would kill a fly" (5.1.141–2). In *Titus Andronicus* dreadful acts are performed when people are transformed by tropes into objects of revenge and attack.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* Grumio describes how Petruchio in taming Katherine "will throw a figure in her face, and so disfigure her with it" (*Shrew* 1.2.112–13). But Lavinia's disfiguring begins behind her back. In fifty lines of dialogue during which the plot to attack her emerges (1.1.581–631), Lavinia is described with seven different similes and metaphors—some of which are extended: a "mill" (1.1.585), a "cut loaf" (1.1.587), the unfaithful wife of Vulcan (1.1.589), a "doe" (1.1.593), "some certain snatch" (1.1.595), Lucrece (1.1.608), and a "treasury" (1.1.631). The assault on Lavinia's person begins when some of these uttered figures take up residency in the speech community and acquire agency of their own.

Aaron the Moor, the vice figure, has a special ability to speak metaphors powerful enough to take hold in the larger speech community.[16] Whereas in the book of Exodus, Aaron becomes the mouthpiece for Moses and, in turn, God, in *Titus Andronicus* Aaron becomes the mouthpiece for Ovid and Virgil: his metaphoric speech prophetically

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[15] It is as if Marcus' "uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action" (Austin 1975, 5).

[16] Indeed, Lavinia not only suffers as the target of Aaron's enacted metaphors but also unwittingly reiterates his metaphors. In the woods Lavinia insults Tamora by calling her "Semiramis" (2.2.118), an insult that stirs Tamora to call for a

transports plots any faithful reader already would know. Initially Demetrius is convinced that he can woo Lavinia with words. At first he asks Aaron, "Then why should he despair that knows to court it / With words, fair looks and liberality?" (1.1.591–2). But by the end of the conversation Aaron has convinced the brothers to "strike her home by force, if not by words" (1.1.618). The line between words and force is blurred as Aaron moves the brothers from their plan to woo Lavinia with words, using metaphors conventional in courtship-as-hunt love poetry, to the plan to hunt her physically with force.

Suggesting the site of the rape, Aaron reminds Chiron and Demetrius that there are "many unfrequented plots" (1.1.615) in the forest where the hunt will take place and instructs them, "Single you thither then this dainty doe" (1.1.617). But frequented plots from books by Ovid and Virgil soon are enacted in these unfrequented plots of land in the forest. As Heather James has described, the metaphor of Lavinia as the wounded doe "gains its power to chill the blood in part because it has been violently wrenched from its original context in Vergil's magnificent simile of the impassioned Dido as a wounded deer" (James 1997, 55). On the day of the hunt, Demetrius, having given up on courting with words, mimics Aaron's instruction when he tells his brother, "Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound, / But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground" (2.1.25–6). And eventually Marcus unwittingly enters the plot when, upon discovering the assaulted Lavinia, he figures her as a wounded deer: Marcus describes how he found Lavinia "straying in the park, / Seeking to hide herself, as doth the deer / That hath received some unrecuring wound" (3.1.89–91). The transformation from metaphor to violent reality comes full circle when Marcus figures Lavinia's reality with one of the same metaphors that provoked Chiron and Demetrius' assault on her. Or perhaps it is more accurate to conclude that Marcus recognizes Lavinia's newly figured reality.

When figuring Lavinia as the "dainty doe" to be hunted, Aaron is explicit in his instructions to Chiron and Demetrius; however, Aaron is more subtle when he figures Lavinia as Philomel. When speaking to the brothers, Aaron compares Lavinia to Lucrece (1.1.608) and gives the quarreling brothers the idea that they both can "revel in Lavinia's treasury" (1.1.631), but he first figures Lavinia as Philomel when he tells

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poniard with which to kill Lavinia. Here Lavinia echoes Aaron's admiring description of Tamora as "This goddess, this Semiramis" (1.1.521), a figure Aaron speaks in soliloquy.

Tamora that Bassiaunus' "Philomel must lose her tongue today, / Thy sons make pillage of her chastity" (2.2.43–4). Chiron and Demetrius do not hear Aaron utter this metaphor, and, furthermore, their mother, who had wanted to kill Lavinia herself, twice instructs her sons to be sure to kill Lavinia after raping her. Tamora commands, "But when ye have the honey we desire, / Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting" (2.2.131–2), and she later instructs them, "see that you make her sure. / Ne'er let my heart know merry cheer indeed / Till all the Andronici be made away" (2.2.187–9). How, then, do Chiron and Demetrius come to perform the assault of Lavinia that imitates and outdoes the Philomel plot, a plot articulated by the mastermind Aaron, though not in their presence? How do we understand Chiron and Demetrius' coming to play the role of Tereus?

Here Shakespeare stages metaphor's power to transport not only a vehicle into a conversation about some tenor but also metaphor's power to transport a larger discourse or plot, in this case Ovid's, into a speech community. Chiron and Demetrius are depicted as particularly susceptible to such plots: they are schooled enough to be familiar with canonical books, but they lack the imagination needed to interpret or plot for themselves. For instance, when Titus sends the scroll containing a passage from Horace, the brothers recognize it as Horace but cannot interpret, as Aaron readily does, that Titus "hath found their guilt" (4.2.26).[17] Chiron and Demetrius' assault on Lavinia emphasizes how, once Aaron metaphorically names Lavinia "Philomel," Ovid's plot is transported into the "unfrequented plot" of the forest with the agency to transform the unwitting Chiron and Demetrius into Tereuses and Lavinia into Philomela.

Whereas Aaron's dismembering metaphor of Lavinia-as-Philomel brings about the rape and cutting out of her tongue, the ealier dismembering sacrifice of Alarbus brings about the hewing of her limbs. This repeitition is emphasized with verbal echoes: when Marcus asks the ravaged Lavinia, "what stern ungentle hands / Hath *lopped* and *hewed* and made thy body bare / Of her two branches" (2.3.16–18, emphasis mine), he echoes Lucius' request to "*hew* [Alarbus'] limbs" and his announcement that "Alarbus' limbs are *lopped*" (1.1.100, 146, emphasis mine). The rape and mutilation of Lavinia that follows the (dis)figuring of Lavinia-as-Philomel and the dismembering of Alarbus reveals how

[17] Aaron further emphasizes their dull minds when he comments aside, "Now what a thing it is to be an ass" (4.2.25).

sacrificial and figurative speech acts can escape their original contexts and aquire unanticipated agency to enact old plots in new situations.

This metaphoric and sacrificial collapse allows for unchecked imitation but also for peculiar repression. Chiron and Demetrius enact metaphorically what they seem not to know or understand whereas Marcus forgets what he has known and expressed metaphorically. Thus, it is with an irony that Titus could not intend that he twice refers to the abduction of Lavinia as her having been "surprised" (1.1.288; 4.1.51). In each case Titus also seems surprised—first that Lavinia had been betrothed to Bassianus and then by her rape. But so is the audience surprised at the alleged revelation of Lavinia's rape when she quotes Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by "turn[ing] its leaves . . . to the tragic tale of Philomel" (4.1.45–7) since Marcus has, in his metaphorical language comparing Lavinia to Philomel, already recognized the rape and mutilation when he first encounters Lavinia after the assault:

> But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee
> And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.
> . . .
> Fair Philomela, why she but lost her tongue,
> And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind;
> But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee.
> A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
> And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,
> That could have better sewed than Philomel. (2.3.26–7, 38–43)

The understanding of Lavinia's situation that Marcus expresses in this metaphoric register, namely, that Lavinia was raped and had her tongue cut out by a rapist who also cut off her hands, mysteriously disappears to allow Lavinia to reveal the crime by quoting Ovid. Here metaphor behaves in the manner Girard describes of sacrifice, namely, it "depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based" (Girard 1977, 5).

A number of critics regard Marcus' description of the mutilated Lavinia as revealing the inadequacy of such language. James, for instance, argues that Lavinia's body "resists the verbal alchemy through which Marcus poignantly attempts to reclaim his niece" and that "the simile, at times fantastically successful in *Titus Andronicus*, cannot transform her and, for the first time in the play, begins to lose its creative powers of order" (James 1997, 68). Kahn finds a "shocking disparity

between Marcus' rhetoric . . . and the maimed body to which it pertains" and asserts that "Marcus' recourse to that language when it can no longer function both highlights it and the places for women that it normally creates, and indicates that Lavinia can no longer occupy those linguistic or social sites" (Kahn 1997, 58–9). Such observations call attention to the ways in which language, including figurative language, fails in the presence of the assaulted Lavinia, yet they downplay that Lavinia's body becomes a mutilated body through verbal alchemy—both the verbal alchemy of Aaron whose words plot the attack and the verbal alchemy of Shakespeare whose words produce the (fake) spectacle of a mutilated body on stage. Indeed, Marcus' description of Lavinia—rather than the actress' body playing Lavinia—is likely the most important way in which the play's audience comes to understand Lavinia's mutilation. In fact, with the possible anachronistic exception of high-tech effects, Lavinia's bodily mutilation can be staged only with symbols. In her film *Titus*, for instance, Julie Taymor costumes the assaulted Lavinia with bare tree branches stuck onto the stumps of her arms. Taymor thereby emphasizes the representation of the mutilation as narrated by Marcus who wonders who has made Lavinia's "body bare / Of her two branches" (2.3.17–18).

Increasingly, Lavinia becomes a cipher. She has no speech or stage direction in either situation when the question of her being "surprised" is raised. When Saturninus inquires, "Surprised? By whom?" after Titus charges that "Lavinia is surprised," Lavinia says nothing (1.1.288–9). Instead, Bassianus answers, "By him that justly may / Bear his betrothed from all the world away," after which Mutius and Lucius assist Bassianus to "convey her hence" (1.1.289–91). Later when Titus asks Lavinia if she was "surprised . . . Ravished and wronged as Philomela was" (4.1.51–2), Lavinia literally can say nothing. Like many editors before him, Jonathan Bate adds the stage direction "*Lavinia nods*" preceding Titus' energetic "See, see!" (4.1.54). Although Bate glosses his inserted stage direction by asserting that a "gesture of assent is clearly indicated by 'See, see!' " (Bate 1995, 214), we cannot fix with certainty the nature of Lavinia's response, especially in the context of Titus' unrealistic confidence that he can decipher her, that he can "interpret all her martyred signs" (3.2.36).

Titus makes martyred signs of his own, signs that further extend the ways in which tropes acquire harsh transubstantial powers as they are enacted in Rome's speech community. Whereas the mutilated Lavinia springs "a crimson river of warm blood" (2.3.22), the mutilated Titus sets down what "shall be executed" in "bloody" and "crimson lines"

(5.2.14–15, 22). Titus works alone in his study to plot his revenge, but he eventually performs a revenge that is very much a collaborative effort. He succeeds at capturing Chiron and Demetrius because he improvises skillfully with the roles Tamora has given herself and her sons, namely, Revenge, Rape, and Murder. But when Titus asks Tamora to stab Rape and Murder as "some surance" (5.2.46) that she is Revenge, Tamora cleverly objects that they are her "ministers" called "Rape and Murder . . . / 'Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men" (5.2.60, 62–3). Tamora's understanding that the allegorical figures of Rape and Murder could be either the objects of revenge or its ministers vividly depicts how a strict talionic code inherently collapses the identity of criminal and avenger: a rape would be repaid by a rape, a murder by a murder; thus, the allegorical figure of the avenger would indeed be indistinguishable from the criminal—Rape and Murder could be either the criminal who commits the offense or the avenger who repays the criminal with the identical act.[18] As Tamora explains, Rape and Murder are "called so / 'Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men" (5.2.62–3). But Tamora is not able to see that Titus sees that Chiron and Demetrius also are such kind of men. She fails to appreciate sufficiently that Titus, whether or not he is mad, has the ability to perceive this collapse and to use it to his advantage. When the allegorical signification escapes her control, she participates unwittingly in the murder of her own sons.

Titus eventually tells the audience that he "knew them all, though they supposed me mad" (5.2.142) and that he will "o'erreach them in their own devices" (5.2.143). First, Titus notes, "Good Lord, how like the empress' sons they are, / And you the empress," yet he casts doubt on his own observation by also noting that "we worldly men / Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes" (5.2.64–6). Just twenty lines later, he again remarks on this likeness when he welcomes "dread Fury" and "Rapine and Murder" to his house: "How like the empress and her sons you are!" (5.2.82–5). In a kind of inverted simile, Fury, Rapine, and Murder become like the empress and her sons. Not only does Tamora mistake Titus' similes for madness, she also underestimates the efficacy of such similes, analogies which link the substitutive logic of figurative speech with the substitutive logic of revenge. Titus, finally, instructs Demetrius:

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[18] Douglas Green comments: "In Titus' one-armed union with Tamora-Revenge, Shakespeare gives us the emblem of the avenger's tragedy: the avenger mirrors the enemy, commits the very evils for which retribution is sought" (Green 1989, 321).

> Look round about the wicked streets of Rome,
> And when thou find'st a man that's like thyself,
> Good Murder, stab him: he's a murderer. (5.2.98–100)

Titus tells "Revenge" that she will know Tamora "by thine own proportion, / For up and down she doth resemble thee" (5.2.106–7). In his feigned madness, Titus takes the logic of similes and revenge to their absurd conclusion. If Tamora is like Revenge, Demetrius like Murder, and Chiron like Rape, then Titus must become like Revenge, Murder, and Rape to "o'erreach them in their own devices" (5.2.143). And, in another instance in the play where articulating a likeness can bring about its enactment, Chiron and Demetrius become the ministers of Revenge as Titus performs it—as the main ingredient for Titus' revengeful feast.

Here Titus performs another play, the first act of which already has been performed. While preparing to kill Chiron and Demetrius, Titus narrates the plot: "For worse than Philomel you used my daughter, / And worse than Progne I will be revenged" (5.2.194–5). Titus and Marcus' son Publius repeat three times the command to "stop their mouths" (5.2.161, 164, 167). Titus thus emphasizes his desire for the rapists to hear and not speak, to suffer the fate of Philomel and Lavinia. Tamora's sons find themselves back in Ovid's tale, simultaneously captive audience and unwitting actors of their new roles. They are no longer Tereus now but rather Tereus' son, Itys. Indeed, when Chiron and Demetrius perform the allegorical figures of Murder and Rape, they are markedly close to what they have been becoming through the course of the tragedy, namely, bodies that enact given names.[19]

The tragedy *Titus Andronicus* depicts the relationship between sacrificial and linguistic crises. The loss of distinctions between figurative speech and the more literal speech for which it stands accompanies the loss of distinctions between sacrificial victims and those for whom they substitute. In the Rome of *Titus Andronicus*, sacrifices cannot contain sacrificial victims in separate social realms: victims become agents or causes of acts of their own. Similarly, metaphors and similes cannot contain alien

[19] Hegel's remarks about the nature of allegorical beings is illuminating here: "in order that there may be congruity between subjectivity and the abstract meaning which it has, the allegorical being must make subjectivity so hollow that all specific individuality vanishes from it" (Hegel 1975, 399).

vehicles in separate linguistic realms: the vehicles become agents of their own acts. And synecdoches, which once could be relied on to stand figuratively for some whole, signify instead horridly dismembered things themselves. This relationship between sacrifice and tropes suggests that even if some Protestant Reformers downplayed the sacrificial elements of Christianity by disavowing transubstantiation and reducing ritual speech to trope, tropes have their own means of fatal and consuming substitutions.

Girard's theory of sacrifice, based on his assertion that "[v]iolence is not to be denied, but . . . can be diverted to another object, something it can sink its teeth into" (Girard 1977, 4), illuminates *Titus Andronicus*' violent world where Tamora's last act is "Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred" (5.3.61). Sacrifice fails to maintain order, and personal identities and linguistic signs collapse into undifferentiated chaos. Girard attributes such chaos caused by sacrificial crisis to excessive likeness, to the obliteration of distinctions among people and signs. In *Titus Andronicus* such obliterating violence follows ungranted pleas for pity, complicating Girard's theory by hinting that, even in a tragic world, establishing the likeness needed for pity might have prevented the cycles of deadly revenge. With pity denied, collapsed states induced by loss and grief facilitate imitation and reenactment rather than rapprochement from which new order or life might be conceived.

In merciless Rome, Aaron, the vice figure who begets much of the destructive chaos, ironically also produces the distinctive issue of the play's final act. Aaron's baby, with its distinguishing skin color, resists becoming part of the economy of undifferentiation. Tamora sends their infant to Aaron because she cannot silently substitute it for one fathered by her husband, the Roman emperor. And whereas gold can buy a "fair" substitute who, as Aaron plots, will be "received for the emperor's heir" (4.2.156, 160), Aaron's boy "scorns to bear another hue" (4.2.102).

The "[c]oal-black" baby (4.2.101), who is reviled by the Nurse, Chiron, and Demetrius, is the sole life produced in the midst of all the slaughter. Indeed, once Tamora conceives the baby, she must rest from her part in the violence-begetting verbal conceits. When Chiron and Demetrius fail to understand the significance of the threatening Horace verses attached to Titus' arrow, Aaron remarks:

> But were our witty empress well afoot
> She would applaud Andronicus' conceit.
> But let her rest in her unrest awhile. (4.2.29–31)

Furthermore, Aaron's baby is distinguished from the deadly cycles of collapsing identities that strip others of discrete identities: this baby boy has no "pattern" or "precedent," but he is a "lively warrant" (5.2.43). As Aaron tells Chiron and Demetrius, "He is your brother by the surer side, / Although my seal be stamped in his face" (4.2.128–9). When trying to quiet the boy, Aaron explains to his baby that he might have been an emperor "Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look" (5.1.29). But this child cannot escape his origins; the dual nature of his conception cannot be disavowed nor, once conceived by mother and father, can his identity or agency be taken over by one side. This baby, whose mother and father both are certain, even escapes the usual anxiety about uncertain paternity: his distinctive hue ensures his distinct identity.

Although Aaron's baby cannot be substituted for another, his life is saved through an exchange: Lucius is motivated to spare Aaron's boy in exchange for Aaron's

> talk of murders, rapes and massacres,
> Acts of black night, abominable deeds,
> Complots of mischief, treasons, villainies,
> Ruthful to hear yet piteously performed. (5.1.63–6)

But before Aaron will tell these tales of classic tragedy—or, perhaps, tragic farce—he demands that Lucius swear an oath that the child shall live, even though Aaron's view of oaths, words empowered by religious ritual, is skeptical at best:

> I know
> An idiot holds his bauble for a god,
> And keeps the oath which by that god he swears. (5.1.78–80)

Despite his own skepticism, Aaron invests in the strength of religious words to move a speaker's deeds, as if he recognizes the irrational power of oaths.

Once Lucius swears to save the boy, Aaron recounts the horrors recently performed—a brief summary of the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*—and laments that he "had not done a thousand more" (5.1.124). Then, recalling past horrors, Aaron describes how he literally has uncovered the sources of people's grief:

> Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves
> And set them upright at their dear friends' door,

> Even when their sorrows almost was forgot,
> And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,
> Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,
> 'Let not your sorrow die though I am dead.' (5.1.135–40)

We are reminded here that remembrance too can be violent, that ruining monasteries, stripping altars, and eschewing sacrifice for commemoration does not necessarily cleanse a commemorative act of horror.

Aaron's baby also is distinguished by his power to foil Aaron's otherwise successful efforts to govern those around him: "a child['s] cry" (5.1.24) attracts the attention of the Goth who discovers Aaron attempting to "contro[l] with this discourse" the crying babe (5.1.26). Aaron's language, which has controlled so much of the previous action, loses efficacy before his preverbal baby. This scene of Aaron hiding with his baby, discovered when the Goth strays from his troops "To gaze upon a ruinous monastery" (5.1.21), conflates the destruction of *Titus Andronicus*' Rome with the destruction of Roman Catholicism in England. Curiously, Aaron attempts to protect his baby in the ruins of this Roman institution, and the black child, begotten of a pointedly maculate conception, rises from the monastery's rubble as a proof of the legitimacy of Rome's new leadership. After killing the emperor Saturninus, Lucius offers his scars to the people of Rome as proof that his murder of Saturninus was warranted: "My scars can witness, dumb although they are, / That my report is just and full of truth" (5.3.113–14). Realizing he has not accomplished his goal, Lucius stops his speech: "But soft, methinks I do digress too much, / Citing my worthless praise" (5.3.115–16). Marcus steps up and offers a different proof: "Behold the child: / Of this was Tamora delivered, / The issue of an irreligious Moor" (5.3.118–20).

The play ends, as it began, with an Andronicus burial ritual, this time with Marcus' grieving for his brother. Whereas Lucius, at his brother's burial, had demanded a human sacrifice "*Ad manes fratrum*" (1.1.101), Marcus articulates a different kind of talionic pay back:

> Tear for tear and loving kiss for kiss,
> Thy brother Marcus tenders on thy lips.
> O, were the sum of these that I should pay
> Countless and infinite, yet would I pay them. (5.3.155–8)

Lucius' Boy also distinguishes himself: unlike his father who sacrificed a prisoner to appease his brother's shade, the Boy wishes to sacrifice

himself to bring his grandfather back to life: "Would I were dead, so you did live again" (5.3.172). Although such mourning departs from the sacrificial rituals of the play's opening, it is not clear what Lucius, now emperor, has learned, especially considering his couplet that ends the play: "Her life was beastly and devoid of pity, / And being dead, let birds on her take pity" (5.3.198–9). Lucius' prohibiting pity for Tamora—emphasized by his ironic reference to the birds who will "pity" her by eating her—ominously echoes Titus' lack of pity for Tamora that started the cycle of consuming revenge.

Although it is unclear whether or not the new order of a Rome governed by Lucius will continue or end the sacrificial crisis, Lucius offers one way to remember Titus that promises change. He reminds his son that his grandsire has told him many stories "And bid thee bear his pretty tales in mind / And talk of them when he was dead and gone" (5.3.164–5). And here, in a final substitution, art—even art about violence—might substitute for violence itself.

4

Imperfect Speech: Equivocation and Metaphor in *Macbeth*

> Metaphors, and senslesse and ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui*; and reasoning upon them, is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention, and sedition, or contempt. (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*)

> The picture here is that to wish to rule out equivocation, the work of the witches, is the power of tyranny. (Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*)

> [A]nd yet even this equivocating and lying is a kind of unchastity . . . The law and sanction of nature, hath, as it were, married the heart and tongue, by joining and knitting of them together in a certain kind of marriage; and therefore when there is discord between them two, the speech that proceeds from them, is said to be conceived in adultery, and he that breeds such bastard-children offends against chastity. (Sir Edward Coke, "Speech at the Trial of Father Henry Garnet")

> Lady Macbeth's infant both is and is not, in a pregnant paradigm of the whole experience of *Macbeth*. (David Willbern, "Phantasmagoric *Macbeth*")

As has long been observed, *Macbeth* stages various scenes of equivocation, though only the Porter and Macbeth speak some form of the word itself. The Porter of Macbeth's castle twice addresses an imagined "equivocator" who "could not equivocate to Heaven" and whom the Porter welcomes instead to "Hell" (2.3.8–11, 16).[1] Soon after,

[1] Except where otherwise noted, quotations of *Macbeth* follow the Oxford World's Classics text edited by Nicholas Brooke (Shakespeare 1990).

the Porter describes "much drink" as "an equivocator with lechery" and concludes that it "equivocates him in a sleep" (2.3.29–33). Perhaps the play's most often cited instance of the word, however, occurs in Macbeth's eventual accusation of the weird sisters: when he hears the report that Birnam Wood is moving toward Dunsinane, Macbeth says that he begins "To doubt th'equivocation of the fiend / That lies like truth" (5.6.43–4). Many scholars have asserted that, in charging that the weird sisters have equivocated, Macbeth reveals that he has understood as literal something that comes to be true figuratively. William O. Scott, for instance, asserts that "Macbeth takes literally what needs to be figurative" (Scott 1986, 173), and Jan Blits contends that "as with the fulfillment of the Birnam Wood prophecy, Macbeth fails to recognize that the equivocation of the prophecy is simply a reflection of his own literalness . . . What he calls paltering is, in fact, nothing but the Witches' figurative speech" (Blits 1996, 193).[2] Although I do not see Macbeth's misunderstanding of the Witches' equivocating prophecies as some confusion of figurative and literal, I do believe that the relationship between metaphor and equivocation in *Macbeth* warrants further attention. Metaphor, like equivocation, expresses something that is and is not true. I shall argue that the metaphoric and equivocal speech of *Macbeth* ultimately emphasizes the mutual manner in which meaning is conceived, even as this mutuality is disavowed by ruling fantasies of univocal speech and absolute power, fantasies that empower and destroy Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

In fact, the relationship between equivocation and figurative language has been observed for centuries. As E. Jennifer Ashworth has shown, in the work of medieval logicians, "metaphor, whether for the sake of ornamentation or out of necessity, was generally subsumed under deliberate equivocation" (Ashworth 2007, 327). Ashworth further describes how Boethius, in his commentary on Aristotle's *The Categories*, links equivocation with *translatio*, the Latin term for metaphor (317).[3] Augustine, too, examines the relationship between lying and figurative

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[2] Richard McCoy has noted that the witches' "assurances are full of figurative loopholes" (McCoy 2004, 32).

[3] In *The Categories* Aristotle notes that "Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each" and that "things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common" (Aristotle 1968, 7). Aristotle draws his first example of equivocal naming from figurative representation: "Thus, a real man and a figure in a picture can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named for, though they

truths in writings that become important to the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century debates about whether equivocation ever can be justified. Augustine takes a firm stance against lying, and, in so doing, counters the claim that scriptural examples of holy men who tell lies suggest that lying is, at times, permissible. Augustine contends that such instances of what are actually truthful figurative or prophetic speech are only misunderstood to be lies. In "Against Lying" he warns that such misreading of the Scriptures would have a "deplorable consequence," namely, that parables and other figures designed "not to be taken literally" could all be said to be lies and that "even what is named a metaphor . . . could be called a lie" (Augustine of Hippo 1952, 152–3). Augustine insists on the need to recognize metaphorically expressed truths.

Similarly, Aquinas, in a discussion of Jacob's assertion that he is Isaac's first-born, claims that Jacob's speech must be interpreted figuratively and prophetically. Jacob, Aquinas explains, spoke in "a mystical sense, namely, that Esau's birthright was his by right" and "employed this manner of speech under the influence of the spirit of prophecy to point to a mystery, namely that a younger people, the gentiles, were to take the place of the first-born, the Jews" (Aquinas 1972, 159). Like Macbeth, these theologians link equivocation, prophecy, and figurative speech, but, unlike Macbeth, they emphasize the auditors' responsibility to interpret accurately what they hear. Prophecies from various traditions and eras notoriously baffle their auditors with their unforeseen ambiguities. As Michael Wood notes, "[o]racles don't have to be fiends, but they do, mostly, have to juggle" (Wood 2003, 6). Macbeth distinguishes himself by imagining that his confusion has resulted from the weird sisters' intentional and malicious equivocation rather than from his own misunderstanding.

In late sixteenth-century England, equivocation came into public awareness amidst controversies over recusant Roman Catholics. As Peter Zagorin has described, sixteenth-century Jesuits, in their efforts to evade religious persecution in England, adopted ideas about equivocation from Navarrus's 1549 *Handbook for Confessors and Penitents* (Zagorin 1990, 165). The Jesuitical distinction between equivocation and lying was intended as a means by which the faithful could keep their faith, their lives, and their virtue: equivocation allowed persecuted Catholics

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have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each" (7).

to tell partial truths before earthly authorities while mentally reserving full truths for themselves and God. Navarrus, who argued that the "communicative relationship" existed only between a speaker and God, defined lying as speaking contrary to one's mind rather than intentionally deceiving one's auditor; thus, Navarrus claimed that speakers could, without sinning, use amphibology[4] and equivocation "for the sake of safety of mind, body, honor, or any virtuous act" (Zagorin 1990, 176, 171). English authorities including the Attorney General Edward Coke and the Anglican cleric Thomas Morton, however, denounced equivocation as nefarious and treasonous, a position *Macbeth*'s Porter echoes in his quip about the equivocator unable to "equivocate to Heaven" (2.3.11). The 1595 treason trial of Jesuit Robert Southwell widely publicized the Jesuitical condoning of equivocation, as did Henry Garnet and Robert Parsons's treatises on equivocation, which gained notoriety in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.[5]

How the contemporary political and religious controversies about equivocation informed Shakespeare's writing of *Macbeth* has been well documented,[6] but the various forms of equivocation in *Macbeth* have been less thoroughly mapped. Particularly worthy of further attention are the play's stagings of how, during Macbeth's tyrannical reign over Scotland, dissenting subjects resort to equivocation as they attempt to align themselves with other dissenters while escaping the king's

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[4] In his 1589 *The Arte of Enlgish Poesie* George Puttenham refers to *Amphibologia* as a "vicious speach" and explains: "[W]hen we speake or write doubtfully and that the sence may be taken two wayes, such ambiguous termes they call *Amphibologia*, we call it the *ambiguous*, or figure of sence incertaine, as if one should say *Thomas Tayler* saw *William Tyler* dronke, it is indifferent to thinke either th'one or th'other dronke … [T]hese doubtfull speaches were vsed much in the old times by their false Prophets as appeareth by the Oracles of *Delphos* and of the *Sybilles* prophecies deuised by the religious persons of those dayes to abuse the superstitious people, and to encomber their busie braynes with vaine hope or vaine feare" (Puttenham 1968, 217–18).

[5] See Henry Garnet's 1598 (1999) *A Treatise of Equivocation* and Robert Parsons's 1607 *A treatise tending to mitigation tovvardes Catholike-subiectes in England* and *A Quiet and Sober Reckoning with M. Thomas Morton*. Although there is not full scholarly agreement, *Macbeth* is generally dated 1606.

[6] Such work includes Henry N. Paul's chapter "Garnet's Doctrine of Equivocation" in *The Royal Play of Macbeth* (1950), Frank Huntley's essay "*Macbeth* and the Background of Jesuitical Equivocation" (1964), Steven Mullaney's "Lying like Truth: Riddle, Representation, and Treason in Renaissance England" (1980), William Scott's "Macbeth's—and Our—Self-Equivocations" (1986), and Garry Wills's *Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare's* Macbeth (1995).

scrutiny. Whereas Henry Garnet and Robert Parsons's treatises advise recusant Catholics on how to hide their complete thoughts from authorities without saying anything explicitly false, in *Macbeth*'s Scotland equivocation also is used to test a fellow countryman's views of a king and to communicate, however imperfectly and cautiously, one's dissenting views. In such instances, equivocating speech must signal a dissenting truth to one's tested auditor even as it obscures the truth sufficiently to allow the speaker to deny his dissent. Although he does not use the term *equivocation*, Lennox aptly describes the subtle and mutual nature of this kind of equivocating speech intended to communicate a politically dangerous idea to a like-minded interlocutor: Lennox tells an anonymous Lord, "My former speeches have but hit your thoughts / Which can interpret further" (3.6.1–2), and Lennox thereby invites the Lord to consider what he is about to say as only part of what he believes. Equivocators, like the prophesying weird sisters, are "imperfect speakers" whose thoughts must be completed by their auditors (1.3.70).

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, in its various scenes of equivocation in the kingdom of Scotland, draws attention to how equivocation, like speech in general, can lead to the mutual conception of truth or the concealment of it. Furthermore, the play contrasts equivocation's inherent ambiguities with the unilateral pronouncements of performative speech, authoritative utterances expected to transform univocal thought into deed. But *Macbeth* also calls attention to how unacknowledged equivocations, including metaphors and other figures of speech, can become unwittingly performative. Especially when speakers are overly confident of their absolute mastery of language, speech can perform more meanings than intended. When speech is mistaken to be univocal and unilateral, equivocal words, especially metaphoric words, are likely to generate unanticipated and unacknowledged double meanings. In the Scotland of *Macbeth* even kings are subject to the inherently equivocal nature of language; kings, like all speakers, have limited power over their subjects.

Yet the fantasy of univocal and unilateral speech abounds. This fantasy that denies auditors' agency in producing meaning is related, I shall argue, to another fantasy circulating in the world of the play, namely, the erasure of women's agency in producing heirs.[7] The fantasy of a

[7] The erasure of the female has been observed by Janet Adelman who asserts that in *Macbeth* "maternal power is given its most virulent sway and then handily

world where rightful kings and their most loyal subjects are "unknown to woman" (4.3.126) and "not born of woman" (5.3.4) is so powerful that the anxieties and jokes about cuckoldry typical in a Shakespearean speech community are not spoken in *Macbeth*. It is as if, with women's roles in generating men's posterity disavowed entirely, no one needs to worry—or even jest—that women will cause royalty to become unlineal. According to Macduff, Malcolm's dead mother, the former queen, was so pious that she "Died every day she lived" (4.3.111), and Lady Macbeth feels obliged to "unsex" herself in order to become the new queen (1.5.40), not long after which she dies. Macduff's mother was likely to have been literally dead at the time he was born by caesarian section.[8] The fantasy of a line of kings produced without women and

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abolished. In the end, we are in a purely male realm, founded . . . on the excision of maternal origin; here, mothers no longer threaten because they no longer exist" (Adelman 1992, 146). Phillipa Berry ties the fantasy represented in the play to contemporary politics: she observes that James, like Macduff, "was represented by the panegyrists as a monarch who was 'not born of woman', but who instead had inherited the throne through parthenogenetic regeneration of English sovereignty, whereby the dying English phoenix, Elizabeth, had miraculously transmitted the kingdom to the reborn British phoenix, James" (Berry 1999, 123, 125). Sigmund Freud, with different emphasis, similarly notes the play's "remarkable analogies to the actual situation. The 'virginal' Elizabeth . . . was obliged by this very childlessness of hers to make the Scottish king her successor" (Freud 1957, 320).

[8] In his gloss for "untimely ripped," Brooke notes, "Prematurely, by surgery—presumably because of the sickness or death of his mother" (Shakespeare 1990, 208), and A. R. Braunmuller notes that "Caesarean section always killed the mother" (Shakespeare 1997a, 234). The idea that someone dead is not a woman—or a man—is not unique to *Macbeth*: it also turns up in Hamlet's exchange with the Gravedigger about Ophelia's grave:

HAMLET	What man dost thou dig it for?
GRAVE DIGGER	For no man, sir.
HAMLET	What woman then?
GRAVE DIGGER	For none neither.
HAMLET	Who is to be buried in't?
GRAVE DIGGER	One that was a woman, sir; but rest her soul, she's dead.
HAMLET	How absolute the knave is. We must speak by the card or equivocation will undo us. (*Hamlet* 5.1.126–34)

Like Macbeth, Hamlet accuses the Gravedigger of equivocation when he hears this reference to a dead woman as not a woman.

sexual intercourse iterates in corporeal terms the fantasy of meaning produced without auditors and conversation. Tragically, Lady Macbeth herself initiates this condition in her own marriage when she calls upon the spirits to unsex her and insists that her husband unwaveringly perform what he has spoken. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* reveals the terrible cost of the collective fantasy that men or meaning can be generated autonomously even as it shows the impossibility of such generation.

After Lennox invites the Lord to "interpret further" his equivocating report on the recent bloody events in Scotland, Lennox recounts Macbeth's official story, while mentally reserving his full thoughts.[9] In a performance of the play, Lennox's attitude could be signaled by the actor's sarcastic and ironic tone of voice. But what in the script lets us know how Lennox's doubling speech works? Lennox distances himself from that which he reports with a series of interjections, rhetorical questions, and paradoxical phrases:

> My former speeches have but hit your thoughts
> Which can interpret further: only I say
> Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
> Was pitied of Macbeth—marry he was dead;
> And the right valiant Banquo walked too late,
> Whom you may say, if't please you, Fleance killed,
> For Fleance fled—men must not walk too late.
> Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
> It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
> To kill their gracious father? Damnèd fact,
> How it did grieve Macbeth! Did he not straight
> In pious rage the two delinquents tear,
> That were the slaves of drink, and thralls of sleep?
> Was not that nobly done? (3.6.1–14)

By introducing his statement with "only I say," Lennox hints to the Lord that this report on the deaths of Duncan and Banquo is only what he says, but not necessarily all he thinks. Then, interjecting "if't please you"

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[9] Marvin Rosenberg observes that until Lennox "is sure of his man, his speech itself equivocates: anyone listening could not tell for certain his true attitude toward Macbeth" (Rosenberg 1978, 495).

indicates that the Lord "may say" Fleance killed Banquo not because it is true, but rather because it somehow gratifies him. When Lennox asks, "Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous / It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain / To kill their gracious father?" he leaves open the possibility that someone may very well lack that thought and think otherwise about the regicide. And Lennox's paradoxical description of Macbeth's state while murdering the guards as a "pious rage" calls attention to Macbeth's mixed motives for doing so. With Lennox's hints, the Lord could logically interpret that Macbeth's actions were not "nobly done."

This short scene stages the play's most clear instance of equivocation used as a technique for communicating dissent about the king while trying to avoid discovery by him and those loyal to his oppressive regime. Lennox equivocates not only to reserve but also to communicate what he thinks while he simultaneously hides behind the safety of imperfect communication. The Lord does not respond verbally until Lennox has spoken 24 lines; however, Lennox's speech, in which the criticisms of Macbeth grow increasingly direct, implies that the Lord's nonverbal responses in some way signal that he is interpreting Lennox's speeches in a like-minded manner. The Lord eventually echoes Lennox's reference to Macbeth as a "tyrant" (3.6.25), and he tells Lennox that Malcolm is living in the English court as guest of "most pious Edward" (3.6.27), to where Macduff recently has fled. What Lennox intends to reserve mentally from a Lord who might be loyal to Macbeth he intends to communicate to one who might provide needed information, join in the rebellion against Macbeth, or at least approve of it passively.

In such equivocation, a speaker tests the allegiances of his auditor with subtle signals; if the auditor passes the test by indicating his understanding and like-mindedness, the speaker continues to aim to communicate fully. But such equivocation does not proceed in a neat sequence. The testing and communicating are instead simultaneous: the auditor passes the test by understanding the speech as fully as it has been intended, which is more fully than it has been spoken. This kind of equivocation, which is not the lone act of the speaker's but rather an interaction between speaker and auditor, calls attention to the imperfect nature of such speech: to understand the speaker's full thought, the auditor must perfect, or complete, the speech act by interpreting further the speech that has hit his thoughts. What Ted Cohen has observed about how metaphor draws "maker and appreciator" closer together applies to this kind of equivocation (Cohen 1978, 6). As with metaphor, the speaker issues "a kind of concealed invitation," and the

hearer, to understand, "expends a special effort" to accept it (6). Such a transaction, Cohen concludes, "constitutes the acknowledgment of a community" (6).

Like equivocation spoken expectantly, if cautiously, to an auditor, figurative speech, especially metaphor, is spoken with the hope that it will be recognized and interpreted as such. The speaker's semantic impertinences, to use Paul Ricouer's terminology, must adequately invite the auditor to interpret figuratively, and the auditor must read the speaker's hints well enough to do so. Considering the mutual nature of any understanding produced by speaker and auditor, it is no surprise that warnings against lack of chastity emerge in reference to equivocation, as they do with metaphor. In his denunciation of equivocation, Sir Edward Coke proclaims that "The law and sanction of nature hath . . . married the heart and tongue" and that speech "conceived in adultery" proceeds "when there is a discord between them two" (Coke 1999, 265–6). But speech is conceived finally in the intercourse between speaker and auditor, in a joining, as it were, of tongue and ear. In equivocation and metaphor understanding is begotten through the mingling of the speaker's and auditor's thoughts, a process that remains mysterious in any conversation, but particularly when thoughts intentionally are veiled even as they are expressed.

Because both equivocation and metaphor express something that is and is not true, community is established when the hearer sorts the speaker's intentions from the unintended possible meanings. For instance, an auditor might distinguish a meaning that is true when understood figuratively from a meaning that is false if taken literally or an intended sense of an equivocal word from an alternate meaning that would make a statement false. Such sorting requires the ability to consider multiple meanings simultaneously. Macbeth, however, admits early on that he has trouble holding in mind two versions of possible realities. Upon being pronounced Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth's "horrid image" and his "thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical" lead him to conclude that "nothing is / But what is not" (1.3.136–43). For Macbeth, the image of "What is not" obliterates entirely what "is." Yet, as Donald Foster observes, Macbeth "fails to realize his own powers of figuration" (Foster 1986, 337). Language, especially metaphoric language, becomes for Macbeth powerful, uncontrollable, and often performative as it overtakes existing realities.[10] Macbeth's unskillful

[10] Brian Morris has observed that "[p]ower is . . . what Macbeth inadvertently achieves, and . . . he wields it unskillfully" (Morris 1982, 40).

wielding of figurative power emerges most vividly in his botched stagings of kingly ceremonies. Although Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's desires and language prove to be frighteningly powerful, they cannot produce and contain either a viable royal spectacle or an heir. When spoken, heard, and interpreted in the back-and-forth of conversation, ambiguities can beget shared understanding, but the ambiguities unacknowledged by the Macbeths instead spawn horrific doubles.

It is as if Macbeth expects all language to work like royal performative speech which has the unilateral power to compel auditors to enact a king's utterances which are presumed to be univocal. *Macbeth*'s audience is reminded early on of the nature of such kingly speech. After hearing about Macbeth's success battling the rebels, Duncan concludes:

> DUNCAN No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
> Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
> And with his former title greet Macbeth.
> ROSS I'll see it done.
> DUNCAN What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. (1.2.64–8)

Duncan's diction emphasizes the performative nature of royal commands: at the king's behest, Ross must merely *pronounce* the Thane's death and *greet* Macbeth with his title for the capital punishment and promotion to be enacted. Ross's assurance that he will "*see* it done" suggests that Duncan's command will be enacted as if without any agency: Ross imagines himself as eye-witnessing the act, not doing it. But Duncan's couplets produce more than he intends: he rhymes *Macbeth* with *death* and unwittingly echoes the weird sisters' comment about the conclusion of the battle *lost* and *won* (1.1.4). Furthermore, Duncan's royal command disturbingly validates the weird sisters' prophecy: he perfects the weird sisters' imperfect speech, as it were, as if together they speak Macbeth's promotion into reality. In *Macbeth*'s Scotland, performative speech, in which the saying is the doing, precludes the mutual nature of conversation but not, it seems, the possibility for eerie doubling.

When Duncan pronounces that what the Thane of Cawdor "hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won" (1.2.66), he reduces the weird sisters' seemingly paradoxical notion of how something can be simultaneously lost and won by assigning one side as winner (loyal Macbeth) and one side as loser (the previous treasonous Thane of Cawdor). But this straightforward assignment of roles and distinction of noble and treacherous is quickly blurred when the new Thane of Cawdor is overcome by treacherous imaginings. The weird sisters' opening conversation has

revealed a world without adequate distinctions, a world where opposites can turn into each other, a world where "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11)—a sentiment Macbeth unwittingly echoes in his first remark of the play, "So fair and foul a day I have not seen (1.3.38).[11] Duncan and Macbeth's echoing opening statements extend the world of inadequate distinctions beyond the weird sisters' "bubbl[e]" (1.3.79) into the warring kingdom of Scotland in which the king's performative and seemingly absolute speech instead doubles the weird sisters' paradoxes.

This blurring of distinctions continues in the second scene of the play in which the Captain's report on the battle becomes itself a hurly burly of simile and metaphor. In the Captain's description of the broil, the loyal Macbeth and the traitor Macdonald appear as "two spent swimmers that do cling together / And choke their art" (1.2.8–9). Various critics have observed how this simile makes it difficult to distinguish between Macbeth and Macdonald and have proposed that the doubling that begins in this figure destabilizes critical attempts to read *Macbeth* as a play about how authority is, in David Kastan's terms, once again "natural and benign" after the "monstrous interregnum" of Macbeth (Kastan 1999, 166).[12] Thus, the political ambiguities of *Macbeth*'s Scotland emerge first in this extended simile spoken by the "bloody man" ready to report on "the revolt / The newest state" (1.2.1–3):

> Doubtful it stood,
> As two spent swimmers that do cling together
> And choke their art: the merciless Macdonald—
> Worthy to be a rebel, for to that

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[11] Frank Kermode remarks about the First Witch's question, "When shall we three meet again? / In thunder, lightening, or in rain?" (1.1.1–2): "But these are three conditions which flourish, so to say, in the same hedgerow; they do not differ so completely as to be presentable as mutually exclusive alternatives" (Kermode 1966, 83).

[12] Harry Berger notes that the Captain's simile "generates the idea that Macbeth in some manner relies on Macdonwald, that both together, hero and rebel, are 'spent swimmers,' perhaps equally victims of a common social weather" (Berger 1997, 76); Philipa Berry observes that the "image of the conflict against Macdonwald . . . stresses the resemblance of opposing forces, hinting thereby at the affinity—soon to be confirmed by the sisters' greeting—between Macbeth and the traitorous Cawdor" (Berry 1999, 121); and David Kastan observes that in the Captain's report to Duncan, "the referents of the third person singular pronouns are as 'doubtful' (1.2.7) as the battle itself that the captain reports" (Kastan 1999, 167).

> The multiplying villainies of nature
> Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles
> Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied,
> And Fortune on his damned quarry smiling,
> Showed like a rebel's whore; but all's too weak,
> For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
> Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel
> Which smoked with bloody execution,
> Like Valour's minion carved out his passage
> Till he faced the slave—
> Which ne'er shook hands nor bade farewell to him,
> Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chops
> And fixed his head upon our battlements. (1.2.7–23)

Here the Captain emphasizes the unchaste fecundity of villainy when he traces Macdonald's rebellion to the "multiplying villainies of nature" that "swarm upon him" and describes Fortune "like a rebel's whore." As Janet Adelman has observed, Macbeth's carving out his passage "anticipates Macduff's birth by caesarian section" (Adelman 1992,143). Adelman, who asserts that "the victorious unseaming happens twice: first on the body of Fortune and then on the body of Macdonwald," reads Macbeth's act as "carving out his passage from the unreliable female to achieve heroic male action, in effect carving up the female to arrive at the male" (143). If so, then doubling Macbeth as like Macduff further blurs distinctions between rebel and loyalist, traitor and hero.

But aside from the image of surgical birth, the Captain's metaphor that Macbeth "*unseamed*" Macdonald "from the nave to th' chops" (1.2.22, emphasis mine) depicts the ease with which Macbeth rips through the rebel's body, as a tailor rips a garment apart at its seam. The metaphor consequently implies that the rebel's body is somehow like a garment, a metaphor that collapses the expected distinction between naked flesh and cloak and complicates the long-discussed metaphors of Macbeth's political title, honors, and kingship as "borrowed robes" (1.3.108), "strange garments" (1.3.146), and "a giant's robe" (5.2.21).[13] The similes and metaphors in the Captain's report make it difficult to distinguish Macbeth from Macdonald, loyalist from traitor, flesh from

[13] See, for example, Caroline Spurgeon's catalog and discussion of the imagery of "Macbeth's Ill-Fitting Garments" (Spurgeon 1935, 324–7) and Cleanth Brooks's chapter "The Naked Babe and the Cloak of Manliness" (Brooks 1975, 22–49).

robe. Duncan, however, flattens the ambiguities before him, concluding simply that Macbeth is a "valiant cousin, worthy gentleman" (1.2.24).

The Captain goes on to tell how Macbeth and Banquo "doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe" (1.2.38) even as the Captain doubly redoubles the figures he uses to describe them. Indeed, the Captain exceeds the meter of his line with two extra syllables in the process. Notwithstanding Duncan's pronouncements, the metaphoric ambiguities are not contained. Furthermore, Duncan eventually becomes embroiled in the figurative and metrical excesses. Just before the Captain announces that he is "faint" and that his "gashes cry for help," he concludes that Macbeth and Banquo

> doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe;
> Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds
> Or memorize another Golgotha,
> I cannot tell. (1.2.38–42)

If the loyal Macbeth and Banquo seemed to the Captain to "memorize another Golgotha," the place where Jesus was crucified, then not only is a place of dead men's skulls evoked, but Macbeth and Banquo are figured as the Romans, fighting on behalf of King Duncan, and the slain rebel is figured as Jesus, the unacknowledged King of Kings. And even if "memorize" suggests a commemoration less gory than a transubstantial sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, Duncan himself evokes a sacrificial supper when he tells the bleeding Captain, "So well thy words become thee as thy wounds, / They smack of honour both" (1.2.43–4). Although "smack" figuratively means "to be strongly suggestive or reminiscent of something" (*OED* 2b *fig.*), its primary meaning is to "taste" (*OED* 1). Duncan's language of powerfully signifying wounds and words that taste of honor is reenacted soon enough when, after Macbeth's banquet, Duncan's grooms' faces have been smeared with the king's spilled blood, figured as wine. Before returning to Duncan's chamber with the bloody daggers, Lady Macbeth asserts, "If he do bleed, I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal" (2.2.54–5); and Macbeth, after returning to the chamber, observes that "The wine of life is drawn" and remarks upon his "golden blood" (2.3.97, 114).[14] Macbeth's next banquet is attended

[14] David Willbern notes that the "various associations of nursing, murder, and revenge in primitive, infantile terms may explain the curious criminal strategy of deflecting the blame for Duncan's murder by gilding the *faces* of the grooms with the king's blood . . . Fantastically, it is as though Duncan's blood is sacrificially

first by murderers with Banquo's blood on their faces and then by the ghost of bloody Banquo himself. With his metaphor of wounds that "smack of honour," Duncan unwittingly speaks himself into the series of bloody feasts to come.

Whereas King Duncan's metaphor of tasty wounds leads him unwittingly to the scene of his own murder, Lady Macbeth imagines that employing such performative powers of speech will make her husband king. The image of eating mixed with deadly violence reappears in Lady Macbeth's now famous claim that she would be willing to destroy her baby even as he was feeding at her breast, a claim that is part of Lady Macbeth's rebuttal of her husband's assertion that they "will proceed no further in this business" of killing Duncan (1.7.31). Much has been said about Lady Macbeth's claim, but what is not often said is that Lady Macbeth connects her willingness to destroy her infant son—and their heir—to her view of swearing, another kind of performative speech:[15]

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
> And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
> As you have done to this. (1.7.54–9)

Here Lady Macbeth describes the tender experience of nursing her baby boy before asserting that had she sworn to kill that baby—to "das[h] the brains out"—she would have done so. By asserting that she would have done this most horrific act had she so sworn, Lady Macbeth distinguishes herself from Macbeth who, she implies, has sworn that he would

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drunk from his wound, in a ritual union of murder and feast" (Willbern 1986, 526). Willbern does not observe, however, that the association between wounds and drinking is first spoken by Duncan himself.

[15] Stephanie Chamberlain, for instance, asserts: "Fearing Macbeth's wavering commitment to their succession scheme, Lady Macbeth declares that she would have 'dashed the brains out' (1.7.58) of an infant to realize an otherwise unachievable goal" (Chamberlain 2005, 72). Carol Chillington Rutter, without mention of Lady Macbeth's condition for killing her child, comments that "To make Macbeth a man, Lady Macbeth produces the death of a child" (Rutter 2004, 40).

kill Duncan but now tells her he intends not to. She draws a contrast, if obliquely, between the certainty that she would act on her hypothetical swearing to kill her baby ("had I so sworn") and Macbeth's refusal to act after actually swearing to kill Duncan ("As you have done to this").

Although we have not witnessed any such swearing on Macbeth's part, Macbeth does not refute the premise of his wife's argument and thus, at least passively, accepts the idea that somehow he has sworn—or said or indicated—that he would kill Duncan.[16] Lady Macbeth, by claiming that she would act on even the most shocking promise, emphasizes her absolute priority to do what she has said and thereby demands that Macbeth must do what he has said. Even killing a beloved child would be more acceptable to Lady Macbeth than not keeping her word in such a case as this. For Lady Macbeth, it seems, such a promise to one's spouse means deeds must follow words.

Although Lady Macbeth proclaims her willingness to kill her child to honor a vow, she first ties Macbeth's acting on his desire for the throne to his acting on his desire for her. When Lady Macbeth threatens, "Such I account thy love," and accusingly questions if Macbeth is afraid to "be the same" in his "own act and valour / As . . . in desire" (1.7.39–41), she implies that his cowardice would keep them from sexual union and, thus, from conceiving an heir. Yet, Lady Macbeth then professes her willingness to destroy their heir if she had promised to do so. Furthermore, she already has asked the spirits to "unsex" her: if the spirits have "ma[d]e thick [her] blood" and "stop[ped] up th'access and passage to remorse," then she won't be pregnant any time soon (1.5.40–3).[17] Lady Macbeth not only links Macbeth's acting on his desire for his wife, an act that could conceive an heir, to acting on one's word but also links

[16] Indeed, the scene staging Macbeth's reunion with Lady Macbeth makes it seem unlikely that Macbeth has sworn explicitly. Although Macbeth has written to his wife about the weird sisters and tells her that "Duncan comes here tonight" (1.5.58), he responds only "We will speak further" (1.5.70) when Lady Macbeth asserts that "never / Shall sun that morrow see" (1.5.59–60). It may well be that the swearing to which Lady Macbeth refers was not spoken aloud but mutually assumed. Importantly, though, Macbeth does not deny having so sworn.

[17] In her discussion of Lady Macbeth's speech in the light of Renaissance medicine, Jenijoy La Belle describes how Lady Macbeth "is asking for the periodic flow to cease, the genital tract to be blocked" and notes that "Renaissance medical texts generally refer to the tract through which the blood from the uterus is discharged as a 'passage"' (La Belle 1980, 382). La Belle further asserts that Lady Macbeth's "[s]topping the processes of procreation is tantamount to murdering infants—albeit yet unborn" (La Belle 1980, 384).

acting on one's word to murdering a child conceived by human parents, an infant who drinks milk and smiles at his loving mother.

Apparently persuaded by his wife to proceed with the regicide, Macbeth only worries, "If we should fail" (1.7.59). But as soon as Lady Macbeth unfolds the details of her plan to frame Duncan's chamberlains, Macbeth is convinced and directs her, "Bring forth men-children only: / For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" (1.7.73–5). Here Macbeth imagines bringing about the birth of their sons by telling his wife to do so, by imagining that she is able to "compose" men-children, hardly the image of an heir conceived of their sexual union.[18] Instead, Macbeth's figure of gaining an heir for his anticipated kingdom includes Lady Macbeth's speaking or writing into existence one who emerges fully developed. Such a man-child contrasts sharply with Lady Macbeth's image of the defenseless baby at her breast and also with Macbeth's own figure of "pity, like a naked new-born babe" (1.7.21).[19] Lady Macbeth offers to sacrifice her infant on the way to their becoming king and queen. The image of a vulnerable nursing infant conceived of their union, about whom she speaks but of whom there is no other evidence or mention, is thus exchanged for the image of men-children spoken into existence as Macbeth orders Lady Macbeth to bring them forth.

As editor Nicholas Brooke notes, a secondary military sense emerges in Macbeth's remark through puns on male / mail and undaunted / undented (Shakespeare 1990, 121). The image of men-children clad in armor that these puns evoke alludes, I suspect, to the story of Cadmus

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[18] Definitions for *compose* include: "To fashion, frame (the human body, etc.); *esp.* in comp. as *well-composed*, well put together, well-built. *Obs.*" (*OED* Ib), but in all of the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s examples of this meaning, "well-composed" is a predicate adjective. As a transitive verb, compose also can mean: "To construct (in words); to make or produce in literary form, to write as author" (*OED* 5) and "To put together (types) so as to form words and blocks of words; to set up (type)" (*OED* 7). Coppelia Kahn comments that Macbeth speaks of Lady Macbeth "as though she were a sole godlike procreator, man and woman both" (Kahn 1981, 172). But Macbeth first is godlike in his command.

[19] Alice Fox observes that "since at the time of the play the Macbeths are childless, this child (and any others they may have produced) must have died" (Fox 1979, 128). Fox points out that the infant mortality rate in Jacobean England was "enormously high" and suggests that when Macbeth says, "Bring forth men-children only" he not only "is struck by the 'undaunted mettle' of a woman who can plan to murder Duncan," but he also is "hoping to make assurance doubly sure" because miscarriage was believed to be less likely to occur with males than females (130).

who brings forth an army of men-children when he sows the serpent's teeth in the ground, a story Shakespeare would have known well from Book 3 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[20] Furthermore, Macbeth's imagined armed progeny have more in common with the armed head produced from the Witches' cauldron than a new-born infant born from his wife's womb. In fact, the Witches' production of the armed head also evokes a simile in Ovid's telling of the story of Cadmus' sown men. In *The Metamorphoses* the image of soldiers that grow from the soil, whose armed heads appear before their bodies, are compared to the theatrical sight of actors appearing on the stage at the start of a play. Arthur Golding translates the passage:

> Behold (mans helper at his neede) Dame Pallas gliding through
> The vacant Ayre was straight at hand, and bade him take a plough
> And cast the Serpents teeth in ground, as of the which should spring
> Another people out of hand. He did in every thing
> As Pallas bade, he tooke a plough, and earde a furrow low
> And sowde the Serpents teeth whereof the foresaid folke should grow.
> Anon (a wondrous thing to tell) the clods began to move,
> And from the furrow first of all the pikes appearde above,
> Next rose up helmes with fethered crests, and then the Poldrens bright,
> Successively the Curets whole, and all the armor right.
> Thus grew up men like corne in field in rankes of battle ray
> With shields and weapons in their hands to feight the field that day.
> Even so when stages are attirde against some solemne game,
> With clothes of Arras gorgeously, in drawing up the same
> The faces of the ymages doe first of all them showe,
> And then by peecemeale all the rest in order seemes to grow,
> Untill at last they stand out full upon their feete bylow. (Ovid 2000, 3.114–30)

Shakespeare's staging of the armed head emerging out of the Witches' cauldron calls to mind Ovid's image of figures on stage whose faces appear before their bodies as the curtain is drawn. In Shakespeare's theater, the head must have ascended because, according to the First

[20] Jonathan Bate observes that Shakespeare's "favourite classical author, probably his favourite author in any language, was Publius Ovidius Naso" (Bate 1993, vii). Bate argues that Shakespeare did not rely solely on Arthur Golding's 1567 translation of *The Metamorphoses* but also read it in Latin.

Folio's stage direction, "He Descends" after delivering his message. Although Golding translates Ovid's "*auloea tolluntur*" as "drawing up the same"—that is, drawing up the Arras—the image is clarified by George Duckworth's account of the workings of the later Roman theater, namely, that the curtain was "lowered to reveal the stage at the beginning of the performance and raised at the close" (Duckworth 1994, 84).[21] Especially considering the Ovid allusion, the fantasy of the male / mail children Lady Macbeth is to bring forth more closely resembles the men the Witches' produce from their cauldron than a baby born from a womb.

As Claude Lévi-Strauss observes in his analysis of the Oedipus myth, the story of Cadmus bringing forth a race of armed men by planting the serpent's teeth is a mythological instance of birth from autochthonous origins—of birth from one, rather than two (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 216).[22] The weird sisters' theatrical production of armed men, like the armed men Macbeth commands his wife to produce, are unilaterally and univocally brought into existence. The notion of birth from one, rather than from two, is emphasized in each case by the destruction of a vulnerable flesh-and-blood infant conceived by sexual union that precedes the advent of the autochthonous men-children: Lady Macbeth agrees that she would sacrifice a baby before her husband's conjuring of the men-children, and the Witches add the "Finger of birth-strangled babe / Ditch delivered by a drab" to the cauldron that produces theirs (4.1.30–1).

Furthermore, both instances of autochthonous birth are linked to meanings autonomously produced by speakers. Although the Witches at first invite Macbeth to speak and declare they will answer (4.1.75), they then insist that Macbeth remain a silent spectator and auditor. When Macbeth addresses the apparitions, the First Witch interrupts, "Hear his speech, but say thou nought" (4.1.84), and later the Witches command, "Listen, but speak not to't" (4.1.103). Both the armed-head and the imagined armed men-children are fantasies that disavow conception from sexual and verbal intercourse. Linguistically and corporally, conception by two is destroyed for the fantasy—the apparition—of conception by one.

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[21] D. E. Hill also notes this practice in the gloss to his translation of *Metamorphoses* 3.111–114 (Ovid 1985, 219).

[22] For Lévi-Strauss, the Oedipus myth "has to do with the inability, for a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous . . . to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that human beings are actually born from the union of man and woman" (1963, 216).

Macbeth's fantasy of autochthonic progeny composed by the "undaunted" mettle of his wife, however, proves barren in deed and thought. Macbeth soon considers that he does not have an heir to succeed him and expresses outrage about his "fruitless crown" and "barren sceptre" (3.1.60–1). Macbeth does not produce an heir, and eventually he does not even imagine one missing. When Macbeth laments lacking the things that "should accompany old age," any mention of a son is conspicuously absent (5.3.24). He lists "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends" but no longer even acknowledges children as part of the expected society of later life (5.3.25).

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* does not suggest, however, that the fantasy of bringing forth a royal line of men-soldiers is the tyrant Macbeth's alone: King Duncan too uses the image of sowing men when he welcomes Macbeth, his newly promoted warrior: "I have begun to plant thee, and will labour / To make thee full of growing" (1.4.29–30). Thus Duncan unwittingly brings forth his armed successor. And, as in the case of Cadmus' crop, the autochthonous production of soldier-sons fit for a king threatens to result in civil violence. Whereas the armed-men that Cadmus harvests immediately begin to fight and kill each other, Macbeth's fellow warrior, Banquo, first fights to be planted by Duncan when the king greets them upon their return from battle:

> DUNCAN Welcome hither:
> I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
> To make thee full of growing.—Noble Banquo,
> That has no less deserved, nor must be known
> No less to have done so—let me enfold thee,
> And hold thee to my heart.
> BANQUO There if I grow,
> The harvest is your own. (1.4.28–34)

Banquo responds to Duncan's praise by figuring himself in Duncan's planting metaphor and promising Duncan any love harvested. Later Banquo continues the image of harvesting royal progeny when he transforms the weird sisters' prophecy from "get[ing] kings" (1.3.67) into his own planting metaphor: "it was said . . . that myself should be the *root* and father / Of many kings" (3.1.3–6, emphasis mine). Perhaps, in part, Banquo takes his cue from Duncan who flattens the distinctions he himself has bestowed on Macbeth. Although Duncan pronounces Macbeth the new Thane of Cawdor and calls him a "peerless kinsman" (1.4.59), Duncan tells Banquo that he has "no less deserved" and should

be known "no less to have done so."[23] Unaware of the consequences of his metaphor of planting warriors, Duncan will soon, like Cadmus, harvest civil strife.

That Macbeth imagines he can produce children by telling his wife to bring them forth indicates that she has convinced him not only to kill Duncan but also that words must be enacted. This belief implies that future action is inextricably dictated by present speech, perhaps a larger sense in which Macbeth's words make Lady Macbeth feel "the future in the instant" (1.5.57). In his soliloquy that leads to the murder of Duncan, Macbeth remarks proverbially that "Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives" (2.1.62), but Macbeth seems more convinced that speech can bring forth deeds. He narrates the murder of Duncan even as he performs it: Macbeth becomes "withered murder" who "*thus* with his stealthy pace, / With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design / Moves like a ghost" (2.2.53, 55–7, emphasis mine).[24] Although Macbeth at first is concerned with whether the dagger is a "fatal vision" or "a false creation / Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain" (2.1.37–40), he eventually ceases to be troubled by whether the dagger is outside or within him.[25] And, anyway, it "marshall[s him] the way that [he] was going" (2.1.43). Macbeth's metaphor becomes his reality. "I go, and it is done," he concludes, collapsing his pronouncement with the completion of the act itself (2.1.63). Once he says so, Duncan is dead; thus, the bell Lady Macbeth rings to summon Macbeth to his task simultaneously "is a knell / That summons [Duncan] to Heaven, or to Hell" (2.1.64–5).

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[23] Duncan's awkward insertion of Banquo into his rewarding of Macbeth continues when Duncan gives Banquo a diamond to deliver to Macbeth for Lady Macbeth. Once Duncan has gone to bed, Banquo presents the gift to Macbeth and tells him: "This diamond he greets your wife withal / By the name of most kind hostess" (2.1.16–17).

[24] Berger finds "something vaguely androgynous about [Duncan's] personality . . . For he is not only the king and father, but also the mother of his society: the spring, the fountain, the very source of blood and manliness, but also of the milk of human kindness and concord" (Berger 1997, 93). In this metaphor, however, in which Macbeth becomes Tarquin, Duncan becomes Lucrece. Thus Duncan is figured as a female virgin, rather than a mother, another instance of the play's idea of birth from one, rather than two.

[25] Huston Diehl observes that "the play itself is centrally concerned with the problematics of vision" and that the "enigmatic images in *Macbeth* are all potentially signs, requiring interpretations, but characters and audience alike are unsure how to 'read' them" (Diehl 1983, 191).

Roy Battenhouse suggests that this scene that begins with Macbeth's saying "'When my drink is ready . . . strike upon the bell' and ends by his saying 'The bell is sounded,' parodies a Christian Mass, in which traditionally a bell is sounded to mark Christ's offering to God of his body and blood as a Saving sacrifice" (Battenhouse 1994, 49). I would argue, with a slightly different emphasis, that the bell marks the moment when the Words of Institution have the power in the Roman Catholic Mass to transform bread into flesh and wine into blood. The bell's suggestion of a kind of black mass emphasizes the power of words to bring about deeds. What is not, when spoken, can become what is.

As Macbeth becomes an increasingly hardened murderer, he decides to skip speech entirely and move straight from thought to act. He tells his wife, "Strange things I have in head, that will to hand, / Which must be acted, ere they may be scanned" (3.4.140–1). Upon hearing that Macduff is fled to England, Macbeth further proclaims that his desires and his thoughts shall be enacted immediately:

> From this moment,
> The very firstlings of my heart shall be
> The firstlings of my hand. And even now
> To crown my thoughts with acts—be it thought and done. (4.1.161–4)

Lady Macbeth is willing to kill their firstling to keep her promise; eventually Macbeth imagines his firstlings as the murderous thoughts and desires themselves, thoughts and desires that will inevitably result in acts.[26] Whereas Lady Macbeth insists that their speech perform acts, eventually Macbeth decides that his thoughts will do so: he will scan them only after converting them into actions; indeed, he will have to act them so that he can scan them. Soon enough Lady Macbeth's speech will entirely dictate her actions: as a chronic sleepwalker, she is doomed merely to repeat and reenact fragments of earlier speech.

Many scholars perceive that the play suggests a connection between Lady Macbeth and the Witches. Peter Stallybrass, for instance, observes that "Lady Macbeth and the Witches are equated by their equivocal

[26] Macbeth's metaphor is all the more striking because, before the regicide, Macbeth had figured his duties to the king as children. He refused Duncan's expressed gratitude by saying, "our duties are to your throne and state, / Children and servants, which do but what they should / By doing everything safe toward your love / And honour" (1.4.25–8).

relation to an implied norm of femininity" and that the play asks us to accept the "logical contradictions" that "Lady Macbeth is *both* an unnatural mother *and* sterile," which "links her to the unholy family of the Witches" (Stallybrass 1982, 196, 198).[27] Like the weird sisters, Lady Macbeth threatens to destroy children she has had the power to produce; she bargains with sexual desire but claims she is willing to murder what she and her husband have conceived. The weird sisters, too, are obscurely sexed and unsexed. When the First Witch declares her intention to follow the master of the *Tiger* to Aleppo, she announces:

> But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
> And like a rat without a tail,
> I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do. (1.3.8–10)

Although editors have commented on the sexualized language of this passage,[28] its imagery is both sexual and chaste, fertile and barren. The First Witch thrice claims she'll "do"—which can mean "perform" (*OED* 6) but also "copulate" (*OED* 16b)—but she says she'll do "like a rat without a tail." The weird sister, thus, both asserts and disavows a phallic power. Furthermore, she announces that she will sail to Aleppo in a sieve, which A. R. Braunmuller notes is an allegedly common witch practice, indeed "one of the accusations against the Scottish witches King James personally interrogated in 1590–1" (Shakespeare 1997a, 110).[29]

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[27] Adelman observes that "Lady Macbeth's power as a female temptress allies her in a general way with the witches as soon as we see her" and further asserts that Lady Macbeth and the witches "fuse through the image of perverse nursery" (Adelman 1992, 134–5). Stephen Greenblatt suggests that "Lady Macbeth is not revealed to be a witch, yet the witches subsist as a tenebrous filament to which Lady Macbeth is obscurely but palpably linked" (Greenblatt 1993, 125). Stanley Cavell imagines that Macbeth, confronted by witches, may wonder if his wife is a witch and "hence that he has had a child with a witch" (Cavell 2003, 242). Garry Wills, however, sees Macbeth as the witch and argues that whereas Lady Macbeth "never commits the formal crime of conjuring and necromancy . . . Macbeth, like other acknowledged witches in Shakespeare, does" (Wills 1995, 74).

[28] See, for example, Dennis Biggins's essay "Sexuality, Witchcraft, and Violence in *Macbeth*"; Biggins notes that "*Do* in the sense of "copulate with" is a common Shakespearean usage, mostly in transitive constructions . . . But *do* is sometimes used intransitively in this sense" (Biggins 1976, 262).

[29] King James calls attention to a standard synonym for sieve when in *Newes From Scotland* he reports that Agnis Tompson confessed that she "with a great many other witches . . . went by Sea each one in a Riddle or Ciue, and went in the same

But if "doing" and other ambiguous witch behaviors associate the weird sisters with female sexual desire, the sieve also associates them with a Renaissance symbol of chastity, perhaps most notably employed in the 1579 portrait of Queen Elizabeth (Strong 1987).[30] If Lady Macbeth is like the allegedly perverse witches, she is as perversely chaste as sexual: she sacrifices her procreative powers, which are dependent upon intercourse with an other, for the false promise of autonomous power wielded alone.

In his seminal essay on equivocation in the play, Frank Huntley argues that "although the initial prophecies of the witches in *Macbeth* can be taken as mere amphibology, they may also . . . be taken as technical equivocation" (Huntley 1964, 397). Huntley imagines that the "mental reservation" in the Witches' initial equivocating prophecy could be: "(1) To Macbeth—'You will be king [if you are willing to commit murder]'; (2) To Banquo—'Your children will be kings [if Macbeth murders Duncan and you but not Fleance]' " (397). Although Macbeth may be imagining the weird sisters' speech in general as equivocating—either by amphibology or by mental reservation—when Macbeth explains the weird sisters' equivocation as "lies like truth," he refers most immediately and explicitly to the Third Apparition's prophecy that "Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinan Hill / Shall come against him" (4.1.107–109).

How, then, does Macbeth's own definition of equivocation apply to what the Third Apparition has said? What lie did the apparition tell that is "like truth"? The "truth" turns out to be that Macbeth is not vanquished until Great Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Hill; the "lie" is that the forest will not "come" on its own, as Macbeth interprets the apparition to mean, but rather that the soldiers will hew down boughs of trees in Birnam Wood and march with them to Dunsinane Hill. This

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very substantially with Flaggons of wine making merrie and drinking by the waye in the same Riddles or Ciues, to the Kerke of North Barrick in Lowthian, and that after they had landed, tooke handes on the land and daunced this reill or short daunce, singing all with one voice" (James I 2002, 13). The witches' means of transportation are, like their riddling prophecies, seemingly miraculous yet full of holes.

[30] Another example is Giovanni Battista Moroni's mid-sixteenth-century painting *The Vestal Virgin Tuccia* which depicts an allegorical "Chastity," as a bare-breasted woman holding a sieve filled with water, as allusion to the vestal virgin who proves her virginity by carrying water from the Tiber in a sieve.

referent—soldiers marching with wood of Birnam forest trees toward Dunsinane Hill—is for Macbeth only "like truth" because the "truth" would be how Macbeth understood the prophecy upon first hearing it, namely, that each moving tree would have to "Unfix his earthbound root" (4.1.111). Equivocation as a statement that "lies like truth" in this case refers to a statement that is revealed to be true, but not in the way the hearer originally imagined. Macbeth's use of "equivocation" here refers pejoratively to speech intended to cause an auditor to interpret incorrectly.

As noted at the opening of this chapter, Macbeth's initial conclusion that he is invincible upon hearing the prophecies about "Birnam Wood to high Dunsinan Hill" and "none of woman born" (4.1.108, 94) has caused various scholars to accuse Macbeth of literal mindedness. Howard Felperin goes so far as to assert that "not only are the prophecies of *Macbeth* not transparent and univocal . . . strictly speaking, they do not even come true" (Felperin 1977, 134). Felperin further argues that "[i]t is only when we suppress their literal meaning (and our own literalism) and take the prophecies solely at a figurative level that they can be said to 'come true' at all" (134). Garry Wills is more accurate, I think, when he notes that "When the portents come true . . . it is not by some preternatural intrusion in to the order of nature. The walking wood and man not born are *fake* miracles, as it were—natural events masquerading in odd language" (Wills 1995, 142).

Macbeth's false confidence that he will "live the lease of nature" (4.1.114), derived from his understanding of the prophecy to mean that his vanquishing will occur only after the seemingly impossible event of a moving forest, is understandable, but also peculiar considering Macbeth's recent encounters with the supernatural. After having seen the ghost of Banquo, Macbeth has observed that "Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak" (3.4.124). In fact, Macbeth has worried about the discovery of his own crimes in part by imagining the natural world to be both observant and communicative:

> Augures, and understood relations, have
> By maggot-pies, and choughs, and rooks brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood. (3.4.125–7)

And before he kills Duncan, Macbeth worries that

> Heaven's cherubim . . .
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye
> That tears shall drown the wind. (1.7.22–5)

His confidence that a forest will not move suggests that Macbeth has accepted Lady Macbeth's insistence that Banquo's ghost, like any other seemingly supernatural perception, "is the very painting of [his] fear . . . the air-drawn dagger which [he] said / Led [him] to Duncan" (3.4.61–3). Macbeth deems the weird sisters' prophecies equivocation not because he realizes something he has understood literally is figurative, but rather because he realizes that the weird sisters' foreknowledge of events refers to plainly human actions—soldiers camouflaging themselves with tree boughs—that when spoken of sounded like supernatural events—trees uprooting themselves and moving. Macbeth is disenchanted before he is defeated.

In part, Macbeth is vulnerable to misunderstanding the apparition because he does not acknowledge that communication is reliant on both speaker and hearer. After Macbeth becomes the Thane of Cawdor, he begins to takes the weird sisters' prophecies to be univocally true. By the time he writes to his wife, he has disavowed his initial response that the weird sisters are "imperfect speakers" to be interrogated further and refers instead, with hyperbolical insistence, to their "*perfectest* report" (1.3.70; 1.5.2, emphasis mine). This unthinking confidence that he has heard a univocal prophecy not requiring interpretation—that he has heard a transparently comprehensible utterance—leaves him vulnerable to lies that are like truth. Macbeth does not heed Banquo's warning that

> oftentimes . . .
> The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
> In deepest consequence. (1.3.124–7)

Instead, he sends to his wife a doubling report of the weird sisters' visit.

The weird sisters' prophetic greetings certainly inspire Macbeth's thoughts: Macbeth seems to match their greetings to something about which he has thought already. As R. A. Foakes observes in his discussion of the Witches' initial greeting, Macbeth's "starting at their greetings of him . . . registers his awareness at this moment that what they say gives conscious expression to a half-formed image" (Foakes 1982, 11). And Shakespeare's revision of Holinshed's narrative emphasizes Macbeth's readiness to imagine what Lady Macbeth calls the "nearest way" to become king (1.5.17). Whereas in *The Chronicles* Macbeth only

thinks of regicide after Duncan names Malcolm heir to the throne,[31] in Shakespeare's play Macbeth experiences the "horrid image" of Duncan's murder well before hearing this news. Shakespeare's Macbeth is vulnerable to the weird sisters' equivocation because their speech hits Macbeth's "half-formed image," to use Foakes's phrase. Such a half-formed image is not unlike what Lennox expects the Lord to have. But Macbeth does not acknowledge that the weird sisters' words are mingling with his own thoughts: he rather imagines that they are magically inducing them. Because Macbeth does not acknowledge the mutual nature of conception—because he does not acknowledge that he has perfected the weird sisters' imperfect speech—he disavows his own agency. Although the weird sisters' prophecy about the Thane of Cawdor comes true without Macbeth's "stir" (1.3.145), their prophecy about Macbeth as "king hereafter" becomes performative when Macbeth disavows his agency as auditor and takes it to be so.

Whereas Macbeth fails to interpret adequately the weird sisters' equivocating speech about his becoming king, Macduff fails to equivocate effectively about Macbeth's having become king. Although Macduff expresses his skepticism about the official story of Duncan's murder, his equivocations fail to elicit any acknowledgement from Ross or the Old Man. Macduff's willingness to make known his view of the regicide and Macbeth's succession becomes clear with his eventual declaration that he will not go to Scone to see Macbeth invested; however, Macduff fails to gain Ross as an ally in resisting Macbeth. For instance, when Macduff reports that "the King's two sons, / Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them / Suspicion of the deed" (2.4.25–7), Ross responds, "'Gainst nature still— / Thriftless ambition, that will raven up / Thine own life's means" (2.4.27–9). Macduff's phrasing—"which puts upon

[31] In Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, it is only after Duncan "made . . . Malcolme, prince of Cumberland, as it were thereby to appoint him his successor in the kingdome, immediatlie after his deceasse," that "Mackbeth sore troubled herewith . . . began to take counsell how he might vsurpe the kingdome by force, hauing a iust quarrell so to doo (as he tooke the matter) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claime, which he might in time to come, pretend vnto the crowne" (Holinshed 1927, 211).

them / Suspicion of the deed"—indicates that Malcolm and Donalbain have received, not necessarily earned, the blame for the regicide and leaves room for Ross to acknowledge alternative motives for their flight. However, Ross instead responds to Macduff's report as further evidence of a cosmic correspondence: Ross's "'Gainst nature still"—referring to Malcolm and Donalbain's killing their father—echoes the reference to the "unnatural" (2.4.10) darkness during the day after Duncan's murder and the Old Man's report of the equally unnatural killing of a falcon by a mousing owl.[32] The exchange between Macduff and Ross demonstrates the limits of equivocation: an auditor might not acknowledge, or interpret correctly, what the speaker means however the speaker has tried to hint.

Although eventually Macduff plainly tells Ross that he will not go to Scone, Macduff fails with Ross and the Old Man to generate any new, shared knowledge of Duncan's murder that contradicts the new king's official story. In his cryptic response, "God's benison go with you, and with those / That would make good of bad, and friends of foe" (2.4.40–1), the Old Man avoids expressing any view of the murder and rather emphasizes that restoring peace in a kingdom can require allowing foul to be fair.[33] Here equivocation is shown as so dependent upon the auditor that it can fail to communicate. Indeed, Macduff communicates his opposition more directly through his actions: he does not go to Scone, and later he does not attend Macbeth's feast. With such transparent opposition, however, Macduff sacrifices the safety of his wife and children to the king's tyranny.

We next see Macduff when, in England, he is an auditor to Malcolm's equivocations. Garry Wills has observed that what "sets this scene apart is that *we* are testing the prince as *he* tests the suspect" (Wills

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[32] Ross's incorrect interpretation of the peculiar natural occurrences on the night of Duncan's murder complicates the idea of a macrocosmic correspondence to the microcosmic event of regicide: a faulty correspondence is shown to be drawn by a fallible human being. This moment calls to mind Franco Moretti's assertions that "At bottom, English tragedy is nothing less than the negation and dismantling of the Elizabethan World Picture" and that "tragedy, in its destruction of the medieval world picture, recognizes its importance, but destroys it nonetheless" (Moretti 1982, 12, 14).

[33] L. C. Knights comments that the Old Man's remark "has an odd ambiguous effect. The immediate reference is to Ross, who intends to make the best of a dubious business by accepting Macbeth as king. But Macduff also is destined to 'make good of bad' by destroying the evil" (Knights 1991, 136). If the Old Man intends the meaning that Knights proposes, it too goes unacknowledged.

1995, 116), and, indeed, scholars have alternately criticized and praised Malcolm's testing of Macduff, depending on whether they find the promise of Malcolm's kingship tainted or strengthened by his willingness and ability to equivocate. William O. Scott, for instance, observes that Malcolm "has a hard time extricating himself from the admission of falsehood, which (especially in suspicious times) seems as unkingly as the actual content of the lies themselves" (Scott 1986, 160).[34] But Richard McCoy finds that "Malcolm's equivocations . . . can be a force for good and a source of grace" and argues that Malcolm "relies . . . on a cunning stratagem of equivocation and careful scrutiny to test potential friends and adversaries alike" (McCoy 2004, 28, 34). Lucy Gent similarly concludes that Malcolm's testing of Macduff "shows how the only adequate counter to the equivocation represented by Macbeth is not the guileless univocal grace of Duncan, but guile-full duplicity" (Gent 1983, 427).[35]

Malcolm's confession and subsequent disavowal of his confessed vices are crucial to interpretations of how Scotland might fare with Malcolm on the throne, compared to Duncan or Macbeth. But in what sense can Malcolm be said to equivocate? The "taints and blames [he] laid upon [him]self" are, according to Malcolm, plainly and entirely untrue, but Malcolm has not hinted so by means of rhetorical distancing; nor has he obscurely spoken in figurative truths that were mistaken by Macduff as literal (4.3.124). Malcolm falsely confesses his various and considerable vices in order to observe Macduff's reaction and thereby determine Macduff's motivations and allegiances. Malcolm equivocates by the strictest mental reservation: he reserves the truth entirely. Although, like Lennox, Malcolm aims to test the allegiance of his auditor, unlike Lennox, his aim is not shared truth, but rather his own unilaterally determined truth about Macduff. Whereas Lennox's equivocation ends in his and the Lord's shared sense of their problematic king and country, Malcolm's

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[34] Scott further suggests that "Believed or not, Malcolm's self-chastisement must weaken his position, both personally and in general" and that "Malcolm's difficulty in freeing himself from falsehood must sound painfully like the experience of many in Shakespeare's troubled age" and, among other examples, refers to the Jesuits who "had a prime reputation as liars because of their doctrine of equivocation" (1986, 160–1).

[35] Other scholars find *Macbeth*'s Act 4, scene 3 merely dramatically unsuccessful. Kermode remarks that "[t]his is rather generally, and I think correctly, thought a blemish on the play, certainly its least well-written scene" (Kermode 2000, 214).

false speaking leaves Macduff merely bewildered: Macduff finds "Such welcome and unwelcome things at once . . . hard to reconcile" (4.3.138–9).

Macduff passes Malcolm's test when he proclaims that someone with the vices Malcolm describes is not suited to live, let alone govern; laments what he has learned about the issue of the "sainted" Duncan; and announces that the "evils" that Malcolm has "repeat[ed] upon [him]self" have "banished" him from Scotland (4.3.109–13). Malcolm's equivocations leave Macduff bereft of all community: he feels banished from the very country for which he has abandoned his family. And Macduff never reconciles Malcolm's allegedly false self-slander and subsequent proclamations of virtue because Malcolm and Macduff's conversation is interrupted first by the Doctor who reports on the King of England's miraculous healing and then by Ross who reports on the slaughter of Macduff's family. Macduff's eventual determination to kill Macbeth is thus prompted by personal revenge as much as by his wish for Malcolm to gain the throne:

> Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself
> Within my sword's length set him—if he scape,
> Heaven forgive him too. (4.3.233–5)

Macduff says nothing further about his hope that Malcolm will return to Scotland.

The manner of Malcolm's equivocation, namely, false speaking and retraction, contrasts sharply with Ross's equivocation before eventually revealing the horrible news of the slaughter of Macduff's family. When Macduff asks Ross about his wife and children, Ross says they are "well" (4.3.177). Yet Macduff's following question, "The tyrant has not battered at their peace?" (4.3.178), reveals that Macduff is aware of the likelihood that they are not well and that Ross's "No, they were well at peace when I did leave 'em" (4.3.179) is either not a full report on Macduff's family's condition, or it refers to the "peace" of death, a meaning that Macduff has not intended when he uses the term in his question. Suspecting that Ross is reserving something, Macduff demands, "Be not a niggard of your speech" (4.3.180). Indeed, before Ross tells Macduff explicitly that his wife and babes have been "savagely slaughtered" (4.3.205), Macduff acknowledges, "H'm—I guess at it" (4.3.203). Ross's equivocating reveals his reluctance to report the horrible events, and Macduff's persistent demands for more information

invite Ross to speak the full truth. Ross allows Macduff some agency in hearing the news: Macduff guesses at it and demands the news before Ross speaks it; he invites Macduff to interpret further even as he cautions of the danger of hearing. Ross warns Macduff that "To relate the manner" of the slaughter "Were on the quarry of these murdered deer / To add the death of you" (4.3.205–7). In the equivocating speech of Ross, the terrible danger of speech is acknowledged after which the speaker and auditor coproduce the terrible truths revealed. Ross's equivocation, in contrast to Malcolm's, calls attention to how Malcolm leaves Macduff unable to reconcile his equivocations into a shared truth.

Whereas Malcolm's equivocations test Macduff's allegiances to his potential kingship, Macbeth's equivocations express the conflict he feels about the crime he commits to become king. Once Macbeth has returned to the chamber and seen the slain Duncan, his remarks are likely as true as they are calculated to avoid blame. Macbeth's assertion that had he "died an hour before this chance," he had "lived a blessed time" (2.3.93–4) is an equivocation that covers his guilt before the assembled lords but also expresses his deep guilt about having killed Duncan and his knowledge that he is now damned. Before killing Duncan, Macbeth had spoken of the "deep damnation" (1.7.20) that would follow, and, after killing him, he had hoped for Duncan's resurrection: "Wake Duncan with thy knocking: I would thou couldst" (2.2.73). Macbeth may kill the guards to silence them. But it is also likely that "Th'expedition of [Macbeth's] violent love / Outran the pauser, reason" (2.3.112–13)—that the sight of Duncan's breached body incites Macbeth's fury. His wife's staging of the groom's gilt / guilt may be powerful enough to elicit Macbeth's reaction, as if Macbeth is as convinced by her show as any of the lords. Macbeth's equivocations seem to result as much from his ambivalences about having killed the king as from his attempts to evade discovery.

Macbeth's ambivalence comes as no surprise considering that he was able to proceed with the regicide in part because his and Lady Macbeth's equivocations had allowed them to act without fully acknowledging their intentions, or even their agency. As Franco Moretti observes, "Political murder, which in Machiavelli may be profitably reflected upon and even more profitably put to use as a warning to enemies, becomes in *Macbeth* the unthinkable and unprofitable deed par excellence" (Moretti 1982, 27). After killing Duncan, Macbeth concludes that "To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself" (2.2.79), and, in fact, Macbeth's

conversations with his wife leading up to the deed protect them from fully knowing the deed and themselves. This link between treachery and not knowing or not wanting to know oneself surfaces again in Ross's description of the treacherous state of Scotland under Macbeth's rule. Ross tells Lady Macduff:

> But cruel are the times when we are traitors
> And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
> From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
> But float upon a wild and violent sea
> Each way and move. (4.2.18–22)

Ross's image of floating upon a stormy sea emphasizes the loss of agency associated with not knowing oneself and the kind of equivocation that can follow.[36]

Stanley Cavell's observation that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's speech "exemplif[ies] exchanges of words that are not exchanges, that represent a kind of negation of conversation" (Cavell 2003, 238) might be rephrased by saying that their marriage is spoken in unacknowledged equivocations. How much does Macbeth know and intentionally withhold from Lady Macbeth? What do they silently agree not to acknowledge? Even though we do not hear Lady Macbeth read her husband's letter from its beginning, what we do hear suggests that although Macbeth has reported much of what the weird sisters have told him,[37] he does not report fully. Most significant is his failure to mention the prophecy that Banquo will "get kings" (1.3.67). Is Macbeth's silence about this part of the prophecy an indication that he withholds information that might have caused his wife to hesitate in their planning? Do Macbeth's treacherous thoughts about the crown temporarily

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[36] Lady Macduff, however, suggests a more straightforward notion of traitor, one who is more fully in control of his false speech. Soon after Ross leaves, she explains to her son that a traitor is "one that swears and lies" and agrees that his father was one (4.2.50). Lady Macduff's accusation of her husband is, thus, not unlike Lady Macbeth's accusation of Macbeth for not keeping his word.

[37] Indeed many of the very words spoken in the scene with the weird sisters and then with Ross and Angus echo with variation in Macbeth's letter. They include: "success" (1.5.1 and 1.3.133), "vanished" and "air" (1.5.4–5 and 1.3.80–1), "all-hailed" (1.5.6 and 1.3.68), and "greatness" (1.5.12 and 1.3.118). As has long been observed, the first words we hear Lady Macbeth say are Macbeth's, but Macbeth's words that she reads from his letter are not his alone.

obliterate any thought of Banquo's prophecy as he focuses on his own kingship?

Macbeth would be sensible to worry that Banquo, with whom he was audience to the weird sisters, would suspect that Macbeth has killed Duncan, but why does Macbeth worry about Banquo only after murdering Duncan rather than taking this into account while planning? Why is Macbeth unable to acknowledge to his sometime "partner of greatness" (1.5.10), with whom he planned Duncan's murder, his plans to have Banquo and Fleance killed? Curiously, when, in soliloquy, Macbeth eventually acknowledges that his "fears in Banquo / Stick deep," he at first does not mention the prophecy but instead notes that in Banquo's "royalty of nature / Reigns that which would be feared" (3.1.48–50). Later, when he does mention the prophecy, he emphasizes Banquo's agency, remembering how Banquo "chid the sisters / When first they put the name of king upon me / And bade them speak to him" (3.1.56–8). Although Macbeth imagines Banquo's desire as somehow responsible for the prophecy that promises Banquo kings as descendents, Macbeth does not imagine his own desire similarly responsible for the prophecy that promised him the kingship.

As Act 3, scene 2 opens, Lady Macbeth also has Banquo on her mind. Although Macbeth's plans to murder Banquo remain unspoken, Lady Macbeth's attention to Banquo hints at some knowledge of her husband's unacknowledged plans. She asks a servant if Banquo is "gone from court" (3.2.1), and after the servant reports that he is gone but will return, Lady Macbeth sends for Macbeth so that she may "attend his leisure for a few words" (3.2.3–4). Once alone, Lady Macbeth laments that "Nought's had, all's spent, / Where our desire is got without content" (3.1.5–6). Lady Macbeth's thoughts move from her concern about Banquo's whereabouts to desire "got without content." As Dennis Biggins has observed, Lady Macbeth's language here is "markedly sexual" (Biggins 1976, 260). However, whereas Biggins hears in her language implications of unsatisfying "carnal possession" and failed "sexual satisfaction" (261), I would argue that her phrasing refers more readily to desire got without conception. Although Lady Macbeth does not acknowledge her concerns directly, her attention at the opening of the scene is focused first on the soon-to-be-murdered Banquo and then, however obliquely, on their missing heir.

When Macbeth arrives, Lady Macbeth abandons her own worries to attempt to assuage his; thus, she never speaks the "few words" she had intended. Macbeth's equivocations about commissioning the murders of Banquo and Fleance turn metaphorical. He fears that they

> have scorched the snake, not killed it:
> She'll close, and be herself, whilst our poor malice
> Remains in danger of her former tooth. (3.2.14–16)

Braunmuller glosses this line by quoting Capell's note that the snake is "'Duncan; alive enough in his sons, and his other friends, to put his wounder in *danger*' " (qtd. in Shakespeare 1997a, 169–70). The snake may be a metaphor for Duncan, but scorching the snake without killing it also prophesies the murder of Banquo from which Fleance escapes. Indeed Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's conversation turns immediately to Banquo. Furthermore, the metaphor recurs, with variation, when, at the feast, Macbeth remarks upon the news that Banquo is dead but Fleance fled:

> There the grown serpent lies, the worm that's fled
> Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
> No teeth for th'present. (3.4.29–31)[38]

The snake metaphor signifies powerfully even as it masks the acknowledgment of the plan to murder Banquo and his son. But although they mask his intentions, Macbeth's equivocating words bring about unanticipated meanings and deeds.

Macbeth eventually agrees to his wife's urging that he "Be bright and jovial among [their] guests" (3.2.31) and in turn instructs his wife:

> Let your remembrance apply to Banquo,
> Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue—
> Unsafe the while, that we must lave our honours
> In these flattering streams, and make our faces
> Vizards to our hearts, disguising what they are. (3.2.33–7)

Whereas Braunmuller notes that "Since Macbeth has just arranged Banquo's murder, this advice presumably means to misdirect Lady Macbeth" (Shakespeare 1997a, 171), Brooke notes that Macbeth is "directing her attention to Banquo as their greatest danger in the hope of securing her complicity" (Shakespeare 1990, 149). Brooke's reading seems, to me, more plausible than Braunmuller's, but the discrepancy

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[38] Perhaps the Cadmus story lingers in these verses: like Cadmus, Macbeth kills the serpent, but its teeth will breed more soldiers and more civil strife.

calls attention to the play's lack of clarity about whether and when Macbeth has told Lady Macbeth about the weird sisters' prophecy that Banquo will beget kings. Macbeth's remarking that "Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance lives" only makes sense if Lady Macbeth understands that Banquo and his son are somehow a threat (3.2.40). And Lady Macbeth's response, "But in them nature's copy's not eterne" prompts Macbeth's direct talk of murder: "There's comfort yet, they are assailable" (3.2.41–2). However, once Macbeth has announced that "there shall be done / A deed of dreadful note," Lady Macbeth asks, "What's to be done" (3.2.46–7), as if unable or unwilling to imagine the murder. Furthermore, Macbeth imagines that Lady Macbeth can be "innocent of the knowledge" (3.2.48). Lady Macbeth and Macbeth both do and do not talk about the murder of Banquo and Fleance. In their equivocating conversation, the Macbeths obscure their collective knowledge and further lose control of their speech and deeds.

It is at this moment when Macbeth once again appeals to the natural and supernatural worlds. When Macbeth invokes the "seeling night" (3.2.49), he figures the night as a falconer in the act of taming his falcon by seeling its eyes, a metaphor with which he distances himself from the acts he himself has ordered. By casting himself as the night's falcon (whose eyes are seeled and who hunts on behalf of his master), he attempts to keep himself innocent of the knowledge and free from responsibility for the kill. Macbeth also echoes an earlier appeal to night: when Duncan names Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth decides it is "a step / On which [he] must fall down, or else o'erleap" (1.4.49–50). Although Duncan insists figuratively that "signs of nobleness like stars shall shine / On all deservers" (1.4.42–3), Macbeth appeals to the actual stars:

> Stars hide your fires,
> Let not light see my black and deep desires,
> The eye wink at the hand—yet let that be
> Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. (1.4.51–4)

As if the stars comply figuratively with Macbeth's appeal, Duncan has been blindly praising Macbeth:

> True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
> And in his commendations I am fed,
> It is a banquet to me. (1.4.55–7)

And so Duncan initiates the strange punning on *Banquo* and *banquet* which precedes the bloody murder-feasts.

The monstrous mingling of killing and eating—having Banquo murdered during the royal banquet—intrudes when, in the midst of the feast, Macbeth greets the Murderer and notes, "There's blood upon thy face" (3.4.13). Like Duncan's grooms, whose faces Lady Macbeth had gilded with blood after the original murder-feast, Banquo's murderers arrive with blood grotesquely on their faces. Even as Lady Macbeth chides Macbeth in an effort to have him stop talking to the murderers and attend to his banquet guests, her language becomes eerily doubling, as metaphor spawns pun that spawns metaphor:

> To feed were best at home;
> From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony,
> Meeting were bare without it. (3.4.35–7)

Lady Macbeth's metaphor of meeting *bare* without ceremony is, like the "daggers / Unmannerly breeched with gore" (2.3.117–18), a metaphor of clothing disguising a killing.[39] Whatever Lady Macbeth's intentions, this metaphor suggests that the gathering of guests at the royal banquet will somehow dress the murder of Banquo.

Lady Macbeth asserts that ceremony, the ritual of the court, transforms mere feeding—the more basic, animal act of acquiring nourishment[40]—into a social occasion, a feast. But this feast degenerates as Lady Macbeth's pun on meat / meet spins out of her control. Not just animals have been slaughtered for this banquet, and there are more neglected ceremonies than Macbeth's neglect to give the cheer. Banquo's slaughtered body, "safe in ditch" with "twenty trenchèd gashes on his head" (3.4.26–7), has not yet received the ceremony of being *cered*—"embalm[ed]" or "shut up . . . in a coffin" (*OED* 2b, c)—and is thus bare

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[39] The *OED*'s first definitions for *bare* are: "I. Without covering. 1. a. Of the body or its parts: Unclothed, naked, nude." Brooks observes about the "daggers / Unmannerly breeched with gore" that "[a]s Macbeth and Lennox burst into the room, they find the daggers wearing, as Macbeth knows all too well, a horrible masquerade" (Brooks 1975, 38), namely, the blood with which the daggers have been dressed as if the guards to whom the daggers belong had stabbed and killed Duncan.

[40] The *OED*'s first definitions for *feed* are: "1. a. *trans.* To give food to; to supply with food; to provide food for . . . b. To suckle (young) . . . c. To put food into the mouth of (*e.g.* a child, a sick person, a fowl). d. To graze, pasture (cattle, sheep, etc.)."

meat—"a dead person, a corpse" (*OED* 8). In her last conversation with Banquo, Lady Macbeth had added to her husband's expressed desire to have Banquo as their "chief guest" (3.1.11):

> If he had been forgotten,
> It had been as a gap in our great feast,
> And allthing [sic] unbecoming. (3.1.11–13)

Banquo's "remembrance" (3.2.33) becomes a "gap" in the feast in the sense of "a gash or wound in the body" (*OED* 3). As has been much remarked, the slain Banquo keeps his word, "fail[s] not" the "feast" (3.1.28), and arrives as the ghost who "shake[s his] gory locks" at the appalled king (3.4.50–1). The ghost of Banquo arrives with a gap-wound even as it fills the gap Banquo's absence would have left. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's equivocations about the murder of Banquo end in the horrific doubling of language and deeds—and even of Banquo, whose corpse lies in a ditch and whose ghost attends the banquet.

After Lady Macbeth dismisses the guests, an equivocating conversation begins about Macbeth's next target, Macduff. When Macbeth asks Lady Macbeth "How sayst thou that Macduff denies his person / At our great bidding?" (3.4.129–30), Lady Macbeth asks, "Did you send to him, sir?" (3.4.130). But when Macbeth announces that he is "in blood / Stepped so far" that it would be "as tedious" to return as to "go o'er" and that he must act the "Strange things" in his head (3.4.137–40), Lady Macbeth does not acknowledge her husband's plan. Instead, she concludes that Macbeth "lack[s] the season of all natures, sleep" (3.4.142). Ironically, her comment on Macbeth's lack of sleep is the last line she speaks before her own final sleepwalking appearance. Although her husband's intentions about murdering Macduff and his family remain unspoken and unacknowledged, Lady Macbeth's knowledge is revealed in her sleep-talking: "The Thane of Fife had a wife—where is she now?" (5.1.40).

When we last see Lady Macbeth, she is rehearsing earlier conversations that have become the scripts for her sleep-talking and walking. Cavell has remarked on the Doctor's portrayal of Lady Macbeth's "slumbery agitation" as "A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching" (5.1.9–11): the Doctor's description, Cavell suggests, "seems most literally a description of the

conditions of a play's audience, and play-watching becomes, along with (or as an interpretation of) sleepwalking, exemplary of human action as such, as conceived in this play" (Cavell 2003, 235).[41] Cavell further observes that sleepwalking "seems a fair instance of a condition ambiguous as between doing something and having something happen to you" (246).

Indeed, Macbeth initiates the representation of such ambiguous agency in his own life when he accepts the weird sisters' prophecies as "happy *prologues* to the swelling *act* / Of the imperial *theme*" (1.3.129–30, emphasis mine). With this metaphor of his life as a play and the prophecies as scripts, Macbeth figures himself as one who will act out an already scripted life. And, increasingly, he perceives not only the prophetic language of the weird sisters but also his own language as scripts to perform. Paradoxically, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's insistence on the absolute and unilateral power of their language and thought—as if a script for action—culminates in Lady Macbeth's being ruled by their speech, doomed to perform earlier scripts, and to Macbeth's sense that life is a player who "struts and frets" without significance (5.5.25). The sleepwalking Lady Macbeth repeats what is presumably an earlier comment to her husband as he worried about being found out: "What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account" (5.1.35–6). Ironically, at the end of her life, she herself is subject to their own royal utterances.

Yet Macbeth never yields entirely to the notion that his fate will determine his life irrespective of his actions: even as he takes the prophecies as truths, he is willing to fight against the enactment of their unappealing parts. For instance, when chagrined that if the weird sisters' prophecy "be so" (3.1.63), it would mean that he had made "the seeds of Banquo kings," Macbeth concludes, "Rather than so, come Fate into the list, / And champion me to th'utterance" (3.1.69–71).[42] And even

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[41] Marjorie Garber goes so far as to suggest that the scene reveals Lady Macbeth to be the author of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: "Here is the scene in which her astonished audience, a doctor and a gentlewoman, describe her as she writes, seals, and performs the play—repeatedly, night after night" (Garber 1987, 87). Garber asserts that the scene "represents the medium of representation itself as a sleepwalker—someone who, in the very act of dramatic composition and performance, personifies the transgression of a boundary" (88).

[42] Foakes glosses this line: "i.e., come, Fate, into the place of battle and fight beside me to the bitter end (or to the death)" (Shakespeare 1968, 65–6) and notes that although "Macbeth's words are usually taken as a challenge to Fate . . . the lines can also be interpreted as an invitation to Fate to stand on Macbeth's side"

after Macduff tells him that he was from his "mother's womb untimely ripped," Macbeth refuses Macduff's invitation to be "the show and gaze o' th' time," determined instead to "try the last" (5.7.45–6, 54, 62). Macbeth will fight Macduff rather than be someone else's show, and he will challenge Fate itself to a metaphorical tournament in the tilt-yard until the *utterance*—a pun that slides between "the bitter end" (*OED* 2a) and speech itself (*OED* 3a).

Cavell's idea that *Macbeth*'s image of sleepwalking—an event that blurs the distinction between doing something and having something done to you—is the play's image of the theater calls to mind the play's storied curse: as directors and actors act out *Macbeth*, *Macbeth* takes its own action on actors. As Marjorie Garber has detailed, legends of its ill-fated stagings abound (Garber 1987, 88–91). For instance, in 1937, Laurence Olivier first lost his voice and then narrowly escaped death by a falling weight, and in 1942 three actors and a scene designer died during John Gielgud's production (89). Charms existing to remove curses brought about through indiscreet references or quoting from the play behind the scenes suggest that some actors feel the performance of this play must be carefully managed and contained. Of particular interest is the superstition that speaking directly about the play, its plot, or its characters is dangerous, and that therefore euphemisms such as "the Scottish play," "the death," or "the Queen" are deemed to be necessary precautionary measures (88). With such legendary accidents attributed to its very production, actors find it necessary to equivocate. Like the weird sisters who have been adding ingredients to their apparition-producing cauldron but insist that what they do is "A deed without a name" (4.1.63), *Macbeth* has become, as it were, a play without a name.

And yet the play is profitable. In an interview with John Russell Brown, the director Peter Hall comments that "it's no accident, of course, that it's the unlucky play" and notes that "there is something

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(66). The problem with this reading is that, as Lady Macbeth puts it, "fate and metaphysical aid doth seem / To have crowned" Macbeth but also to have pronounced Banquo's children kings (1.5.28–9). Why then would Macbeth expect Fate to champion him? Brooke notes that "it is ambiguous whether Fate defies Macbeth or supports him" (144). The ambiguity calls attention to how, although Macbeth seems to be most immediately concerned with fighting against the fate that Banquo will beget kings, he paradoxically accepts that fate has crowned him. Furthermore, Macbeth enacts the paradox essential to all fights against fate: there would be no reason to fight his fate unless he believed his life already was determined, yet to fight his fate he must simultaneously believe he can change his already determined life.

about living with evil that has a very debilitating effect on everybody who works on it" (Hall 1982, 248). Hall points out, however, that the play's reputation for danger may be linked to its very popularity: "it was always done when a company was about to be disbanded and had to have a good box-office. Once *Macbeth* was announced, all the actors knew times were bad . . . It remains, paradoxically, one of the most popular plays" (248). At once productive and destructive, performing *Macbeth* might save a company even as it endangers its actors.

Hall's comments might be included among scholars' descriptions of the play's equivocations.[43] For one, Adelman, who reads the end of the play as "a radical excision of the female site of origin" explicitly calls the play's ending "equivocating" and contends that "the play curiously enacts the fantasy that it seems to deny: punishing Macbeth for his participation in the fantasy of escape from the maternal matrix, it nonetheless allows the audience the partial satisfaction of a dramatic equivalent to it" (Adelman 1992, 139–40). Adelman acknowledges that Macduff "carries the power of the man not born of woman" (139) only through the Witches' equivocation but nonetheless argues that *Macbeth*'s ending "plays out this dual process of repudiation and enactment, uncreating any space for the female even while it seems to insist on the universality of maternal origin" (140). What Adelman does not observe adequately, however, is that the imagined "all-male family . . . in which the father can be fully restored to power" (139) that reigns in Scotland at the play's end promises further civil strife. Despite the play's ending with Malcolm ascending the throne—the king "Unknown to woman" (4.3.126)—who has been helped by Macduff—the warrior not "of woman born" (4.1.94)—the weird sisters' prophecy about Banquo's sons lingers and, thus, so does further unlineal violence.[44]

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* depicts the grave consequences of the language of speakers who disavow mutually conceived significations. It shows that equivocation can be used by tyrants to hide their motives, but it also depicts equivocation as a means of resistance against tyranny. Metaphor, whose meaning must be conceived by speaker and auditor, becomes most unchaste when speech is presumed to be univocal and absolute, when its inherent discursive nature is disavowed.

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[43] Greenblatt argues that "[f]or Shakespeare the presence of the theatrical in the demonic, as in every other realm of life, only intensifies the sense of an equivocal betwixt-and-between" (Greenblatt 1993, 127).

[44] Roman Polanski emphasizes this pending strife by ending his film with an added final scene of Donalbain's visit to the weird sisters.

Macbeth repeatedly distinguishes between speakers who intend to hit the thoughts of their auditors and expect conception to follow from speech and interpretation and those who disavow the agency of interpretation. The play shows that kings—not only Macbeth but also Duncan before him—are subject to the very powers of speech available to their potentially traitorous subjects.

The promise of Malcolm's reign, I would argue, is not tarnished by his equivocation but rather by its unilateral nature that leaves the loyal Macduff unable to reconcile the doubleness Malcolm has spoken. Even though Malcolm wields his equivocation unilaterally, however, he also acknowledges, unlike Duncan or Macbeth, that interpretation is fraught and uncertain, that misreading is a possibility. Duncan admits, "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face" immediately before making himself more helplessly vulnerable to his new Thane of Cawdor than he was to his last (1.4.11–12). Macbeth's conclusion that life is "a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing" (5.5.26–8) is another expression of kingly helplessness in a world that does not signify accurately, reliably, or univocally. But Malcolm, who has witnessed how foul things can disguise themselves with fair, also knows that "Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace, / Yet grace would still look so" (4.3.23–4). Fair disguise of things foul does not make the fair appearance of something fair any less appropriate or true. Once hailed king, Malcolm promises to "perform" his kingly duties with "the grace of Grace" (5.7.102–3)—with the brows of grace, as it were, all that anyone ever can behold. How Malcolm imagines the subject-spectators of his kingly performances is not clear. Are they, as the weird sisters demand of Macbeth, to remain silent during the show? What ultimately is Malcolm's sense of Macduff's silent reaction to his first show, his "first false speaking" with which he tested Macduff's loyalty (4.3.130)? If, as McCoy suggests, "Malcolm acknowledges and embraces his role as actor and player-king" (McCoy 2004, 29), what notion of theater does Malcolm have for Scotland?

What, finally, is the play's notion of the theater? What is the difference between the weird sisters' show for Macbeth and Shakespeare's show for us? A link between Shakespeare and the Witches is implied not only by the theatrical show the Witches perform for Macbeth but also by directors who imagine that the Witches bring the play *Macbeth* into being. Roman Polanski, for instance, opens his film of *Macbeth* with the Witches performing a spell. When the film's title "*Macbeth*" finally emerges from the foggy frame, it is as if the Witches have brought its production into existence. And Orson Welles, in his 1936 WPA staging

of *Macbeth* set in Haiti, had Hecate and the voodoo-witches bring the play to its end: the final line of the production was "Peace, the charm's wound up," the Witches' line, in Shakespeare's script, that precedes Macbeth's first appearance (1.3.37). Stephen Greenblatt conjectures that it is "as if [Shakespeare] identified the power of theater itself with the ontological liminality of witchcraft and with his own status as someone who conjured spirits, created storms, and wielded the power of life and death" (Greenblatt 1993, 120). If Shakespeare's *Macbeth* presents a spectacle for its audiences like the equivocating Witches present for Macbeth, Shakespeare's play hardly has produced the silent spectators the weird sisters demand, nor has it left audiences disillusioned by the meaninglessness of a tale that, as Macbeth concludes despondently, signifies nothing. As evidenced by centuries of scholarly debate and innumerable stage and film productions of this dangerous play, if Shakespeare's *Macbeth* equivocates, it does so by hitting our thoughts and inviting us to interpret further even as it also once entertained Shakespeare's absolute monarch, King James.

5
"Base Comparisons": Figuring Royalty in *King Henry IV Part 1*

> PRINCE. Yet herein will I imitate the sun. (*King Henry IV Part 1*)
>
> PRINCE. I shall hereafter . . . / Be more myself. (*King Henry IV Part 1*)
>
> CHORUS. Then should the warlike Harry, like himself, / Assume the port of Mars. (*King Henry V*)

Before the Chorus of *King Henry V* tells us that in the theater our "thoughts . . . must deck our kings," he wishes for the real thing: "A kingdom for a stage, princes to act, / And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!" (*Henry V* Pro. 28–30, 3–4).[1] But since we, the audience, are not monarchs and they, the actors, are not princes, we will have to use our imagination to transport the kings through space and centuries, to "Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times" (*Henry V* Pro. 29). The Chorus's desire to conjure the real presence of King Henry V—for Harry to appear "like himself"—is thwarted by the very circumstances of the playhouse. But what does the Chorus imply we would behold if we were monarchs and the players were princes? If we were to witness an actual spectacle of royalty, then, the Chorus asserts, Harry should "like himself, / Assume the port of Mars" (*Henry V* Pro. 1.5–6). In the Chorus's fantasy of being able to stage Harry himself, rather than a mere actor playing him, Harry is not like himself, or at least not only like himself. Before the audience is asked to transport Harry anywhere, Harry, like himself, is imagined to "assume the port of Mars" (*Henry V* Pro. 6).[2]

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[1] Quotations of *King Henry V* follow the Arden text, edited by T. W. Craik (Shakespeare 1995a).

[2] The phrase "assume the port of Mars" carries rich implications. Here *assume* likely means primarily "to take upon oneself, put on (a garb, aspect, form, or

Even when the Chorus imagines presenting the king himself, the king appears in another role.

Whereas *King Henry V* opens with the problem of transporting Henry's royal presence to a theater generations after the king's life, *King Henry IV Part 1* traces the revelation of Prince Henry's royalty, a revelation which likewise relies on effective theatrical techniques and on transporting figurative language. Prince Henry's royal self repeatedly is represented as being like something other than the heir apparent. In *King Henry IV Part 1* figuring royalty with metaphors and similes that compare the prince to things other than himself paradoxically affirm his royalty as authentic, inimitable, and unmistakable. Even the "base comparisons" (2.4.243)[3] of the tavern world that might at first seem to demean royalty are, in fact, integral to the revelation of it.

Prince Henry's royalty is revealed most lavishly through comparison on the day of the Battle of Shrewsbury where Prince Henry "redeem[s]" himself on "Percy's head" (3.2.132). When the rebel Vernon, reporting to Hotspur on the king's army, gives an exuberant description of the armed Prince of Wales, he speaks nine similes in thirteen lines, two of which are extended (4.1.97–109). Vernon perceives Prince Henry as "gorgeous as the sun at midsummer" (4.1.101) and thus affirms that the Prince has kept his promise to "imitate the sun" (1.2.187). But Vernon also compares the prince, with his comrades who are "all furnished, all in arms" (4.1.96), to ostriches, eagles, images, the month of May, goats, bulls, and Mercury (4.1.97–105). The similes function like Prince Henry's armor: they signify the royal self as they cover up the man.

Whereas imitating the sun is quite lofty, the discourse of the tavern world, where Prince Henry rehearses dialects and styles of language not spoken at court, is more often strewn with what Prince Henry calls "base comparisons" (2.4.243). The figurative and punning language of the tavern world can debunk royalty through such "base" similitudes and metaphors. But, at the same time, the worldly materials of the base

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character)" (*OED* v. II 4), but it also could mean "To take as being one's own, to arrogate . . . to usurp" (*OED* v. III). Thus the word *assume* inherently connects playing a role with usurping that role. The *port* of Mars could mean "the deportment, . . . or demeanour" of Mars (*OED* n. 4, 1a) but also the "place" (*OED* n. 1, 3b) of Mars. The idea of assuming the place of a god, in turn, evokes another meaning of *assume*, namely, "to receive up into heaven" (*OED* v. 1b).

[3] Quotations of *King Henry IV Part 1* follow the Arden text, edited by David Kastan (Shakespeare 2002a).

things to which royalty is compared have the power to reify royalty. When a "base comparison" figures royalty as a lowly, material thing, tangible physical accidents signify that the intangible essence is present. *King Henry IV Part 1* suggests that Prince Henry, the son and heir of a self-made king, succeeds at refiguring royalty not only by aligning himself with the sign of kings—the heavenly sun—but also with the sign of the king of kings—the earthly son of flesh and blood.

Falstaff's perplexing comment that Hal is "essentially made without seeming so" (2.4.479–80) complicates the idea that he is essentially royal while seemingly wayward. But what exactly does Falstaff mean when he asserts that the Prince is "essentially made"? And what is it that keeps the Prince from "seeming so"? Falstaff's remark is a response to Prince Henry's last line of the tavern drama before it is interrupted by the sheriff's watch. Falstaff, who is playing the Prince, has been defending himself against the scathing criticism of the "King," played by Prince Henry. When Falstaff-as-Prince warns, "Banish plump Jack and banish all the world" (2.4.466–7), Prince Henry-as-King asserts, "I do; I will" (2.4.468). Before Falstaff has a chance to respond, Bardoll runs in to announce that the sheriff is at the door. Falstaff orders Bardoll out and demands that they "Play out the play" because he has "much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff" (2.4.471–2). Likewise ignoring the Hostess's urgent worries about the sheriff who has come to inquire about the stolen money, Falstaff instead continues to be concerned with his value to the Prince: "Dost thou hear, Hal? Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit. Thou art essentially made without seeming so" (2.4.478–80).

Falstaff's admonition, spoken after he has dropped the conceit that he is the Prince talking to the King, suggests that Falstaff fears that the Prince does, or could, take him for counterfeit.[4] Falstaff shifts from asserting his own essential value, that he is "a true piece of gold," to asserting that the Prince is "essentially made without seeming so."

[4] This image of Falstaff as counterfeit is echoed when the Prince confirms that the ring Falstaff claims is gold is instead copper, "a trifle, some eightpenny matter" (3.3.104). When the Prince confronts Falstaff with the Hostess's report of Falstaff's claim that the Prince "owed him a thousand pound" (3.3.133), Falstaff cleverly shifts the terms of value: "A thousand pound, Hal? A million. Thy love is worth a million. Thou owest me thy love" (3.3.135–6). Falstaff makes a figurative move in order to explain away his false claims about his own monetary value—the Prince owes him love, not money. And if he is rich in the Prince's love, it will not matter that his ring—or he—is counterfeit.

Modifying "made" with "essentially" muddies the usual opposition between artifice and essence and complicates how royalty is valued. Falstaff's comment about the Prince disrupts the belief that kings, from birth, have a divinely bestowed royal essence with the notion that kings somehow are made. And yet Falstaff, like the play itself, ultimately upholds Prince Henry's royalty. The paradoxical manner in which the base comparisons of *King Henry IV Part 1* function reveals how royalty can be conceived of as at once essential and made, a paradox revealed to the audience of the staged history of *King Henry IV Part 1*.

As many critics have observed, the representation of royalty is of particular interest in the plays chronicling Prince Henry's youth and eventual kingship because Prince Henry's father, Henry IV, did not inherit the throne. Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, for instance, remark that in *King Henry IV Part 1* "[p]atrimonial inheritance no longer legitimates royal authority" (Howard and Rackin 1997, 163). And David Kastan observes that "Henry has . . . the problem of how to consolidate and maintain his authority, having deposed Richard who ruled by lineal succession" (Kastan 1999, 129). King Henry IV's reign, following King Richard II's deposition, is itself evidence that subjects may judge whether or not a king is behaving in a kingly enough fashion and that subjects may act on their judgments by deposing a king. The legitimate son of the present king is not guaranteed succession.

In *King Richard II* after King Richard is deposed, York describes how Richard was received by the people "As in a theatre the eyes of men, / After a well-graced actor leaves the stage, / Are idly bent on him that enters next" (*R2* 5.2.23–5). York's figurative description is especially fitting because it is Richard's bad acting that has cost him his kingdom. *King Henry IV Part 1* depicts the heir-apparent's approach to his royal role in a time when the monarchy's legitimacy is not guaranteed solely by patrimony, a time when even a legimate heir must act convincingly like royalty in order to retain the crown.

In a monarchy with lineal succession, a prince's legitimate claim as heir apparent is guaranteed by his legitimate claim as the son of a chaste mother conjoined to his father, the king. In such a system, the legitimacy of kings depends on the chastity of queens. But in *King Henry IV Part 1* the Prince's mother is mentioned only in one of Falstaff's jokes, and typical anxious jokes about cuckoldry and dubious paternity are

voiced only when Falstaff plays king.[5] "That thou art my son I have partly thy mother's word" (2.4.392–3), Falstaff says to Hal when playing the role of his disapproving father-king.[6] Only in the tavern world burlesque is the heir-apparent's legitimacy discussed in the terms of bodily conception.

At court, cuckoldry becomes instead a figure of political abstraction. The king himself is accused by the rebels of being the usurping "cuckoo's bird" (5.1.60), the illegitimate heir that takes over the nest and squeezes out, or even devours, the legitimate offspring. Worcester makes this most plain when he charges Henry IV:

> you used us so
> As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
> Useth the sparrow: did oppress our nest,
> Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
> That even our love durst not come near your sight
> For fear of swallowing. (5.1.59–64)

Worcerster figures Henry IV as a usurping bastard in an image that transforms cuckoldry from a bodily to a strictly political phenomenon.

King Henry's doubts about his own legitimacy as king overshadow any doubt about the paternity of his son. In fact, Henry imagines his wayward son as divinely conceived by a punishing God through a kind of perverse immaculate conception. He says to Prince Henry:

> — I know not whether God will have it so
> For some displeasing service I have done,
> That, in His secret doom, out of my blood
> He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;
> But thou dost in thy passages of life
> Make me believe that thou art only marked
> For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven
> To punish my mistreadings. (3.2.4–11)

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[5] Howard and Rackin point out that in the *Henry IV* plays, where legitimate authority is no longer dependent upon being a legitimate heir, "female sexuality no longer threatens to disrupt legitimate authority" (Howard and Rackin 1997, 137–8).

[6] Similarly, in *The Second Part of King Henry IV* when the Prince is disguised as and playing the role of a drawer, Falstaff calls him "A bastard son of the king's" (*2 Henry IV* 2.4.231).

Here King Henry's certainty that his wayward son is legitimate emerges as part of his fantasy of parthenogenesis. If Henry loses royal posterity, it will not be as a cuckolded father who raises an illegitimate son but rather as an illegitimate king who raises a legitimate, wayward prince. Indeed, King Henry wishes that "it could be proved / That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged" his Harry Plantagenet for Harry Percy (1.1.85–6).[7]

Whereas Worcester sees King Henry IV as a usurping cuckoo, the king sees his son, the Prince, as a bird whose "affections . . . do hold a wing / Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors" (3.2.30–1). The Prince's wayward flight takes him from the court to the tavern. King Henry IV wonders if the tavern's "rude society" could "Accompany the greatness" of the Prince's blood (3.2.14, 16), a censure Falstaff anticipates in one of the impromptu comedies which suggests a relationship between the nature of royal and verbal lineages. When playing the king, Falstaff tells his "son":

> There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest. (2.4.400–4)

As Falstaff, quoting Ecclesiasticus 13.1, makes the point about the defiling potential of foul company, he initially keeps the word *pitch* unsullied. Falstaff-as-king first indicates the gap between the "name" of *pitch* and the "thing" it represents. The name *pitch*, once cathected to the thing it represents, is authorized by the ancient biblical writers who report on its defiling nature. In a slippery move, the defiling nature of the foul company Hal keeps seems to be proven by the authorized name for the thing known as pitch.[8] Pitch "doth defile" and "so" does

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[7] The Prince eventually fulfills his father's fantasy to exchange Harries when, as Hal promises his father, he "make[s] this northern youth *exchange* / His glorious deeds for my indignities" (3.2.145–146, emphasis mine).

[8] Ironically, if Falstaff had continued to quote from Ecclesiasticus 13, he would have foretold the eventual outcome of keeping company with Prince Henry, a man more powerful than he: "Burden not thyself above thy power while thou livest; and have no fellowship with one that is mightier and richer than thyself: for how agree the kettle and the earthen pot together? for if the one be smitten against the other, it shall be broken . . . If thou be for his profit, he will use thee: but if thou have nothing, he will forsake thee . . . But cruelly he will lay

the company the Prince keeps. Although the word "so" suggests that the defiling nature of the Prince's company is proven by the defiling nature of pitch, in fact the defiling nature of the Prince's company is proven only through the power of the unspoken, implied analogy, namely, *Prince Henry's company is like pitch*. Falstaff's parodic simile reveals how the form of a simile might obscure a gap in logic.

Falstaff's performance as king reveals how claims and values can be authorized by establishing the legitimacy of a word and its heritage. The gaps and slips in these lineages that become obvious in the tavern plays cast doubt on the court's lines of authority which the tavern plays parodically double. As William Empson remarks of another instance of doubling in *King Henry IV Part 1*, "[t]he double plot method is carrying a fearful strain here" (Empson 1974, 46). These performed parodies of court, as well as the ongoing tavern banter which brims with figures and puns, threaten to expose the gaps in accepted, though obscured, linguistic and royal lineages. The unlineal King Henry IV must obscure such a gap if his legitimate son Prince Henry is to inherit the throne as if kingship always passes lineally from father to son.

Words, like men, Falstaff suggests, can be defiled by the company they keep, and these defiled words can, in turn, defile society. Doll Tearsheet makes this point explicitly when, in *The Second Part of King Henry IV*, she rails at the idea of Pistol's being called *captain*: "A captain? God's light, these villains will make the word as odious as the word 'occupy', which was an excellent good word before it was ill-sorted, therefore captains had need look to't" (*2 Henry IV* 2.4.114–16). Doll Tearsheet warns captains to "look to" the way lower-ranking people use words because ill-sorted words can lead to an ill-sorted society in which, she implies, the word *captain* would no longer have the power to maintain the social status of its referent. When a good word is ill-sorted, according to Doll Tearsheet, its value is lowered. It is when Falstaff calls Prince Henry a string of degrading metaphors including "dried neat's tongue," "bull's pizzle," and "stock-fish" (2.4.239) that the Prince refers to Falstaff's metaphors as "base comparisons" (2.4.243). The term *base comparisons* certainly describes Falstaff's choice of objects for comparison to the Prince; it also aptly describes many metaphors and similes that are far more polite.

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up thy words, and will not spare to do thee hurt, and to put thee in prison" (Ecclesiasticus 13.2, 4, 12; KJV).

Indeed, the tenor of any metaphor can be ill-sorted by its vehicle. Especially in a metaphor for something intangible, the metaphor's vehicle can debase its tenor by bringing it down to the material world for comparison with some sensible object. In his 1560 *The Arte of Rhetorique* Thomas Wilson lists this type of metaphor as the first kind of metaphoric "translation":[9]

> First we alter a word from that which is in the mind, to that which is in the bodie. As when wee perceiue one that hath begiled vs, we vse to say. Ah sirrha, I am gladde I haue smelled you out. Beeing greeued with a matter, wee say commonly wee cannot digest it. (Wilson 1909, 173)

Here Wilson describes metaphors that bring something conceptual down to something corporeal—from thought to smell, from emotion to digestion.[10] In the type of metaphor Wilson describes, in order for the tenor to be grasped, a vehicle is employed to bring the tenor down from the mind to the body, from the human to the animal or inert, from the conceptual to the material.[11] And it is this type of metaphor that is most common in the tavern world, where the Prince learns how to de-mean, as it were, in order to re-form.

The Prince's first series of metaphors for *time* fits well Wilson's first class of "translation," namely, from mind to body. The Prince tells

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[9] *Translation* is an early modern English synonym for *metaphor*. The Latin word for the Greek term *metaphor* is *translatio*. The English *translation* refers both to the figure of speech (*OED* II 4) and to the act of turning from one language into another (*OED* II 2a).

[10] Wilson's description of *similitude* also emphasizes how animals and nonliving matter often provide the material for comparison. He says: "A Similitude is a likenesse when two thinges, or moe then two, are so compared and resembled together, that they both in some one propertie seeme like. Oftentimes brute Beastes, and thinges that haue no life, minister great matter in this behalfe. Therefore, those that delite to proue thinges by Similitudes, must learne to knowe the nature of diuers beastes, of mettalles, of stones, and al such as haue any vertue in them, and be applied to mans life" (Wilson 1909, 188–9).

[11] Saint Augustine makes a similar point in *On Christian Teaching* when he observes that the knowledge of things is necessary for understanding metaphorical signs: "Ignorance of things makes figurative expressions unclear when we are ignorant of the qualities of animals or stones or plants or other things mentioned in scripture for the sake of some analogy" (trans. Green 1997, 44). Thus, to understand divine Scripture one must have knowledge of material things.

Falstaff that he sees no reason why he should "demand the time of the day" unless "hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta" (1.2.6–11). The Prince thus shifts the abstract notion of demanding the time to the tangible demand for something that is desired and can be satisfied in a corporeal manner—drink, food, and women. Such metaphors that represent an abstraction by presenting it as material are a crucial mechanism by which the tavern world establishes itself as the carnival double of the world of the court.

Although the carnival aspects of such scenes in the tavern world of *King Henry IV Part 1* have long been discussed,[12] I want to call attention more specifically to how the nature of metaphor is itself carnivalesque. Any metaphor, not only the "base comparisons" of the tavern speech community, can operate on the same principle of "degradation" that Mikhail Bakhtin describes as essential to the *grotesque* and explains as "the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract . . . a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity" (Bakhtin 1984, 19–20). Falstaff's metaphors for the Prince like "bull's pizzle" and "stock-fish" (2.4.239) are certainly *grotesque* in Bakhtin's sense, but, as Wilson notes, so is a large class of metaphors that function by bringing a word from the mind to the body.

Puns, likewise plentiful in the tavern's carnival, also fit an aspect of Bakhtin's notion of the *grotesque*: they are "a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of . . . growth and becoming" (Bakhtin 1984, 24). Metaphors allow us to understand something (the tenor) by perceiving it in relation to something different (the vehicle). But for a metaphor to signify comprehensibly, the differences between the tenor and the vehicle must turn out to be a foil for some essence the vehicle and tenor share. Puns, in contrast, connect seemingly similar words—words that sound alike—that turn out to be essentially different. Whereas metaphors, and similes, generate new understanding by logically conjoining different words that share some similar essence, puns spawn new ideas by echoing like-sounding

[12] See, for example, C. L. Barber's famous study of "Rule and Misrule in *Henry IV*" (1959), Graham Holderness's "Carnival and History: *Henry IV*" (1992), and François Laroque's "Shakespeare's 'Battle of Carnival and Lent': The Falstaff Scenes Reconsidered" (1998).

words with different meanings. Both figures threaten to disrupt linguistic order, but puns are, perhaps, more disorderly since sound can skip to like sound, unconstrained by meaning, as metaphors are.

One of Falstaff's very first speeches, which follows closely the Prince's metaphors of time, includes a punning interchange with the Prince:

> FALSTAFF And I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art a king, as God save thy grace—'majesty', I should say, for grace thou wilt have none—
> PRINCE What, none?
> FALSTAFF No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter. (1.2.15–20)

Here Falstaff disrupts the convention of addressing the king as "grace" by slipping to an alternate meaning of the word, namely, "attractiveness, charm" (*OED* n. 1) or "an individual virtue or excellence, divine in its origin" (*OED* n. 11e).[13] Falstaff then further degrades both of these more lofty meanings of *grace* by moving the word into its new context where it signifies a short, common blessing recited before an unceremonious meal.

Although some metaphors lower the abstract to the material, others can raise the material to the abstract. In his *Aesthetics*, Hegel observes both directions in which such metaphors can work: like Wilson, Hegel observes how "something spiritual" can be "brought nearer to our vision through the picture of natural objects" (Hegel 1975, 405),[14] but

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[13] Falstaff's pun also tragically foreshadows that, when Prince Henry is king, he will have no grace—no mercy (*OED* n. 15a)—for Falstaff.

[14] Here Hegel warns that "such illustrations may easily degenerate into preciousness, into far-fetched or playful conceits, if what is absolutely lifeless appears notwithstanding as personified and such spiritual activities are ascribed to it in all seriousness" (405). Hegel continues that "even Shakespeare" is not "entirely free" from such "hocus-pocus" and gives as an example Richard II's speech to the Queen before he leaves for Pomfret (405): "For why, the senseless brands will sympathize / The heavy accent of thy moving tongue / And in compassion weep the fire out; / And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black, / For the deposing of a rightful king" (*R2* 5.1.46–50). Hegel exemplifies such metaphoric "hocus-pocus" with the point at which Richard II no longer speaks with "the breath of kings" (*R2* 1.3.215), the breath at which Bolingbroke earlier wondered, "How long a time lies in one little word!" (*R2* 1.3.213). Once disempowered of its kingly performative power, Richard's words seem instead like pathetic figurative speech that reveal Richard's deluded imagining that "senseless brands" would feel for his fate.

Hegel also notes that a "principal task" in the poetic invention of new metaphors consists in "transferring, in an illustrative way, the phenomena, activities, and situations of a higher sphere to the content of lower areas and in representing meaning of this more subordinate kind in the shape and picture of loftier ones" (405). Giving the examples of "*laughing* fields" and "*angry* flood" (405), Hegel observes that what is "natural and sensuous" can be "imaged in the form of spiritual phenomena and therefore is elevated and ennobled" (405).

Hegel distinguishes between the poetic invention of new metaphors and the "mass of metaphors" "already contain[ed]" in every language (Hegel 1975, 404). In his discussion of these conventional metaphors, now often called *dead metaphors*, Hegel cites the examples of *fassen* and *begreifen* (which can mean *to grasp physically* and also *to grasp conceptually*), and he observes how metaphors "arise from the fact that a word which originally signifies only something sensuous is carried over into the spiritual sphere" (404). Hegel describes how we no longer perceive abstract words as metaphorical because we no longer are aware of their material origins:

> But gradually the metaphorical element in the use of such a word disappears and by custom the word changes from a metaphorical to a literal expression, because, owing to readiness to grasp in the image only the meaning, image and meaning are no longer distinguished and the image directly affords only the abstract meaning itself instead of a concrete picture. If, for example, we are to take *begreifen* in a spiritual sense, then it does not occur to us at all to think of a perceptible grasping by the hand. (404)

The lively metaphors of the tavern world resurrect the concrete pictures, the sensuous reality, to use Hegel's terms, from which the spiritual is derived. The demeaning figures uncover the material foundations on which the abstract or spiritual is built. But such carnivalesque excavations do not merely or always lower the value of a lofty abstraction by exposing its lowly, material origins: they can instead also guarantee the value of an abstraction by providing some tangible proof of its existence, like gold bullion guaranteeing paper currency.

When, after a punning exchange, Falstaff exclaims that Hal is the "most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince" (1.2.77–8), Falstaff refers most immediately to the Prince's comment about the "melancholy of Moorditch" (1.2.74–5), a pun with which Hal brings the humour causing Falstaff's alleged melancholic condition down to the

literal black bile of a drainage ditch.[15] Changing the subject, Falstaff asks the Prince to "trouble" him "no more with vanity" (1.2.78–9). Here Falstaff asserts that such punning that transports a word from one meaning to the next—in this case to the sewer—is fruitless, profitless. Falstaff wishes, instead, that he "knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought" (1.2.79–80) and tells the Prince, "An old lord of the Council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not" (1.2.80–2). Falstaff shifts the conversation from profitless punning to his desire to buy good names, acknoweldging that his and the Prince's names have been sullied, presumably by the vain lifestyles they lead. Falstaff's report that an old lord of the Council "rated" him about the Prince carries not only the sense of "to scold" (*OED* v. 1, 1) but also "to estimate the worth . . . of" (*OED* v. 2, 3b). The pun on *rated* thus links the behavior that warrants scolding to Hal's behavior that cheapens his royalty, namely, his participation in a speech community with an abundance of base comparisons and seemingly vain puns.

When the Prince expresses reluctance to participate in a robbery unfit for a prince, Falstaff's punning response degrades his royalty to mere money: "thou cam'st not of the blood royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings" (1.2.133–4). In the end, however, the value of royalty does not only go down as the Prince keeps Falstaff's company. Falstaff's punning on two meanings of *royal*—"connected with a king" (*OED* adj. A 1a) and the name of "an English gold coin" (*OED* n. B 2a)—exemplifies the way in which he brings the abstract down to earth: royalty is transformed from an intangible quality of kingliness to a tangible gold coin. Such transformation does not, however, only demystify royalty: it also reifies it. As the abstract quality of royal kingliness is connected to the material gold royal, the value of royalty is granted a physical presence. As the pun slides from abstract to material, the value of the material gold metal guarantees the value of abstract royalty.[16]

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[15] Kastan notes that Moorditch was a "foul drainage ditch north of the City of London" (Shakespeare 2002a, 155).

[16] Whereas *King Richard II* exposes the notion of an essential value of royalty as artifice, *King Henry IV Part 1* shows how that very artifice can be used in the service of shoring up the value of royalty. Richard's pun on *angel* as *heavenly being* and *coin* emphasizes the uncertain value of the golden crown:

> For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed
> To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
> God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
> A glorious angel. Then, if angels fight,
> Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right. (*R2* 3.2.58–62)

King Henry IV Part 1 suggests that Hal, at the start of the play, does not fully understand how to act like the true prince. Although Kiernan Ryan asserts that the Prince's Act 1 soliloquy shows that "The prince needs no lessons from the king in impressing the singularity and exclusiveness of his identity upon his people" (Ryan 2002, 153), the scene immediately preceding the robbery indicates that the Prince does need lessons in learning how that singular and exclusive identity can be masked—and in *King Henry IV Part 1* masking identity emerges as integral to its revelation. Act 1, scene 2 contains a peculiar discontinuity in its presentation of the Prince's desire to participate in the proposed robbery. The Prince is the one who first introduces the idea of the robbery when he asks, "Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack?" (1.2.95). Falstaff eagerly calls Poins to "set a match" (1.2.102). But a little while into the planning when Falstaff asks the Prince if he will join in the robbery, Hal says, "Who? I rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith" (1.2.131), and insists that "come what will, I'll tarry at home" (1.2.137). Even if the Prince's refusal is part of the larger joke or game, the nature of the persuasion it provokes is nonetheless significant.

The Prince eventually is persuaded by Poins to join the robbery as a joke at the expense of Falstaff, Peto, Bardoll, and Gadshill. An ambivalent thief, the Prince appears to be naive about disguises and plots, all of which are planned by Poins. When the Prince worries "'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits and by every other appointment to be ourselves" (1.2.165–7), Poins explains to Hal that they will hide the horses, change their vizards, and mask their outward garments with buckram (1.2.168–71). The Prince then worries that they might not be able to overcome the others, that "they will be too hard for us" (1.2.172). Poins is confident of and, it turns out, accurate about their nature: "Well, for two of them, *I know them* to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back" (1.2.173–4, emphasis mine). An unpracticed and reluctant trickster, the Prince eventually consents: "Well, I'll go with thee" (1.2.181). On the night of the robbery, the Prince, still relying on Poins, asks, "Ned, where are our disguises?" (2.2.72). Poins's mentoring of the Prince complicates the Prince's imminent representation of himself as schemingly in control all along.

Poins persuades the Prince to participate in the robbery-jest by assuring him that they can be effectively disguised—even from their closest friends—and by telling him that

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When, shortly before Richard is murdered, the Groom greets him, "Hail, royal prince!" (5.5.67), Richard replies, "Thanks, noble peer. / The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear" (5.5.67–8).

> [t]he virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper: how thirty at least he fought with, what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lives the jest. (1.2.176–80)

Poins imagines Falstaff's "incomprehensible lies" will be about a dangerous battle with numerous attackers, a lie that will cover up Falstaff's easy surrender of the money and cowardly flight. The incomprehensible lie that Poins does not imagine is the one Falstaff will tell about how "instinct" prevented him from "turn[ing] upon the true prince" (2.4.263, 261). This lie about an undisguisable and naturally protected royal presence does more than provide cover for Falstaff's cowardice. Falstaff's excuse is funny because everyone, including the play's audience, knows that he is lying. But the excuse also likely rings true, incomprehensible though it may be, both to everyone in the tavern world and, for dramatic reasons, to everyone in the audience: Falstaff simply could not have killed Hal because Hal is the true prince. Even as Falstaff's cowardice is revealed so is the Prince's royalty. This scene recalls Falstaff's paradoxical remark that the Prince is "essentially made without seeming so" (2.4.479–80): royalty is presented as "essential" in the sense that a subject can by instinct recognize it even through a prince's disguise, yet royalty also is presented as "made" in the sense that it is constructed, and guaranteed, by the tokens which man imbues with valuable essences. The comedy of Falstaff's professed inability to kill the true prince, one of many marching in buckram suits,[17] will be reiterated as history when the rebels are unable to kill the king, one of many marching in the king's coats (5.3.29).[18]

By the end of Act 2, scene 4, Falstaff's pun that brings the concept "royal" down to monetary value ("thou cam'st not of the blood royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings" [1.2.133–4]) acquires unexpected

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[17] As Falstaff tells his tale he continues to multiply the number of rogues in buckram suits that he supposedly kills: the number starts at two (2.4.185) but grows to eleven (2.4.211).

[18] Kastan emphasizes that at the Battle of Shrewsbury Douglas is "unable to recognize royalty when he finally confronts it" and that "the monarch shines no more brightly than any of the substitutes Douglas has killed" (Kastan 1999, 141). And yet the king's escaping his death nonetheless seems connected, in part, to his royalty.

currency. By participating in the robbery—by standing for royals—the Prince demonstrates his royalty. As Poins predicts, in Falstaff's "reproof . . . lives the jest" (1.2.180). But this denial also gives life to the reproof that Hal is royal: he does, as Falstaff had hoped but not imagined how, "for recreation sake, prove a false thief" (1.2.147) even as he proves to be the true prince, even as he prepares to recreate himself, even as we laugh.

The Prince's much-commented upon soliloquy, the only verse soliloquy in the play, immediately follows the conversation in which Poins convinces Hal to rob the robbers and instructs him in how it is possible. The soliloquy is instructive not only in its sequence of figures but also in its form: it starts with an epic digression and ends with a blank verse sonnet:

> I know you all, and will awhile uphold
> The unyoked humour of your idleness.
> Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
> Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
> To smother up his beauty from the world,
> That, when he please again to be himself,
> Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
> Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
> If all the year were playing holidays,
> To sport would be as tedious as to work;
> But when they seldom come, they wished-for come,
> And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
> So when this loose behaviour I throw off
> And pay the debt I never promised,
> By how much better than my word I am,
> By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
> And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
> My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
> Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
> Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
> I'll so offend to make offence a skill,
> Redeeming time when men think least I will. (1.2.185–207)

Just as soon as Poins leaves the stage, the Prince who did not know, as Poins did, that Falstaff and the others would be too cowardly to fight suddenly claims to "know you all" (1.2.185). Whereas before

the robbery the Prince could not figure out how he and Poins could disguise themselves so that the others would not know them "to be ourselves" (1.2.166–7), immediately after the robbery he conceives an extraordinarily subtle relationship between mask and self. Prince Hal, who just recently needed Poins's detailed instructions to participate in the Gad's Hill jest, now displays a nearly Iago-like grasp of scheming and seeming. Are we to imagine that the Prince was misrepresenting himself to Poins as inexperienced in matters of disguise? Are we to imagine the Prince a very quick study?[19] Although the source of these discontinuities cannot be determined with any certainty, their dramatic effect nonetheless can be observed: the soliloquy in which the Prince reveals himself and his purposes helps us to forget the man who needed to learn from Poins how to disguise and represent himself. The soliloquy's figures and form sanction Prince Henry's proclamation that he is in essence a prince and that he is now ready to reveal that essence.

Harry Berger observes the artifice of the Prince's soliloquy when he remarks that the "shift from prose banter to the ritual formality of blank verse . . . produces the odd effect that, just when [the Prince] could be expected to speak what he feels, not what he ought to say, he sounds like he is making a speech, rehearsing a preformulated scenario, before an audience" (Berger 1997, 306). Although Graham Holderness interprets the function of the speech quite differently from Berger, he also comments on the official nature of the Prince's voice: "The Prince expresses the 'official' attitude towards saturnalian licence: its strictly limited function is that of confirming, by a liberation as temporary as it is violent, as impermanent as it is affirmative, statutory authority and constituted order" (Holderness 1992, 150). This shift in message and linguistic style that Berger and Holderness observe consolidates the Prince's power as the official voice of royalty even as it promotes our amnesia about how his official royal power is staged. The soliloquy enables the

[19] Perhaps the discontinuity between a Prince who now claims "I know you all" (1.2.185) and a Prince who just recently has worried that their friends "will know us . . . to be ourselves" (1.2.165–7) motivated Gus Van Sant to revise the roles in this scene of his film adaptation of *King Henry IV Part 1*, *My Own Private Idaho*. Van Sant reassigns to his Hal character, Scott Favor, the part of suggesting the joke as a means to persuade his Poins character, Mike Waters, to join the robbery. Van Sant thus eliminates the complexity of Shakespeare's Hal who in one scene needs to be persuaded and learn how to debase himself and in the next scene claims to have known all along.

audience to forget that the prince we have just witnessed with Poins is not the same prince speaking this soliloquy and prepares us for the Prince who, after the robbery, will tell Falstaff confidently: "Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down" (2.4.246–7).

In his soliloquy the Prince steps out of his tavern role by leaving behind communal, morphing prose for individual, directed verse containing didactic metaphors and similes. "[H]erein will I imitate the sun," he announces and then explains the nature of the sun in a six-line epic digression (1.2.188–93). Indeed, the Prince almost speaks an epic simile: he announces his likeness to the sun and then explains the quality of the sun relevant to his comparison, namely, how the sun is more wondered at when it breaks through the mists that had blocked its beauty from the world. An epic simile would end when a transitional word or phrase (such as "just so" or "even as") following the digression would bring us back to the tenor. But the Prince does not close the figure by summarizing the likeness: he does not make explicit, for instance, that the base contagious clouds smother the sun's beauty *just as I allow the base tavern crowd to cover up my royalty*. We are left to close the comparison on our own, a task that encourages us to become complicit in the conceit. The Prince leaves his description of the sun before returning to his self—to "I"—and introduces another comparison, namely, the nature of holiday. As he starts this new comparison, he shifts to a new form—a sonnet, though unrhymed. Starting with "If all the year were playing holidays" (1.2.194), the Prince speaks three blank verse quatrains followed by a couplet. In form the Prince leaves epic for lyric; in content he leaves the cosmic and royal for the worldly and common.

What is the effect of Prince Henry's representation of self and kingdom that starts with epic verse and heavenly imagery and shifts to private lyric and imagery of work, debt, payment, and redemption? When the Prince makes this shift, he brings the brilliance of the sun down to earth. In the first part of the soliloquy, the sun's beauty, which the Prince will imitate, breaks through "the foul and ugly mists / Of vapours" (1.2.192–3); in the second part his reformation shines "like bright metal on a sullen ground" (1.2.202).[20] In imagery, the Prince moves back to the world of work and holiday, debt, coins, and jewels, the world where,

[20] The Q4 variant "soile" instead of "foil" (1.2.205) underlines that, although the primary meaning of "sullen ground" is, as Kastan notes, "dull background" (Shakespeare 2002, 162), the senses of earth, dirt, and the bottom also lurk.

in his joke about Falstaff's relationship to time, the Prince has conjured the "blessed sun himself" for a more earthly appearance as "a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta" (1.2.9–10).[21]

The courtly imagery of the sun and clouds and the more common imagery of holiday and work assert the same idea in two different modes. If we take "you all" to refer to his tavern companions, then Prince Henry is saying that he will uphold the unyoked humour of their idleness, the feature analogous to the base, contagious clouds. And yet the premise of the sonnet section cannot apply easily to Falstaff and the tavern world: "If all the year were playing holidays, / To sport would be as tedious as to work" (1.2.194–5). But in *King Henry IV Part 1*, one man's work is another man's idleness: as Falstaff jokes, his "vocation" (1.2.100) is purse-taking. However ironically we understand Falstaff's comment that "'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation" (1.2.100–1), the premise of the Prince's conceit does not fit Falstaff's notion of work and idleness because the king of misrule is on perpetual holiday. The premise more likely fits most playgoers, whose idleness is for a while upheld by the actor playing the Prince, playgoers who, while watching the play, are more likely to be taking a holiday from work as Prince Henry conceives it. In his soliloquy the Prince reveals that he has been participating in the tavern world only as a foil to the revelation of his royalty. And as he does so the terms of his metaphor marginalize Falstaff and his tavern world as unsuited to the categories with which he explains the world. At this very moment he invites the play's audience into his royal world; if the audience understands the terms of the Prince's figures, it is complicit in the Prince's banishment of Falstaff.

With his metaphor about work and holiday, the Prince begins to reshape who will be in and who will be out of his community. Ted Cohen's assertion that metaphor functions in "the achievement of intimacy" is particularly illuminating here (Cohen 1978, 6). Cohen describes how "[t]here is a unique way in which the maker and the appreciator of a metaphor are drawn closer to one another" when "the speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation" and "the hearer expends a

[21] Whereas the King gives his son a lesson in maintaining power by explaining how he had consolidated his power by being seen only rarely and therefore "wondered at" (3.2.47, 57) like a "comet" (3.2.47) and a "robe pontifical" (3.2.56), Hal's willingness to be "So common-hackneyed in the eyes of men" (3.2.40) incites the *King's* wonder: "Yet let me *wonder*, Harry, / At thy affections" (3.2.29–30, emphasis mine).

special effort to accept the invitation" (6). Emphasizing that the "transaction" of speaking and understanding a metaphor "constitutes the acknowledgment of community," Cohen observes that the "sense of close community results not only from the shared awareness that a special invitation has been given and accepted, but also from the awareness that not everyone could make that offer or take it up" (6–7). With his metaphoric language, the Prince invites an intimacy with us, the audience, and begins to exclude his tavern friends. Soon we will be, with Hal and Poins, audience to Falstaff's cowardice and lies staged by Poins and the Prince. The Prince introduces his reformation by reforming his speech into a sonnet, a form particularly well suited to inviting private discourse between speaker and auditor. And with this intimacy, the Prince establishes for his audience rule as everyday and misrule as holiday.

The nature of the jest the Prince subsequently proposes which merely provokes the drawer Francis to repeat a single word, "Anon" (2.4.36–94), differs strikingly from the jest which provokes Falstaff's elaborate tale of "incomprehensible lies" (1.2.176). Poins, the Prince's sometime mentor in disguise and jest, participates in but ultimately fails to understand the jest he performs at Francis's expense. The Prince, commenting on the limited English of the drawers, tells Poins that after his visit to the wine cellar he is "so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that [he] can drink with any tinker in his own language" (2.4.17–19). As if to prove his perception of tavern workers' limited language true, the Prince enlists Poins's help to make the drawer Francis's "tale . . . be nothing but 'Anon' " (2.4.31). Although the jest works—Francis repeatedly responds "Anon" as the Prince questions Francis while Poins demands his attention from a different room—Poins fails to see its point. Poins asks the Prince, "But hark ye, what cunning match have you made with this jest of the drawer? Come, what's the issue?" (2.4.87–9).[22] Poins's question further marks the Prince's pending separation from the tavern community. Whereas the "virtue of [Poins's] jest" (1.2.176) is to beget Falstaff's outrageous tale, the point of the Prince's jest is to prove that Francis has "fewer words than a parrot" (2.4.95–6). Whereas Sir John Falstaff is prompted and caught in the loquacious performance of a highly imaginative lie, Francis is prompted

[22] Maynard Mack observes that "the joke on Francis . . . falls flat and turns against its proposer; for while Francis is confused and says what Hal has predicted, his touching deference to the Prince and generosity in the matter of the pennyworth of sugar move our sympathy" (Mack 1962, 291).

and caught in the taciturn performance of his ordinary and frustrating lowly role.

Prince Harry's education in using figurative language to shape community distinguishes him from his double, Harry Percy, whose failure as a leader emerges as connected to his uncommunicative use of language. Unschooled in the give-and-take of word play, Percy's figures and puns fail to forge intimacies or community. Worcester remarks of the ranting Hotspur that "[h]e apprehends a world of figures here / But not the form of what he should attend" (1.3.208–9) and begs Hotspur to stop talking and to listen instead:

WORCESTER Good cousin, give me audience for a while.
HOTSPUR I cry you mercy.
WORCESTER Those same noble Scots
That are your prisoners—
HOTSPUR I'll keep them all.
By God, he shall not have a scot of them;
No, if a scot would save his soul he shall not.
I'll keep them, by this hand.
WORCESTER You start away
And lend no ear unto my purposes,
Those prisoners you shall keep.
HOTSPUR Nay, I will; that's flat. (1.3.210–17)

Here Hotspur's punning (on Scots and scot) merely breaks down conversation further: busy word-playing with himself, he does not hear what Worcester is telling him. When Worcester finally gives up trying to make Hotspur listen, Northumberland reprimands Hotspur for "Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own" (1.3.236). This quality of Hotspur's puns is emphasized with variation when Hotspur's punning thwarts his intercourse with Lady Percy who will continue to be "A banished woman from [her] Harry's bed" (2.3.38):

LADY PERCY What is it carries you away?
HOTSPUR Why, my horse,
. . .
LADY PERCY but if you go—
HOTSPUR So far afoot? I shall be weary, love. (2.3.73, 80–1)

Hotspur interrupts Lady Percy's question and asks one for her ("So far afoot?") that guarantees his ability to give a punning response. It is

as if he does not trust his skill at mutual play. Instead of using figurative language and puns to establish intimacy with his interlocutors, Hotspur interrupts himself with inattentive speech. Hotspur uses figures to describe deeds but does not understand that figures can move communities to bring deeds about.

Prince Henry, in contrast, learns at the tavern to participate in a community of mutual figurative language. He will not, however, allow this community any discourse with his courtly life. Eventually Prince Henry draws a strict boundary around his tavern speech community and relationship with Falstaff when he squelches Falstaff's punning during war talks. The King challenges the rebel Worcester's claim that he has "not sought the day of this dislike" (5.1.26):

KING	You have not sought it? How comes it, then?
FALSTAFF	Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.
PRINCE	Peace, chewet, peace. (5.1.27–29)

The Prince's unwillingness to play word games at war, or sanction Falstaff's playing them, is further emphasized when he is next with Falstaff alone on the stage. When Falstaff gives the Prince a bottle of sack rather than a pistol, the Prince throws the bottle at Falstaff (5.3.56 sd) and asks, "What, is it a time to jest and dally now?" (5.3.57). For Falstaff the answer seems to be yes. After the Prince exits, Falstaff puns on Percy's name: "Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him" (57).[23] Although the end of *King Henry IV Part 1* may foreshadow the beginning of Prince Henry's rejection of "beardless vain comparatives" (3.2.67), as his father calls them, it also suggests that the punning, figuring speech community will carry on with or without the true prince in its midst.

[23] Derek Peat has shown that the staging of Hal's throwing the bottle at Falstaff has a great impact on the presentation of the dynamic of their relationship (Peat 2002). Peat describes a production where Falstaff catches the bottle (as Peat thinks he would have on a stage without wings like the Globe's) and then uses it as a prop during his soliloquy: "The playing stressed both Hal's criticism and Falstaff's comic response; in the process, it maintained the balance of the scene, which, when Falstaff is cowed in the end, is tipped in favor of Hal. What the playing wasn't doing was placing the emphasis, as recent Stratford productions have tended to, on the rejection of Falstaff" (384).

King Henry IV Part 1 has figured prominently in the now familiar debate over the extent to which Shakespeare's plays subverted or reproduced the dominant political and social order. Some critics assert that *King Henry IV Part 1* effectively contained whatever subversive energy it unleashed, and thereby furthered the social and political status quo, whereas others assert that the play helped to bring about the social change that led to the deposition of Charles I. Stephen Greenblatt, for instance, argues that the play is involved in "the constant production of its own radical subversion and the powerful containment of that subversion" and concludes that the play "operates in the manner of its central character, charming us with its visions of breadth and solidarity, 'redeeming' itself in the end by betraying our hopes, and earning with this betrayal our slightly anxious admiration" (Greenblatt 1988, 41, 47). C. L. Barber's now classic study makes a similar point: Barber asserts that the play's "dynamic relation of comedy and serious action is saturnalian rather than satiric, that the misrule works, through the whole dramatic rhythm, to consolidate rule" (Barber 1959, 205). David Kastan argues instead that "[i]n setting English kings before an audience of commoners, the theater nourished the cultural conditions that eventually permitted the nation to bring its king to trial, not because the theater approvingly represented subversive acts but rather because representation itself became subversive" (Kastan 1999, 111). Several feminist critics including Valerie Traub (1992) and Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin (1997) have taken a middle road on the question of the play's relationships to the political status quo: they describe how even as the play stages the exclusion of women from the historical process, it also subverts that order by revealing how the reproduction of patriarchal authority is dependent upon such exclusion. These critics, and others who address similar questions, build their arguments, in part, on how they perceive the interaction of the play's various plots, especially on their judgment of whether or not the court plot effectively dominates and contains the tavern plot.

I have been exploring the relationship between the tavern and court worlds by observing the effect of the tavern community's puns and figures of speech. What happens when royalty is represented through base comparison? What is the effect of a metaphor whose vehicle can, by nature, bring its abstract tenor down to earth? The heir apparent's education in the tavern world's speech community precedes the revelation that he indeed is suited for the role of prince and that he promises to perform the role of king suitably as well. In his verse soliloquy Prince Henry reveals that he has learned to use figurative language to reveal

his royalty, but he also presents himself as having known how to do so all along. Prince Henry uses base comparisons to perform his royalty, to make his royalty an essence that can be seen in the earthly images to which he compares it. To the extent that Prince Henry convincingly discounts his experience in the tavern community as training for his performance as prince, his courtly speech community effectively dominates, contains, and exploits the tavern's. But the scenes of the Prince in the tavern world indicate that he learns plenty there and, thus, contradict the Prince's own narrative.

That Prince Henry eventually rejects the tavern world's misrule as merely idle may, as Barber asserts, consolidate rule. Yet, the play's insights about the education of the heir of an unlineal king also complicate any strict distinction between rule and misrule. The revelation in the tavern world carnival that an abstraction such as *royalty* can acquire authority through "base comparisons" (2.4.243) is not simply or entirely contained by the Prince's disavowal of his time in the tavern as idle. Indeed, the court's rule turns out to be built upon principles more obviously apparent in the tavern's misrule. A prince's success, and his succession, is revealed as dependent upon his being able to bring his royalty down to earth for his subjects. Although the Prince may be, to use Falstaff's phrase, "essentially made," he learns to be so "without seeming so" (2.4.479–80).

Prince Henry announces in his soliloquy that he has a specific purpose at the tavern where he rehearses dialects and styles of speech not spoken at court, but the play suggests that the carnivalesque language of the tavern community shapes Prince Henry's royalty in ways that extend beyond the Prince's conscious plan to use it as a foil. Figuring royalty with "base comparisons" does not only demean royalty so that it can later be reformed: such "base comparisons" also validate royalty not only because misrule ultimately is a foil for rule but also because royalty is reified as it is presented as material, tangible, and therefore more believable as real. This process is crucial for the Prince who must authorize his royal lineage even as he covers the unlineal gap by which his father gained the throne.

Barber remarks that "[a]t the heart" of the Henry IV plays "[t]here is an intoxication with the possibility of an omnipotence of mind by which words might become things, by which a man . . . might achieve, by making his own ritual, an unlimited power to incarnate meaning" (Barber 1959, 193–4). "But," Barber adds, Shakespeare's "drama also expresses an equal and complementary awareness that magic is delusory, that words can become things or lead to deeds only within a social group, by virtue

of a historical, social situation beyond the mind and discourse of any one man" (194). Close observations of the figurative language support Barber's claim: despite the Prince's proclamations of self-fashioning, it is the community, through collaborative, if not necessarily conscious, processes, that can make words things and reify Hal's royalty. *King Henry IV Part 1* reveals how language—without seeming to do so—can make the royal essence of the son of an unlineal king.

6

"Ears of Flesh and Blood": Dead Metaphors and Ghostly Figures in *Hamlet*

> All languages are composed of dead metaphors as the soil of corpses, but English is perhaps uniquely full of metaphors of this sort, which are not dead but sleeping. (William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*)
>
> But however stone dead such metaphors seem, we can easily wake them up. (I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*)
>
> The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures. (Lady Macbeth)

In 1599, the year Shakespeare was conjuring *Hamlet*'s Ghost, John Marston had invoked another for *Antonio's Revenge*. Antonio, whose father has been murdered, reports a dream visit by two ghosts who cried "Revenge"—one "fresh-paunched with bleeding wounds" and a second that "assumed [his] father's shape" (*Antonio's Revenge* 1.3.43–6). Balurdo responds with the account of his own "monstrous strange dream" of the ghost of a simile:

> For methought I dreamt I was asleep, and methought the ground yawned and belked up the abominable ghost of a misshapen Simile, with two ugly pages, the one called Master *Even-as*, going before, and the other Mounser *Even-so*, following after, whilst Signior Simile stalked most prodigiously in the midst. (1.3.61–7)

Antonio's dream of the ghost in the figure of his father is followed closely by Balurdo's dream of the ghost of a figure of speech. The Ghost of Hamlet's father, I shall suggest, also brings along a ghostly figure of speech, though one more difficult to spot. Hamlet takes the Ghost's

story of poison in the king's ear as a literal report on how Claudius murdered his father, but the play hints that this account of the king's death is instead a metaphor raised from the dead. When the Ghost of Hamlet's dead father "usurp[s] this time of night" in the "fair and warlike form . . . of buried Denmark" (1.1.49–51), the ghost of a dead metaphor in the form of buried Denmark's ear usurps the status of literal speech.[1]

Let me acknowldege from the start that my reading of poison in the king's ear as a dead metaphor will not be demonstrated by some uncontestable proof. The interpretation is nonetheless worth considering because it offers a way to make sense of the vexed scenes of Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost and of the lack of any scripted response for Claudius to the dramatic re-presentation of the Ghost's story in the dumb-show. Furthermore, entertaining the idea that when Hamlet encounters the Ghost, he also encounters a ghostly metaphor illuminates Hamlet's tragic reluctance to accept being in a fallen world where words are not conjoined seamlessly to their objects, nor vehicles to their tenors, nor kings to the state.

When, in *Antonio's Revenge*, Balurdo encounters a ghost-simile, what he finds nightmarish is not immediately apparent. Indeed, although Balurdo reports that it is "misshapen," the ghost-simile's entourage proceeds in the expected form: Signor Simile's page "Master *Even-as*" goes before Signor Simile, and page "Monsieur *Even-so*" follows after. And yet Balurdo perceives the ghost of this simile as so "abominable" and "misshapen" that before waking he "bewrayed the fearfulness of [his] nature, and—being ready to forsake the fortress of [his] wit—start up," and "called for a clean shirt" (*Antonio's Revenge* 1.3.68–70).[2] The paradoxically shapen yet misshapen simile with orderly but ugly pages has the power to cause Balurdo to lose the ability, in his dream, to contain himself. It threatens his mental and physical continence: Balurdo is about to surrender his wit, and he requires a clean shirt. This dreamed ghost-simile, which appears in its conventional shape and yet is frighteningly misshapen, reveals an inherent tension between the figure's formal and protean nature.

Franco Moretti has asserted that metaphors "*give form* to the unknown: they contain it, and keep it somehow under control" (Moretti

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[1] Quotations of *Hamlet* follow the Arden Shakespeare text edited by Harold Jenkins (Shakespeare 1982).

[2] Editor W. Reavley Gair glosses *bewrayed* as "both 'befouled myself' and 'betrayed my fear'" (Marston 1978, 70).

1998, 47). But the unknown and potentially unruly realities expressed by metaphorical language never are entirely contained by a metaphor—or even by a simile where the transformation of *this* into *that* typically is announced with *even as* or *just as* and the transition back to the subject with *even so* or *so*. Despite their formal containers, even similes threaten to transform those who encounter them. Shape-shifting, potentially frightening in a simile, can be even more disorienting in a metaphor, a figure long recognized as a shortened or condensed simile, one whose shape does not as obviously signal the transformation.[3] Like ghosts, similes and metaphors assume the shape of something they are like, and thus their very forms can be spooky.

Written at a time when Roman Catholic rituals for contact with the deceased had been outlawed in England, *Hamlet* continues, centuries later, to provoke questions about ghosts and the dead that parallel philosophical questions about *dead metaphors*—the name by which many language theorists have called a metaphor so frequently used that, after a time, it no longer compels us to think metaphorically when we speak or hear it. Does dead metaphor influence the living word? Does it produce illusion or correct it? Are dead metaphors points of contact for ancestral words, sites at which we can witness our living speech's origins? Or are they instead haunting reminders that such origins remain lost and inaccessible, forever deferred by a metaphoricity of language that cannot be plumbed? If dead metaphors no longer demand our conscious solving of a riddle, is there nonetheless some other demand they do make? What, as Hamlet asks his father's ghost, "would" this "gracious figure" (3.4.105)?

When William Empson asserts that "[a]ll languages are composed of dead metaphors as the soil of corpses," his own simile ("as the soil of corpses") implies complete decomposition in which old metaphors would not be recognizable but from which new ones could grow. Yet Empson reserves the possibility that these decomposed metaphoric

[3] Aristotle specifies that although a simile can "do the same thing" as a metaphor, a simile is "less pleasing because longer and because it does not say that this *is* that, nor does [the listener's] mind seek to understand this" (Aristotle 1991, 244–5); Quintilian similarly observes that "[o]n the whole *metaphor* is a shorter form of *simile*, while there is this further difference, that in the latter we compare some object to the thing which we wish to describe, whereas in the former this object is actually substituted for the thing" (Quintilian 1996, 305); and in his 1588 *The Arcadian Rhetoric* Abraham Fraunce asserts that "a *Metaphore* is nothing but a similitude contracted into one word" (Fraunce 1969, B1r).

corpses somehow are not "dead but sleeping" and asserts that they retain metaphorical powers: "while making a direct statement" they "colour it with an implied comparison" (Empson 1966, 25). I. A. Richards, who insists that "however stone dead such metaphors seem, we can easily wake them up" (Richards 1936, 101), implies that the death of a metaphor is in fact a death of sleep, to invert the Prince's famous phrase. As John Searle observes, "to speak oxymoronically, dead metaphors have lived on" (Searle 1979, 98).

But not everyone believes in ghosts or in dead metaphors. A number of philosophers have argued that when metaphors die, only literal words remain. Donald Davidson, for instance, reluctantly acknowledges that literal words might have metaphoric origins but rejects the idea that they are haunted by past metaphoric lives: "Once upon a time, I suppose, rivers and bottles did not, as they do now, literally have mouths" but "when 'mouth' applied only metaphorically to bottles, the application made the hearer *notice* a likeness between animal and bottle openings… Once one has the present use of the word, with literal application to bottles, there is nothing left to notice" (Davidson 1978, 35). Paul Ricoeur similarly argues that because they no longer "transgress… semantic pertinence… dead metaphors are no longer metaphors, but instead are associated with literal meaning" (Ricoeur 1979, 290). And Jacques Derrida doubts, if there were dead metaphors, that we would be able to locate them to rouse them.[4] Indeed, for Derrida, who contends that metaphor "always carries its death within itself" (271), metaphor is inherently a kind of ghost.

Notwithstanding the doubts about dead metaphors and ghosts, I want to argue that the confusion over Hamlet's attempt to verify the Ghost's

[4] Although philosophers such as Anatole France may, according to Derrida, "undertak[e] an etymological or philological work which is to waken all the sleeping figures" (Derrida 1982, 212), in order to do so "one would have to posit that the sense aimed at through these figures is an essence rigorously independent of that which transports it" (229). Derrida does not reject the metaphoric ghost "inscribed in white ink," the "invisible design covered over in the palimpsest" (213), but he does not think that we can reach ancestral origins of words or ideas. In condemning the search for metaphoric remains as misguided because impossible, Derrida refutes Hegel's claim that just this kind of continuity exists. Hegel, citing the example of *to grasp* evolving to mean *to comprehend*, describes how a word which originally signifies something sensuous can be carried over into the spiritual sphere where "gradually the metaphorical element in the use of such a word disappears and by custom the word changes from a metaphorical to a literal expression" (Hegel 1975, 404).

story by staging "something like the murder of [his] father" (2.2.591) is clarified by recognizing that the Ghost's story contains a dead metaphor that wakes up, as Empson and Richards contend is possible. *Hamlet* further suggests that when a dead metaphor awakens, its more current abstract meaning can be displaced by an older material meaning. In *Hamlet* the Ghost's dead metaphor of the "ear of Denmark" is awakened with its literal, etymological significance renewed.

Marjorie Garber (1987, 127), Patricia Parker (1994, 136), and Stanley Cavell (2003, 183) have drawn on psychoanalytic theory to argue that *Hamlet*'s ghost scene is a kind of primal scene at which Hamlet confronts—and resists—the knowledge of his own sullied, material origins. I shall argue that *Hamlet*'s ghost scene also can be considered a kind of primal scene at which Hamlet confronts and resists the knowledge of words' sullied, material origins. In the presence of the Ghost, Hamlet faces the disillusioning reality of the way words, like children, have been transported from the spritual to the earthly realm of flesh and blood. Indeed, *Hamlet*'s ghost scene, which reveals a connection between metaphoric and human conception, suggests that in linguistic, like family, lines there is always the potential for unlineal, unchaste signification and there is the potential that dead fathers and metaphors will haunt living sons and speech. When "a figure like [Hamlet's] father" appears "in the dead waste and middle of the night" (1.2.198–9),[5] a dead father and a dead metaphor intrude into the present. "The time is out of joint" (1.5.196), as Hamlet observes, when ghosts of fathers and figures wake up and confound the living with the concerns of the dead.

Shape-shifters by nature, ghosts, like metaphors, not only can make demands of, but also can deceive their audiences. Indeed, the Wittenberg-schooled Prince's very first question to the "questionable shape" (1.4.43) reveals his awareness of this potential. "Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd" (1.4.40), Hamlet wonders, laying the foundation for centuries of scholarly inquiry into whether the Ghost tells the truth or lies, is literal or figurative, is outside or inside of Hamlet.

[5] This phrase describing the appearance of the figure of the Ghost unchastely echoes in Hamlet's joking with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about the figure of the "strumpet" Fortune: "Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours" (2.2.232–6).

However, even critics who set out to consider the possibility that the Ghost may have lied—W. W. Greg near the beginning of the twentieth century, for instance, or Stanley Cavell near its end—eventually shift their question to whether the Ghost is real or Hamlet's fantasy (Greg 1917; Cavell 2003). I shall work from the premise that the Ghost is real in the sense that, as a character with lines to speak whom characters other than Hamlet recognize, the Ghost is not merely Hamlet's projection. I shall argue further that as the Ghost's words slip between the dead and the living, they also slip, unnoticed, between the metaphoric and the literal.

Greg argues that "the only hypothesis" consistent with Claudius's lack of response to the dumb-show is that in the dumb-show Claudius "actually fails to recognize the representation of his own crime" (Greg 1917, 401). "There is but one rational conclusion," Greg asserts, "*Claudius did not murder his brother by pouring poison into his ears*" (401).[6] Noting that no one has satisfactorily answered Greg's claim, Cavell argues that the claim that the king does not see the dumb-show or that he sees it but is able to suppress his reaction until the repetition of the scene with words seems "essentially weaker than Greg's" (Cavell 2003, 181). All such explanations, Cavell charges, are "designed to accomplish . . . the negative task of excusing, or explaining away, one of the most extraordinarily theatrical strokes in our drama" (181). Arguing that such explanations aim to maintain the "assumption that the Ghost is honest," Cavell wonders, "But why, at all costs, is that veracity to be preserved?" (181).

Cavell goes on to suggest that Hamlet's urgency in proving the Ghost's veracity is motivated not only by his need to convince himself that Claudius is guilty but also by his desire to avoid an alternate conclusion that Hamlet himself has proposed, namely, that his "imaginations are as foul / As Vulcan's stithy" (3.2.83–4). Cavell notes that "by his 'imaginations' Hamlet refers not solely to Claudius as a murderer but also to the vivid pictures he paints of Claudius as his mother's lover" (183). As Cavell discovers, Hamlet's doubts about the Ghost's honesty are linked to Hamlet's doubts about his mother's.

Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost, however, compels Hamlet to confront not merely whether the Ghost is honest or his mother chaste; it compels him to confront the inherently unchaste nature of signification

[6] Greg does not question Claudius's guilt but rather his murder method. (Recently Christopher Pye has asserted, incorrectly, that "Greg concludes . . . Claudius must be innocent" [Pye 2000, 105].)

and conception. Hamlet confronts his own origins—the spirit of his dead father and the nature of his adulterous mother—in a scene that stages the problems of the origins of the language available to do so. Furthermore, Hamlet's own uncertainty about the Ghost's status tends to derail critical thinking about the Ghost. Although Greg and Cavell set out to accuse the Ghost of being a liar, by the end of their analyses they quietly transform the charge that the Ghost lies into the charge that Hamlet hallucinates or fantasizes the Ghost. Greg argues that "[i]f the facts of King Hamlet's death were not as represented in the player's play, then the Ghost was no honest ghost, but a liar. In other words, *the Ghost's story was not a revelation, but a mere figment of Hamlet's brain*" (Greg 1917, 401).

Greg's statement that the Ghost's story was "a mere figment of Hamlet's brain" is not, however, merely "other words" for his statement that the Ghost was "a liar." Indeed, Cavell rightly points out that Greg links the "question of the Ghost's veracity to the issue of the Ghost's general mode of existence (as real or imaginary) more tightly than the matter of the dumb-show requires" (Cavell 2003, 182). Yet just one paragraph later Cavell himself proposes "that we look at the dumb-show as Hamlet's invention, let me say his fantasy" (182–3). What is it about the ghost scene or the Ghost's story that prompts this critical slip?

Greg argues that the story of death by poison in the king's ear that Hamlet later stages to test Claudius actually is remembered from a play Hamlet once had seen: a deluded Hamlet has hallucinated that his father's Ghost tells him this story (Greg 1917, 403–16). Cavell asserts that Hamlet stages the memory of a childhood fantasy of a primal scene (Cavell 2003, 183–9). In order to suspect such pre-Ghost sources for Hamlet's scripting of the dumb-show and *The Murder of Gonzago*, namely, Hamlet's memory of a play or childhood fantasy, Greg and Cavell rely on the unargued assertion that either the Ghost is real and tells a truthful literal account of King Hamlet's murder by poison in the ear or that the Ghost is forged by Hamlet's imagination and lies. The equation of the Ghost's being a liar with the Ghost's being Hamlet's hallucination or fantasy, however, erases the very possibility Greg and Cavell set out to explore, namely, that the dumb-show does not catch Claudius's conscience because the Ghost does not tell an entirely truthful story of King Hamlet's death and, thus, that the dumb-show does not present accurately the way in which Claudius murdered King Hamlet. How, then, might a real ghost have lied?

I agree with Cavell that the scene of *The Mousetrap* is terribly oversimplified by imagining that Claudius, distracted during the performance, merely fails to see the dumb-show. If, instead, Claudius does not react to the dumb-show because it does not represent accurately the way in which he killed King Hamlet, then the Ghost himself has given out, as it were, a forged process of his own death. But what kind of forgery? The Ghost's figure of the "ear of Denmark" and the truth he expresses in his metaphoric observation that the ear of Denmark has been "by a forged process of [his] death / Rankly abus'd" (1.5.36–8) begets, I contend, what moments later becomes the account of his own death by poison in the ear. The Ghost's account slips from the truth about the state's metaphorical body into a lie about the king's body of flesh and blood. The problem with Hamlet's attempt to catch the conscience of the king by staging what the Ghost has told him is that Hamlet mistakes the Ghost's word for the thing itself. The Ghost inspires in Hamlet a nostalgia for a prelapsarian world of signification, a world in which correspondences between words and objects are transparent and perfectly intact.

Because Hamlet faces a set of questions about deeds and words more complicated than whether the Ghost speaks plain truths or lies, his attempts to forge proof for the Ghost's story are foiled by his method of dramatically re-presenting the Ghost's story and observing Claudius's reaction. Hamlet has conceived too simple a test for a world in which your father's ghost may speak figuratively as well as literally, a world in which the truth can be transported from the word by a metaphor even as your father's spirit can be transported from his body by a ghost. If, as Gertrude posits, "words be made of breath / And breath of life" (3.4.199–200), then of what are the ghostly words made that enter Hamlet's "ears of flesh and blood" (1.5.22)? What are spoken words removed from the material reality of breath and bodies?

The strangeness of encountering the Ghost's breathless words might help to explain why Hamlet is compelled immediately to figure the words—and his own mind—as material, to "set" the Ghost's words "down" in the "table of [his] memory" (1.5.98). Although Hamlet promises that the Ghost's "commandment all alone shall live / Within the book and volume of [his] brain, / Unmix'd with baser matter" (1.5.102–4), his reflex to figure the words as written in a book foils his attempt to keep the Ghost's words from the baser material realm. The adulterating threat of baser matter is intensified by the connection in *Hamlet*, observed by Margaret Ferguson, between the English

word *matter* and the Latin word for *mother*.[7] Janet Adelman has argued that the "fantasy of spoiling at the site of origin is . . . the under-text of the play" which "emerges first in muted form as Hamlet waits for the appearance of his ghostly father and meditates on the dram of evil that ruins the noble substance of man" (Adelman 1992, 23). Adelman further notes that "in the traditional alignment of spirit and matter, the mother gives us the stuff—the female matter—of our bodies and thus our mortality" (27). Hamlet struggles to find the Ghost's words honest—unmixed with baser matter—even as he struggles to find human conception pure. Yet the Ghost compels Hamlet to confront his mother's unchaste marriage and his father's unchaste speech.

When the Ghost begins to speak, he tells of his amazing post-death experiences of walking by night and fasting in "sulph'rous and tormenting flames" (1.5.3) by day. The Ghost rejects Hamlet's "pity" and demands instead "serious hearing" (1.5.5), hearing that will move Hamlet to action on his behalf rather than allow Hamlet a cathartic experience of grief. When the Ghost says that he must not tell the living Hamlet of the unearthly horrors he has experienced, he uses similes to describe the potential effects of the forbidden tale: Hamlet's eyes would "like stars start from their spheres" (1.5.17) and each hair would "stand an end / Like quills upon the fretful porpentine" (1.5.19–20). But, the Ghost claims, his tale is unspeakable: "this eternal blazon must not be / To ears of flesh and blood" (1.5.21–2). He cannot unfold these horrible eternal truths to the mortal Hamlet. Here the threat of how a literal description of the forbidden world of bodiless spirits would transform Hamlet is depicted in conditional similes, and so the threat of Hamlet's transformation is contained by keeping the worlds of the dead and the living sufficiently separate. But as the Ghost continues to speak, forbidden and permitted knowledge and literal and figurative language begin to mix.

At first the Ghost plainly demands that Hamlet "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" (1.5.25). But once the Ghost begins to narrate past events from his mortal days and to comment on the current state

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[7] Ferguson argues that "As we hear or see in the word 'matter' the Latin term for mother, we may surmise that the common Renaissance association between female nature in general and the 'lower' realm of matter is here being deployed in the service of Hamlet's complex oedipal struggle. The mother is the matter that comes between the father and the son" (Ferguson 1985, 294). Patricia Parker also observes that "a pun on 'matter' and female 'matrix' . . . runs through *Hamlet*" (Parker 1994, 121).

of earthly Denmark, his narrative becomes increasingly figurative.[8] The Ghost employs the well-established metaphor of the state as the king's body to describe the effects on Denmark of Claudius's lie about his death:

> so the whole ear of Denmark
> Is by a forged process of my death
> Rankly abused. (1.5.36–8)

The story "given out" (1.5.35)—that a serpent stung King Hamlet while he was sleeping in his orchard—is, the Ghost reveals, an account of the king's death that if spoken and understood literally happens to be a lie. The Ghost transforms Claudius's lie about a serpent's stinging King Hamlet into a truth about Claudius by revealing it to be a metaphor: "The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears his crown" (1.5.39–40). The metaphoric nature of this statement is easily recognizable: because there is no serpent slithering around Denmark wearing King Hamlet's crown, the serpent easily can be understood to be Claudius. Here, words that if spoken and understood literally would be a lie are framed by obvious semantic impertinence, to use Ricouer's term: since serpents do not literally wear crowns, and kings do not literally sting, the Ghost's statement can be recognized as true as metaphor.

Prompted by the scent of the morning air to stop the account of his queen's "falling off" and his allegorical explanation of the nature of virtue and lust (1.5.47–57), the Ghost tells the story of having been killed by Claudius's pouring poison in his ear. As the Ghost continues the tale of his murder, the metaphor of the ear of Denmark becomes literalized and, wittingly or unwittingly, the Ghost ends up telling a lie. Such a slip is facilitated by the conventional metaphoric equation of the

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[8] The lengthy and increasingly figurative nature of the Ghost's speech is illuminated by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's comment that the speech would be more effective if shorter and that the more a ghost says the less believable it will be. On November 29, 1780, while working in Munich on his opera *Idomeneo*, Mozart wrote in a letter to his father: "Also, don't you think that the speech of the subterranean voice is too long? Just think about it!—imagine yourself in the theater; the voice has to convey a feeling of terror—it should go through and through—one has to think it's real—how can you get such an effect if the speech is too long; for the longer it goes on, the more the audience will become aware that there's nothing real about it.—If the speech of the Ghost in "Hamlet" were not quite so long, it would be much more effective" (Mozart 2000, 218).

king's body and the state: because the King of Denmark *is* Denmark—the king's body *is* the state—the metaphoric ear of the state of Denmark can slip quietly into a story in which the literal ear of the King of Denmark is poisoned with hebenon.[9] And so the truth that Claudius metaphorically has poisoned the ear of the state of Denmark becomes the lie that Claudius literally has poisoned the ear of Hamlet, King of Denmark. Once uttered, the metaphor of Denmark's ear being abused generates the details of the Ghost's account of the murder of the King of Denmark that Hamlet understands as literal. The vehicle—*the human body of the King of Denmark with an ear of flesh and blood*—loses its tenor—*the state of Denmark with people who listen to stories*—and makes a false claim on truth. The kind of lie told when a metaphor circulates as if it were literal explains how a real ghost could have lied without relying on Greg or Cavell's problematic equation of the Ghost's lying with Hamlet's hallucination or fantasy.

Friedrich Nietzsche's description of how man forgets "that the original metaphors of perception *are* metaphors, and takes them for things themselves" (Nietzsche 1997, 94) helps to explain such a ghostly slip from the figurative to the literal. Indeed, Nietzsche is not the only philosopher who has imagined a time in a mythical past when the death of a metaphor could give way to the birth of literal language: Giambattista Vico and Jean Jacques Rousseau did so before him.[10] But it is Nietzsche's

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[9] Commenting on *Richard II*, Frank Kermode observes that "[i]t is not always easy, when kings are concerned, to distinguish shadow and substance. Of the King's two bodies, which is substance and which shadow? . . . The robes of kings and magistrates, their additions, make a brave show, but they are the substance of their offices and powers. The king's two bodies, then, are substance to each other's shadow; and they are in a hermaphroditic union only death can end" (Kermode 1985, 42).

[10] Vico contends that figures of speech were the "necessary modes of expression in all the early poetic nations" and "became figurative only later, as the human mind developed and invented words which signified abstract forms" (Vico 1999 159, 162). Rousseau, who asserts that "[f]igurative language arose first, proper [or literal] meaning was found last," illustrates his claim with the example of a frightened "savage" who misperceives a stranger as larger than life and so names him *giant* (Rousseau 1997, 253–4). Thus, what Rousseau calls "figurative" is in fact a term that happens to have been wrongly applied when a speaker's heightened emotion distorted his perception: the name *giant* expresses the savage's deluded perception. When in a calmer state the savage perceives that the so-called giants are no stronger or larger than he, the savage "will restrict the name *Giant* to the false object that had struck him during his illusion" and invent another name

sense of the delusion that ensued when sensual and passionate perception gave way to rational abstraction that best illuminates *Hamlet*'s ghost scene. Whereas Rousseau trusts the enlightened mind to correct the language errors caused by primal, distorting passions and to distinguish the figurative from the literal, Nietzsche finds the enlightened mind to be the distorting culprit. In Nietzsche's scenario, human beings, who originally expressed metaphorically their individual perceptions of the world, eventually came to accept already circulating "worn-out metaphors" (92) as truths.[11] Nietzsche, who asserts that the "impulse towards the formation of metaphors" is the "fundamental impulse of man" (97), celebrates those metaphors we express as we freshly perceive the world but imagines a silent—and sinister—consequence of our forgetting the metaphoric nature of perception, namely, our delusional acceptance of dead metaphor as truth.[12]

The discrepancy Greg and Cavell suspect between Claudius's murder of King Hamlet and the murder represented in the dumb-show and *The Murder of Gonzago* can, I am suggesting, be understood as the discrepancy between a literal and figurative version of the murder—a discrepancy not recognizable because something uttered metaphorically assumes the status of a literal statement. Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost—a kind of linguistic primal scene—illustrates, in a compressed version, the process that Nietzsche calls the "hardening and stiffening" of the "primitive world of metaphors" (94).[13] *Hamlet*'s Ghost scene suggests that when a dead or sleeping metaphor is aroused from its deathly

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common to them both, namely, *man* (254). Rousseau concludes: "Since the illusory image presented by passion showed itself first, the language answering to it was invented first; subsequently it became metaphorical when the enlightened mind recognized its original error and came to use expressions of that first language only when moved by the same passions as had produced it" (254).

[11] See pages 17–18 and 20–1 for a fuller analysis of these ideas published in Nietzsche's posthumous essay "On Truth and Falsity in their Extramoral Sense."

[12] Longinus' judgment that "the best use of a figure is when the very fact that it is a figure goes unnoticed" (Longinus 1991, 29) also is useful here. "[G]reatness and passion," according to Longinus, "are a wonderful help and protection against the suspicions aroused by the use of figures; cunning techniques, when overlaid with beauty and passion, disappear from view and escape all further suspicion" (29). Hearing the Ghost's passionate tale, the unsuspecting Hamlet would be less prone to detect the Ghost's account of his death as figurative. Quintilian similarly connects rhetorical ornament to listeners' "readiness to believe what they hear" as they are "sometimes even transported by admiration" (Quintilian 1996, 213).

[13] In his discussion of Shakespeare's ghosts, Stephen Greenblatt asserts that the "hardening of dream into reality is, in effect, what Shakespeare calls history"

slumber, it may have, with its new literal status, even greater power to affect a hearer.

Although Hamlet does not fully grasp the effects of the potential discontinuity between ghostly figurative and literal speech, he is troubled greatly by the potential discontinuity between the words and deeds of the living. Before Hamlet presents the Ghost of King Hamlet's story by arranging the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* preceded by a dumb-show—all gesture without words—he presents King Priam's story by requesting the recital of a dramatic speech—all words without gestures. Indeed, Hamlet points out that the speech he requests is from a play "never acted" (2.2.431), and in his praise of the play, Hamlet emphasizes how it was authored, namely, "well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning" (2.2.435–7). *Modesty* means not only "freedom from excess" (*OED* 1) but also "scrupulous sobriety of thought, speech, and conduct . . . natural avoidance of coarseness or lewdness . . . regarded as a virtue proper to women" (*OED* 2). Hamlet thus stresses, as it were, the unacted play's chastity: he remembers one who remarked that it was devoid of the excesses that make "the matter savoury" (2.2.438) and who called it "an honest method" (2.2.438). In choosing this speech that comingles modesty and cunning, Hamlet imagines the possibility of imparting chaste, fruitful knowledge;[14] in choosing a speech about Pyrrhus' vengeful killing of the "Old grandsire Priam" (2.2.460), Hamlet imagines regicide and revenge in an ancient kingdom where, unlike in Denmark, the conjunction between father-king and state is fully operational.

Although Pyrrhus misses when he first strikes at Priam, the "whiff and wind" (2.2.469) of Pyrrhus' sword causes Priam to fall. So then does Ilium itself: "senseless Ilium / Seeming to feel this blow . . . Stoops to his base" (2.2.470–2) and the "hideous crash / Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear" (2.2.472–4). With his ear prisoner, Pyrrhus "Did nothing" (2.2.478). The

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(Greenblatt 2001, 174). Here, the hardening of metaphor into reality may be what Shakespeare calls history.

[14] Hamlet's concern that theater be both chaste and fruitful recurs when he warns the players that the laughter of clowns will "set on some quantity of *barren* spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered" (3.2.41–3, emphasis mine).

mere gesture and sound of Pyrrhus' attempt on Priam causes the crash of Ilium, which in turn deafens and immobilizes Pyrrhus: the gesture and sound of the assault on Priam destroys Ilium itself. Furthermore, the widowed queen spontaneously expresses her horror, and that "instant burst of clamour," in turn, rouses the gods' passion (2.2.511). Whereas in Denmark only in Hamlet's wry joke "father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh" (4.3.54–5), in Ilium man and wife and gods are effectively conjoined.[15]

The Ghost of King Hamlet tells the Prince that the forged process of his death—the whiff and wind of a lie, as it were—abuses the state of Denmark. But, unlike Ilium, the state of Denmark has withstood not only the force of his murder but also the force of abuse of its king's memory. In Ilium anyone who had seen the murder of King Priam would "with tongue in venom steep'd, / 'Gainst Fortune's state . . . treason have pronounc'd" (2.2.506–7). Yet, in Denmark the son of a murdered father feels he "must hold [his] tongue" (1.2.159), that he can "say nothing" (2.2.564). The body of the King of Denmark, it turns out, is not fully joined to the state.

Nor has the murder of a great king elicited the uncontrollable noise of horror and grief or the passion of the gods. Unlike in King Priam's Ilium—or in King Duncan's Scotland—in King Hamlet's Denmark there is no cosmic response to the king's murder. Nothing happens, as it does in *Macbeth*'s Scotland, that is "unnatural, / Even like the deed that's done" (*Mac*. 2.4.10–11); no Old Man observes "Hours dreadful and things strange" (*Mac*. 2.4.3) following the murder of Denmark's king. Whereas in Scotland "dark night strangles the travelling lamp" and "darkness does the face of earth entomb" (*Mac*. 2.3.7–9), in

[15] Various critics have commented on the problematic and failed conjunctions in *Hamlet*. George Wright, in his discussion of the prominence and effect of hendiadys in the play, asserts that "[w]hat the play suggests, and what hendiadys helps to convey, is that the conjunctions on which life depends, on which this world's customs and institutions are founded, cannot be trusted" (Wright 1981, 181). Frank Kermode looks at *Hamlet*'s "conjunctures, perspectives, and condensations," observes that the play's "central rhetorical device . . . is doubling," and asserts that "[t]his, then, is a play in which self is sometimes joined with, sometimes divided from, same; opposites are conjoined and similars separated" (Kermode 1985, 47, 48, 59). Richard McCoy, tracing the "matrimonial implications" and "mystical political significance" of the term *conjoined*, describes how in Hamlet's "eagerness to see his father's 'form and cause conjoined' in the closet scene, Hamlet yearns . . . for something like a Eucharistic miracle" (McCoy 2002, 71, xvi).

Denmark only human activity disturbs the time: the "sweaty haste" that "make[s] the night joint-labourer with the day" (1.1.80–1) is the new king's military preparations to defend the country against young Fortinbras. The speech Hamlet requests to hear about the kingdom of Ilium conjoined to its king contrasts sharply with his own state of Denmark.

As Bruce Danner points out, Hamlet is "so struck by the Player's speech that he proclaims his malefactions in soliloquy" (Danner 2003, 53). Thus, Hamlet himself bears the first fruit of the Player's chaste speech. In his soliloquy Hamlet mulls over the player's moving account of Pyrrhus' murder of Priam and eventually speaks explicitly of being "prompted to [his] revenge" (2.2.580) but of failing to take the appropriate action. But Hamlet is at first more concerned about his failure to make an appropriate and moving speech. Hamlet recognizes that his own words have not been conjoined to his grieving heart.

Outraged by the Player's ability to express his grief for Hecuba, Hamlet asks what the Player would do if he had "the motive and cue for passion" that he himself has (2.2.555). Hamlet answers his own question by imagining publicly expressed grief with great consequence. The Player, says Hamlet,

> would drown the stage with tears,
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
> Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
> Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
> The very faculties of eyes and ears. (2.2.556–60)

The expression of the grief Hamlet imagines would have an effect strikingly similar to Ilium's fall.

In the doubling, "motive and cue," Hamlet shifts from *motive*—"a circumstance or extenal factor inducing a person to act in a certain way" (*OED* n. 3a)—to the metaphoric *cue*—"the concluding word or words of a speech in a play, serving as a signal or direction to another actor to enter, or begin his speech" (*OED* n. 2).[16] This doubling thus reveals

[16] "Motive and cue" is not a hendiadys in the same sense as "law and heraldry" (1.1.90) or "whiff and wind" (2.2.469) which, as George Wright observes, can be paraphrased as "heraldic law," or "whiffing wind" (Wright 1981, 185–6). I would argue, however, that "motive and cue" does fit Wright's criteria of "conjoined terms . . . not quite parallel" and, thus, could be counted in Wright's category of "almost hendiadys" (185).

the process by which Hamlet's move to metaphor moves him to another realm of action. *Cue*, the metaphoric vehicle that turns Hamlet's life into a play, turns Hamlet into an actor. And indeed he becomes one: by the end of the speech Hamlet has decided to stage a play, not take revenge.

Hamlet condemns himself for being able to "say nothing" (2.2.564) before he condemns himself for having done nothing. His disgust at "unpack[ing his] heart with words" and "cursing like a very drab" surely evokes the alternative action of revenge (2.2.581–5). But Hamlet's disgust at such debased, private speech also evokes the alternative of the dignified public elegy and appropriate mourning that, according to Hamlet, never adequately graced his father's death.[17] Even when Hamlet summarily asserts "If a do blench, / I know my course" (2.2.593–4), he does not specify the course and, although revenge is likely the course to which he refers, Hamlet's concern with the course of speaking publicly and truthfully of his father's death lingers. There have been no words to suit the action of the passing of a great father-king. And furthermore, although a king has been mercilessly slain, the state has been left standing. What was a fully operational correspondence in Ilium—that even an attempt on King Priam causes "senseless Ilium" to "Stoop to his base" (2.2.470–2)—turns out to be metaphor in Denmark—that lying about the state is figured as poisoning the king's ear.

Notwithstanding critics who have found E. M. W. Tillyard's account of the *Elizabethan World Picture* world inadequately observant of the complexities of Elizabethan culture,[18] Tillyard's description of how the "Elizabethan[s] hover[ed] between equivalence and metaphor" is illuminating here (Tillyard 1959, 99–100):

> To the correspondence between macrocosm, body politic, and microcosm, the Elizabethans gave a double function. On the one hand they made it express the idea of that order they so longed for and on the other serve as a fixed pattern before which the fierce variety of real life could be transacted and to which it could be referred. But they no longer allowed the details to take the form of minute mathematical

[17] For Hamlet, his mother's marriage merely "A little month" after his father's death taints the sincerity of her mourning and the funeral: he faults his mother for not having "mourn'd longer" and perceives her tears as "most unrighteous" (1.2.127, 151, 154).

[18] Franco Moretti, for instance, who finds that English tragedy is "[a]t bottom . . . nothing less than the negation and dismantling of the Elizabethan World Picture," charges that Tillyard's account "denies the historical and cultural specificity of the age of absolutism" (Moretti 1982, 12–13).

> equivalences: they made the imagination use these for its own ends; equivalences shaded off into resemblances. (99)

Tillyard continues that "[i]t was through their retention of the main points and their flexibility in interpreting the details that the Elizabethans were able to use these great correspondences in their attempt to tame a bursting and pullulating world" (100). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* shows a prince unable to be flexible in this way, one who instead turns nostalgically to stories of the ancient world in which these correspondences were perfectly intact and to the theater where he imagines he can replicate that world, a world where Hamlet might not just frighten the King with "false fire" (3.2.260) but avenge his father with it.[19]

After Claudius leaves in the middle of the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet asks Horatio about Claudius's actions: "Didst perceive?" (3.2.281). But Horatio's polite and plain answers, "Very well, my lord" and "I did very well note him" (3.2.282, 284), only confirm that Horatio was observing Claudius, not what Horatio concluded from censuring Claudius's seeming. Horatio's observation of Hamlet when he first encounters the Ghost, namely, that Hamlet "waxes desperate with imagination" (1.4.87), is an observation as apt for Hamlet's behavior during and after *The Mousetrap*. As Cavell notes, at the play Hamlet is "aroused, in more than one way" (Cavell 2003, 183). Why does the play excite Hamlet so?

Cavell suggests that Hamlet is excited by his own staging of the primal scene of parental intercourse. A child witnessing, or imagining, the primal scene of his parents' intercourse must confront the material mixing of human conception: he must confront the knowledge that he

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[19] Bruce Danner argues that "Hamlet's attempt to infuse language with violence produces a corresponding dissolution of violence into language" (Danner 2003, 41). Analyzing Hamlet's intention to "speak daggers" (3.2.387) to his mother, Danner says: "But if Hamlet's violent language echoes the 'bitter business' he has just resolved to perform, it also assumes a catachretic structure that can only negate the prospect of real physical force rather than carry it to fruition. Muddying the distinctions between violence and speech that he hopes to maintain here, Hamlet's 'speak daggers' does not simply make daggers out of words; it also makes words out of daggers" (41–2). I don't agree with Danner's classification of "speaking daggers" as catachresis: unlike table *leg* which has a missing term (leg : body :: ? : table), "speaking daggers" can be analyzed like a metaphor (speak : hateful words :: thrust : daggers). I nonetheless find Danner's point crucial that we recognize not only how Hamlet's metaphors turn his speech violent but also how his metaphors turn his violence into speech.

exists, as it were, as the fruit of his parents' labor, of the sweat of their brows, that he is a thing, as Polonius says of Laertes, "a little soil'd i' th' working" (2.1.41) rather than an immaculately conceived spirit. Hamlet intends to keep the Ghost's command "[u]nmix'd with baser matter" (1.5.104) and "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to" (3.2.22) Claudius. But at the ghost scene Hamlet instead is faced with how human beings—and how words—are conceived not by chaste copying but by unchaste mingling. Garber notes that "the appearance of the ghost comes at the time when the living spouse has effected, or is about to effect, a repetition and a substitution, through remarriage" (Garber 1987, 15). If a metaphor could be regarded, as Nelson Goodman argues, "as a happy and revitalizing, even if bigamous, second marriage" (Goodman 1976, 73), then the Ghost might be regarded as a sign that new marriages and metaphors might take root in the soil where dead husbands and metaphors are buried. The ghost scene situates the knowledge of the adulterating nature of conception—a knowledge Hamlet frantically resists—in the liminal space between life and death, waking and sleep, reality and dream.

Hamlet attempts to rid the play scene of adulterating matter by holding a mirror up to nature. However, he first is compelled to conjure and exorcise its threatening presence. While the players "stay upon [Hamlet's] patience" (3.2.106), Hamlet performs a sexual solicitation, albeit disingenuous and vicious, of his sometime beloved. Hamlet proposes to "lie in [Ophelia's] lap" (3.2.110) and, when she refuses, asks if she thought he "meant country matters" (3.2.115). Hamlet finally contents himself to play chorus for Ophelia's show. "I could interpret between you and your love if I could see the puppets dallying" (3.2.241–2), he quips, but eventually abandons even that role to play chorus for *The Mousetrap*. Adelman has argued that Ophelia "becomes dangerous to Hamlet insofar as she becomes identified in his mind with the contaminating maternal body, the mother who has borne him" (Adelman 1992, 14). Before the play, Hamlet rehearses and rejects his contact with Ophelia before attempting to cause Claudius's chaste conception of his crime.

Hamlet's grotesque image of "the sun breed[ing] maggots in a dead dog" (2.2.181) is only an exaggerated expression of his disgust at the adulterating nature of all conception—his disgust that conception always involves some mingling of the heavenly (the sun) with baser matter (the dead dog). In his encounter with the Ghost and in the re-presentation of that encounter in the dumb-show and *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet struggles with how meaning is conceived in the interaction between the ethereal and the material, between the word

and the flesh. Hamlet perpetuates the fantasy that allows him to disavow this knowledge of the conception of meaning and the conception of human life; he perpetuates a prelapsarian fantasy of his garden-world still weeded, a world where correspondences, like the time, were not yet "out of joint" (1.5.196). The Ghost offers Hamlet the possibility of an allegorical world where the name of a thing entirely explains its actions, a world where Virtue "never will be mov'd" (1.5.53) and Lust "Will sate itself in a celestial bed / And prey on garbage" (1.5.56–7). The Ghost offers the fantasy of a world of essences not images, of being not seeming, a world where the difference between the king's ear and his subjects' hearing collapses like Priam and Ilium. Hamlet himself has insisted that his seeming—"the trappings and the suits of woe" (1.2.86)—cannot "denote [him] truly" (1.2.83) and that "one may smile, and smile, and be a villain" (1.5.108). Yet at the scene of the play, Hamlet excitedly imagines that by observing Claudius he will be able to "censure . . . his seeming" (3.2.87), that Claudius will seem just as he is.

Hamlet's desire—and the Ghost's demand—for such seamless correspondance of signs and their objects hinders Hamlet's ability to grieve for his murdered father and to be in the sullied world. At the scene of the ethereal remains of his father-king, Hamlet expresses his pity for his father—"Alas, poor ghost" (1.5.4)—but is abruptly reprimanded by his father's spirit. The undifferentiated empathy required for pity and grief is cut short by the demand for revenge, an action based on strict one-to-one correspondence. By the time the Ghost reappears after Hamlet has slain Polonius in his mother's chamber, Hamlet has learned its lesson about pity's thwarting effect on action. Hamlet urges the Ghost:

> Do not look upon me,
> Lest with this piteous action you convert
> My stern effects. Then what I have to do
> Will want true colour—tears perchance for blood. (3.4.127–30)

Only at the scene of the material remains of his father's jester is Hamlet able to express more fully his pity and grief: "Alas, poor Yorick" (5.1.178).

Perhaps the Gravedigger whom Hamlet has just accused of "play[ing] at loggets" (5.1.90–1) with human bones knows that the skull he hands Hamlet is Yorick's. Perhaps he doesn't. Whether Hamlet holds Yorick's skull or someone else's, the physical skull of some once alive human

being nonetheless allows Hamlet to pity Yorick. The remains of the jester—a man who surely made words wanton—and the anonymity of the graveyard allow Hamlet to turn from the spirit world to seek, at last, his "noble father in the dust" (1.2.71)—and to claim his own identity from it. Hamlet remembers Yorick even as he expresses "how abhorred in [his] imagination it is," how his "gorge rises at it" (5.1.181–2), presumably at the memory of his past contact with the living Yorick, on whose back he would ride, along with present contact with some dead man's skull. He remembers Yorick's spirit lovingly even as he is disgusted by Yorick's material decay. The physical contact with the unearthed remains of the body of a dead man allows Hamlet to claim his right to express pity for the beloved dead and to claim his identity as his father's son and king.

When the funeral party for Ophelia arrives at the graveyard and Laertes wants to hold his sister's body once more, Hamlet takes offense that Laertes has "come here to whine, / To outface [him] with leaping in her grave" (5.1.272–3). Hamlet later explains to Horatio that he feels remorse for having "forgot" himself to Laertes (5.2.76), but that "the bravery of his grief did put [him] / Into a tow'ring passion" (5.2.79–80). Indeed the bravery of Laertes's grief—and its unleashing of the bravery of Hamlet's—prompts Hamlet's assertion of his identity as his father's son and the King of Denmark: "This is I, / Hamlet the Dane" (5.1.250–1). Thus Hamlet claims his identity and birthright as the son of his murdered father not prompted by a dead man's ethereal apparition and the right to revenge, but prompted by a dead man's material skull and the right to grieve. Hamlet gives up the ghost—a desire for chaste replication of the father for whom he would act in revenge—and embraces the unchaste mingling of grief from which his distinctive identity can emerge.

At the graveyard, a site of decomposition, Hamlet then also claims his right to have "lov'd Ophelia" (5.1.264). Here Hamlet voices the tragically belated expression of grief that would have allowed him to go on with his own life and love, with earthly conception of his own, with a waking life in the material here and now. Whereas earlier Hamlet had spurned the imperfect Ophelia, now he fights Laertes at her grave. Here he begins to grasp the matter from which sullied flesh and words grow and to which they return, to accept the conditions under which new kings and words are conceived, to bear that dead kings and metaphors might haunt the living, to understand that to conceive, metaphorically, one has both to be and not to be.

7
"Strange Fish": Transport and Translation in *The Tempest*

> [I]n naming something that does not have a proper name of its own, metaphor should be used. (Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*)
>
> STEPHANO. A lost thing looks for a lost name. (W. H. Auden, *The Sea and the Mirror*)
>
> CALIBAN. Call me X. That would be best. (Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*)

In the single afternoon during which the plot of *The Tempest* unfolds, the names by which Caliban is called are as various as they are denigrating. They include "whelp" (1.2.283), "slave" (1.2.309), "villain" (1.2.310), "earth" (1.2.315), "tortoise" (1.2.317), "filth" (1.2.346), "savage" (1.2.356), "thing" (1.2.358), "Hag-seed" (1.2.366), "malice" (1.2.368), "fish" (2.2.25), "monster" (2.2.30), "cat" (2.2.82), "mooncalf" (2.2.105), "man-monster" (3.2.11), "beast" (4.1.140), "devil" (4.1.188), "knave" (5.1.268), and "demi-devil" (5.1.272).[1] The sheer variety of these names, many of which are repeated with assorted modifiers, suggests that the names signify as much about their speakers as they do about what Caliban is or is like.

Prospero and Miranda twice refer to Caliban as human. In recounting the history of the island and of Sycorax's son's presence there, Prospero tells Ariel that when he and Miranda arrived,

[1] Except where otherwise noted, quotations of *The Tempest* follow the Arden Shakespeare text edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (Shakespeare 1999).

> Then was this island
> (Save for the son that she did litter here,
> A freckled whelp, hag-born) not honoured with
> A human shape. (1.2.281–4)

Even as Prospero refers metaphorically to Caliban as a "whelp" "litter[ed]" by the hag-mother Sycorax, he recounts that the island was without a human shape "save" for Caliban. Prospero thus considers Caliban the island's sole "human shape," however "disproportioned" Prospero may find him (5.1.291).[2] Later, when Miranda is puzzled by her father's ungentle approach to the newly discovered Ferdinand, she protests:

> This
> Is the third man that e'er I saw, the first
> That e'er I sighed for. (1.2.445–7)

Miranda hereby counts Prospero and Caliban as the first two men.[3] Even if Caliban's nonhuman names are abundant and what he looks like difficult to determine, Prospero regards Caliban as a human shape, and Miranda counts him among men.

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[2] *Whelp*—"the young of the dog" or "of various wild animals" (*OED* 1 and 2)—has since the fifteenth century also had the established figurative meaning of "a young child" (*OED* 2b). Even if *whelp* is a sleeping metaphor, however, "litter" wakes it up. Perhaps it is Prospero's animal metaphors that have prompted some to misattribute "not honoured with / A human shape" to Caliban rather than the island. Judith Anderson, for instance, writes: "When Prospero's tale gets to Caliban, the witch's son—'A freckled whelp, hag-born . . . not honor'd with / A human shape'—Ariel interrupts him, 'Yes—Caliban her son' (283–8). Presumably, Ariel chorically assents to Prospero's description of Caliban as not fully human" (Anderson 1996, 162). Anderson silently elides the opening of Prospero's sentence—"Then was this island"—and inserts an elipsis between "hag-born" and "not honor'd," where she has elided no words. Anderson thereby misrepresents Prospero as referring to Caliban—rather than to the island—as "not honor'd with / A human shape."

[3] Later Miranda insists that she "would not wish / Any companion in the world" other than Ferdinand even though she has not seen "More that [she] may call men" than Ferdinand and her "dear father" (3.1.51–5). However, Miranda's omission, when speaking to her newly beloved Ferdinand, of any mention of Caliban—the "Abhorred slave" (1.2.352) whom she does "not love to look on" (1.2.311)—does not necessarily indicate that she has reconsidered her earlier classification.

The animal names Caliban is called evoke feline, bovine, and reptilian characteristics, but his being called a fish has a peculiar resonance in the speech community of shipwrecked Italians. The series of references to Caliban as a fish reveals, I shall argue, how a term for something newly encountered can acquire authority when it unwittingly transports a notion already circulating within one speech community onto an object newly perceived in another. The idea of Caliban as a fish emphasizes the metaphoric nature of naming new objects that has been recognized since Aristotle[4] and reveals how a newly named exotic being, a being whose identity is translated into a new speech community, can get caught in that community's linguistic network.

Judith Anderson observes that "in the early modern period *translation* is an implicitly metaphorical, multivocal pun just waiting to happen" (Anderson, 2005, 9). As rhetoricians have long noted, the Latin word for the Greek term *metaphor* is *translatio*, a word that refers both to the figure of speech and to the act of turning one language into another.[5] *The Tempest* reveals how naming something foreign is a kind of translation that can carry identities beyond the literal significance of a name. A name, however literally intended, can work like a metaphor to transport onto its object a speech community's fancies and fears to which the name has been attached in other contexts. Indeed, in Caliban's case, the name "fish" is likely not literally well suited to its object, but the significances that "fish" carries by association not only fuel the name's reiteration but, once uttered, also shape perceptions of Caliban.

It is when Trinculo comes upon Caliban that he first is called a fish. Caliban, who has mistaken Trinculo as a spirit whom Prospero has dispatched to punish him, decides to "fall flat" in an effort to hide from his tormenter (2.2.16). In a case of mutual mistaken identity, Caliban mistakes Trinculo for a spirit while Trinculo mistakes Caliban for a fish. Although Trinculo's laughable mistake is part of the scene's comedy, it is significant nonetheless. Trinculo asks himself:

> What have we here, a man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish-like smell, a kind of—not of the newest—poor-John. A strange fish! Were I in England now (as once I was) and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. (2.2.24–9)

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[4] See Ch. 1, pp. 6–7.

[5] Both terms—*meta-phor* and *trans-lation*—literally mean *trans-port* or *across-carry*.

In just a few sentences, Trinculo repeats the word "fish" six times, pronounces Caliban a "strange fish," and imagines the spectacle of his newly discovered creature profitable in England. That Caliban has been hiding beneath a "gaberdine," under which Trinculo eventually joins him, further emphasizes the ridiculousness of Trinculo's efforts to observe and classify Caliban (2.2.37). Soon after pronouncing Caliban a fish, Trinculo finds that the reality of Caliban's body complicates his conclusion, so he wonders, "Legged like a man and his fins like arms!" (2.2.32–3). Although Trinculo detects the legs and arms of a man, at first he fits them into his conception of Caliban as a fish. He thus perceives the alleged fish as having legs only figuratively *like* a man and as having fins *like* arms. Part of what's funny here is that Trinculo's naming Caliban a fish thwarts his ability to see that Caliban is a man and causes him instead to think of Caliban as a monstrous fish with human-like limbs. But even the foolish Trinculo quickly acknowledges the absurdity of fitting his observation of a man's limbs into his original conception of Caliban as a fish, so he revises his taxonomy: "Warm, o'my troth! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt" (2.2.34–6).

This comic scene stages how a traveler's misnaming of a native, in this case an islander as a fish, absurdly can dictate the traveler's further observations of the native; the scene also stages a traveler's ability to realize his misconception and correct it. Yet, although Trinculo resolves his confusion—and ends the joke—when he retracts his laughable conclusion that Caliban is a fish, the name lingers nonetheless. After Stephano arrives and Caliban asserts that he will not serve Trinculo because he is "not valiant," Trinculo reverts to calling Caliban a "deboshed fish" and demands, "Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but half a fish and half a monster?" (3.2.23–8). And when Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban eventually are reunited with the mariners and courtiers, Antonio remarks that Caliban is a "plain fish and no doubt marketable" (5.1.266).[6]

Perhaps, as Trinculo asserts, Caliban smells like a fish, though even this remark is questionable considering that Trinculo observes Caliban's "fish-like smell" (2.2.26) only after he pronounces him to be one.[7]

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[6] Northrop Frye connects Antonio's echoing Caliban's fish name with Antonio's questionable moral character and wonders "whether the ability to see humanity in Caliban isn't something of a test of character in the observer" (Frye 1986, 180–1).

[7] Walter Ralegh's description of the conditions on one of his 1595 British explorer's ships as stinking and fishy suggests that Stephano and Trinculo, very

Although the play provides no evidence that Caliban looks like a fish—indeed Trinculo is compelled to abandon the preposterous idea—some scholars and directors have adopted the notion that there is something aquatic or amphibious about Caliban. Marjorie Garber, for instance, refers in one essay to "the amphibious Caliban" (Garber 1988, 48) and in another plainly notes that he "looks like a fish" (Garber 2004, 866); Marina Warner observes "the contradictory zoology by which others evoke [Caliban's] looks and his smell" yet asserts that "he is above all redolent of fishiness" (Warner 2000, 98); and Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden Vaughan report that, in various productions throughout *The Tempest*'s stage history, Caliban has been decked with fins and fish scales (Shakespeare 1999, 34).[8] It seems that Trinculo's pronouncement of Caliban's fish identity has ventured beyond the speech community in *The Tempest* and surfaced in scholarly and theatrical circles.

"Strange fish" catches on, I suggest, because it is a name unwittingly transported from an earlier context which lends unacknowledged metaphorical legitimacy to an unlikely name for Caliban. As Reuben Brower has observed about the play, "Shakespeare is continually prodding us—often in ways of which we are barely conscious—to relate the passing dialogue with other dialogues into and through a super-design of metaphor" (Brower 1962, 96).[9] The seemingly irrational insistence that Caliban is somehow like an actual fish is fueled by what is from the Italians' point of view a more reasonable, if xenophobic, belief, namely, that Caliban is metaphorically a "strange fish" who threatens legitimate Italian heirs as they are transported through the Mediterranean Sea in quest of dynasty. Shipwrecked on the way home from Tunis to Italy and

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recently passengers on a long sea voyage, might even literally project their own smell onto Caliban. Consider Ralegh's 1596 description of his "poore & weake vessels": "[W]e caried 100 persons and their victuals for a moneth . . . wherewith they were so pestred and unsavery, that what with victuals being most fish, with the weete clothes of so many men thrust together and the heate of the sunne, I will undertake there was never any prison in England, that coulde be founde more unsavory and lothsome" (Ralegh 1997, 135).

[8] The Calibans who have been costumed with fish features span more than a century of performances: Caliban had "fins on shoulders and arms" in Charles Kean's 1857 production, fish scales in Margaret Webster's 1945 production, and "glistening fish scales" in Henry Baker's 1970 performance (Vaughan and Vaughan 1991, 183, 189, 191).

[9] Brower further observes that the "harmony of the play lies in its metaphorical design, in the closeness and completeness with which its rich and varied elements are linked through almost inexhaustible analogies" (95).

separated from Ferdinand, whom he believes has drowned, King Alonso laments:

> Would I had never
> Married my daughter there, for coming thence
> My son is lost and (in my rate) she too,
> Who is so far from Italy removed
> I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir
> Of Naples and Milan, what *strange fish*
> Hath made his meal on thee? (2.1.108–14, emphasis mine)

Here Alonso expresses his concern about his heirs by wishing that he never had married his daughter to the King of Tunis who "so far from Italy removed" is lost to him. Alonso further holds the marriage journey responsible for the loss of his son, now presumed drowned. Sebastian callously chides the king for allowing Claribel to marry a foreigner—a stranger:

> Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
> That would not bless our Europe with your daughter
> But rather loose her to an African. (2.1.124–6)

When Sebastian continues, "We have lost your son, / I fear, for ever" and charges, "The fault's your own," Alonso admits, "So is the dear'st of'th' loss" (2.1.132–7).[10] Alonso's imagining a fish making his meal on the presumably drowned Ferdinand is perfectly logical, but his imagining a *strange* fish seems overdetermined, notwithstanding John Gillies's observation that "[i]n sixteenth-century Europe, images of strange fish . . . filled the edges of maps and the tops of broadsides" (Gillies 2000, 201). Alonso's despairing apostrophe to his heir Ferdinand connects the fear of loss of his heirs not only to the King of Tunis, the strange man to whom his daughter is now lost, but also to the son of an Algerian, the island's stranger not yet discovered. These men are, of course, strangers from the perspective of the traveling Italians.

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[10] In her discussion of Sebastian's charge, Ania Loomba notes that "women and black men, and particularly a combination of the two, are posited as the cause of misfortune" (Loomba 1989, 155). Kim Hall observes that "Sebastian's criticism, like Alonso's regret . . . directly attributes Ferdinand's loss—and the loss of the royal bloodline—to the marriage" and that "in Sebastian's condemnation, European families are ruptured and bloodlines broken because of this marriage" (Hall 1995, 149).

When, in the very next scene of the play, Trinculo discovers Caliban and calls him a "strange fish" (2.2.27), he unwittingly transports onto Caliban Alonso's fantasy of the foreign creature ready to devour the heir of Naples and Milan.[11] Even once the reality is established—discernable even by the foolish Trinculo—that Caliban is not, in fact, a fish "Legged like a man and his fins like arms" (2.2.32–3) but rather an "islander" (2.2.35), the fantasy of Caliban as the one who could devour the legitimate heir continues to fuel the notion of Caliban as a strange fish. The idea that strange fish lurk, ready to devour the possibility of Italian dynasty, becomes a metaphor whose truth gets lost in translation. Alonso fears that a fish lurking under the vulnerable ship might make its meal on Ferdinand who washes into the sea during the shipwreck. The fish who might eat Ferdinand becomes a metaphor for Caliban who, if he had his way, would devour Italian heirs metaphorically by wrecking—raping—Miranda and, thus, Prospero's hope for a suitable heir. "Strange fish" performs, I am suggesting, like a metaphor's vehicle of which speakers are not consciously aware, but one that signifies powerfully nonetheless: it conflates Alonso's concern about losing the heir of Naples (to a strange fish who lurks beneath the Italian vessel carrying his heir in its hull) with Prospero's concern about losing the heir of Milan (to a strange man who threatens the Italian woman who will carry his heir in her womb).[12]

Furthermore, the name *Caliban*, widely recognized as an anagram of *cannibal*, suggests that this islander already has been named for his potential to devour what is dearest to Italian rulers. Like "strange fish,"

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[11] Commenting on the play's "strange-wondrous" analogies, Brower cites the speech in which Alonso imagines the "strange fish" feeding on his lost son and the "comic antiphony" of Trinculo's reiteration of the term: "From the 'accident most strange' of the shipwreck we come to Alonso's ponderous woe . . . and then to Trinculo's discovery of Caliban—'A strange fish!' " (Brower 1962, 103–4). Gillies observes that "strange fish" is a "textual link" between Alonso's comment and Trinculo's name for Caliban (Gillies 2000, 201).

[12] Garber asserts that "what is *figurative* or metaphorical in the 'high' plot becomes *literal* or unmetaphored in the 'low' one," noting that "Ferdinand explicitly associates himself with resurrection," which is "very likely to be a shadow meaning behind the image of the devouring 'strange fish' " whereas "Caliban, who looks like a fish and smells like one, enacts the same scenario as in the Book of Jonah, first encompassing, then releasing, the hapless jester Trinculo" (Garber 2004, 865–6). The relationship between the "high" and "low" plots is more complicated, however, than Garber suggests: even if Ferdinand undergoes a metaphorical resurrection, Alonso fears that Ferdinand has been devoured by an actual fish.

Caliban-Canibal is a name unearned: nothing in the play suggests that he eats, or desires to eat, human flesh. Calling Caliban a "strange fish" reiterates with variation his name modestly adapted from *cannibal* even as it illuminates the possible origins and significances of such a name.

Whereas Alonso speaks the word "fish" to refer to a creature who might eat a man, Caliban speaks the word "fish" to refer to the animal men eat. In fact, each of the times Caliban speaks the word "fish," he refers to the food he provides for his master Prospero which, in his drunken state, Caliban offers to provide for Stephano instead. When Caliban subjects himself to Stephano, he offers, "I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough. / A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!" (2.2.158–159). And soon after, Caliban, imagining his liberation from Prospero, sings:

> No more dams I'll make for fish,
> Nor fetch in firing at requiring,
> Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish. (2.2.176–8)

Whereas for Caliban "fish" is associated, along with fetching logs and washing dishes, with working to serve a hungry Italian master, for the shipwrecked Italians "fish" becomes associated with the fear that Caliban's desires will devour them, an association that obscures Caliban's labor and their own appetites. The discrepancy between Caliban and the shipwrecked Italians' use of the word "fish" suggests that the peculiar transport of "strange fish" onto Caliban allows the Italian travelers to project their own hunger onto Caliban: the name transforms a man who catches fish for the hungry strangers who arrive on his island into a monster who is a strange, hungry fish.[13]

Not only is the strange fish imagined as a danger to heirs: so are the female bodies that carry heirs apparent. The perceived vulnerability of the female body to tumultuous natural forces that threaten social hierarchies and ruling lineages is voiced in the play's opening scene. As the storm rages, Gonzalo says of the Boatswain, "I'll warrant him

[13] This projection of hunger and desire onto Caliban is enacted, with a twist, in a late nineteenth-century actor's conception of Caliban about which Vaughan and Vaughan report: the actor F. R. Benson's "idea of Caliban was to come on stage with a fish between his teeth" (Vaughan and Vaughan 1991, 185–6). Vaughan and Vaughan note that this "bit of stage business" was adopted by Beerbohn Tree in his 1904 performance of the role (186). Thus, even in a production of *The Tempest* in which a fish appears as literal food to eat, it is Caliban—not an Italian master—who has the fish in his mouth.

for drowning, though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an unstanched wench" (1.1.45–7).[14] Soon the ship is proven so, and Gonzalo cries, "We split, we split!" as he bids farewell to his family (1.1.60–1). When Antonio describes Alonso's daughter, Claribel, as "she that from whom / We all were sea-swallowed" (2.1.250–1), Claribel becomes associated with this figure of the ship as an incontinent female body from which heirs are cast into the sea. Furthermore, when Antonio encourages Sebastian to consider killing and supplanting his brother, who he mistakenly thinks has lost his heirs, Antonio cites the presumed drowning of Ferdinand and the great distance at which Claribel, "loose[d] . . . to an African" (2.1.126), now resides. The image of the incontinent ship as it is wrecked is thus fused with the image of the incontinent female body: a leaky ship and a leaky wench could wreck Alonso and Prospero's dynastic ambitions.

On the island with Caliban, Prospero apparently has reason to worry about the mother of his future heir. Prospero charges that he has confined Caliban in the "hard rock" only after Caliban sought "to violate / The honour of [his] child" (1.2.344–9), a charge that Caliban not only concedes but regrets his having been prevented: he claims he would have "peopled else / This isle with Calibans" (1.2.351–2). Although Caliban's actions and his attitude toward Miranda more nakedly express the value of a woman for a man's posterity, Caliban's motivation to rape Miranda stems from an aspiration he shares with Prospero and Alonso: he too wants heirs. Even after Caliban's own attempt to bring forth more Calibans is thwarted, he still recognizes Miranda's value to rulers. In his drunken effort to ingratiate himself to his new master, he offers Miranda to Stephano: "Ay, lord, she will become thy bed, I warrant / And bring thee forth brave brood" (3.2.104–5). To transport dynastic hopes, Miranda's vessel remains vital, if vulnerable.

Although Prospero finds Ferdinand to be a suitable suitor for his daughter, he nonetheless suspects that Ferdinand's appetite also might harm his chances for legitimate posterity. Prospero, determined that Miranda not be "too light" a "prize" for the king's son (1.2.452–3), thus enslaves Ferdinand: he threatens to "manacle" Ferdinand's "neck and feet together" and feed him a modest diet of "fresh-brook mussels,

[14] Gail Paster has described the Renaissance discourse that inscribes women as "leaky vessels" and has shown how the excessive production of fluids is linked to "excessive verbal fluency" (Paster 1993, 24–5). Paster argues that "[i]n both formations, the issue is women's bodily self-control or, more precisely, the representation of a particular kind of uncontrol as a function of gender" (25).

withered roots, and husks / Wherein the acorn cradled" (1.2.462–5).[15] Prospero's determination that Ferdinand not "break" Miranda's "virgin-knot before / All sanctimonious ceremonies may / With full and holy rite be ministered" (4.1.15–17) is motivated by his desire that his chance for a legitimate heir not perish. Indeed, he would prefer "barren hate" (4.1.19) between Ferdinand and Miranda to an illicit union that would produce illegitimate issue.

Trinculo's naming Caliban a fish stealthily transports onto Caliban the fear that strange, desirous suitors and pervious women will endanger legitimate Italian heirs. The linguistic network that connects leaky vessels to incontinent women and fish to desirous foreign men to whom Italian heirs might be lost allows Trinculo's name for Caliban as a fish to work metaphorically. But the linguistic network also allows the name that derives its sense metaphorically to seem as if it were literal: thus Caliban earns the erroneous reputation of being like a literal fish. The circulation of the word *fish* reveals that a name might be mistaken as literally signifying some truth about a stranger that instead metaphorically signifies a truth about the collectively imagined place that stranger occupies within the speech community.

The Tempest's staging of an Italian naming a newly discovered islander is of particular interest in the context of the play's long recognized references to England's New World encounters including John Florio's 1603 translation of Montaigne's essay "Of the Caniballes," Silvester Jourdain's 1610 pamphlet *A Discovery of the Barmvdas, Otherwise called the Ile of Divels*, and William Strachey's 1610 letter "A true reportory of the wracke."[16] In his influential essay on *The Tempest* in the context of

[15] David Sundelson comments that although Ferdinand assures Prospero that he will be honorable, "Ferdinand protests too much: his words suggest fantasies of rape and reveal a disturbing contradiction" (Sundelson 1980, 48). Ann Thompson similarly observes that the language in Ferdinand and Prospero's exchange about the marriage "seems to suggest that the minds of both men are dwelling in morbid detail on the possibilities of completing Caliban's attempted violation" (Thompson 1995, 172).

[16] Some of these references have been recognized for more than two centuries. Horace Furness notes in his 1892 variorum edition of *The Tempest* that in 1808 Edmond Malone published *Account of the Incidents from which The Title and Part of the Story of Shakespeare's Tempest were derived; and its True Date ascertained* including Sil. Jourdan's 1610 pamphlet, *A Discovery of the Bermudas* (Shakespeare 1964, 308–9).

European attitudes toward New World languages, Stephen Greenblatt describes how in the sixteenth century two contradictory European positions on "Indian language" coexisted, namely, that it was either "deficient or non-existent" or that "there was no serious language barrier" (Greenblatt 1990, 30). Greenblatt proposes that although these European conceptions of Indian language

> seem to be opposite extremes, both positions reflect a fundamental inability to sustain the simultaneous perception of likeness and difference, the very special perception we give to metaphor. Instead they either push the Indians toward utter difference—and thus silence—or toward utter likeness—and thus the collapse of their own, unique identity. Shakespeare, in *The Tempest*, experiments with an extreme version of this problem, placing Caliban at the outer limits of difference only to insist upon a mysterious measure of resemblance. It is as if he were testing our capacity to sustain metaphor. (31)

Greenblatt here implies that the key to a satisfactory approach to translating Indian languages into European languages would have been the same as the key to understanding metaphor, namely, the ability for "simultaneous perception of likeness and difference." Greenblatt further imagines Shakespeare's creation of Caliban as a test of his audience's capacity to "sustain" metaphor. For Greenblatt, it seems, Caliban embodies the challenge of translation because the character tests our ability to see that we both resemble and do not resemble Caliban. If we fail this test, Greenblatt implies, we would misperceive Caliban either as inhuman or as human in exactly the way we are. Perceiving and acknowledging Caliban requires the same skill as perceiving and acknowledging the "unique identity" of people from a newly encountered culture who speak their own language. Greenblatt thus links the understanding of metaphor, the translation of an Indian language, and the interpretation of Shakespeare's Caliban by their common demand for simultaneous acknowledgment of likeness and difference.

I likewise see the character of Caliban situated at the crux of questions of translation and metaphor in *The Tempest*, but I am arguing that Shakespeare discloses the potentially cryptic workings of translation by showing how the European characters' name for an encountered stranger can carry a network of metaphorical significances, how the metaphoric nature of those significances can be obscured even as they signify, and how a name whose authority derives from a metaphoric etymology can be mistaken as literal or factual. It is not so much, as Greenblatt suggests, that the character Caliban himself tests our

understanding of the processes of metaphor and translation but rather that the European naming of Caliban reveals the metaphoric nature of translation. Unlike Bottom who, as Peter Quince marvels, is "translated" corporeally into a man with the head of an ass (*MND* 3.1.113), Caliban is translated only in the Italians' minds, and language is the only magic used.

If "Caliban" is considered an anagram of "cannibal," the name "Caliban" itself calls attention to what can be lost and gained through the inevitable mutations that occur during translation—or even transcription—of languages with differences not only in vocabulary and syntax but also in the sounds that letters represent. The *OED* reports that *cannibal* derives from sixteenth-century Spanish *Canibales*, "originally one of the forms of the ethnic name *Carib* or *Caribes*, a fierce nation of the West Indies, who are recorded to have been *anthropophagi*, and from whom the name was subsequently extended as a descriptive term." The entry further notes that "*l*, *n*, *r* interchange dialectally in American languages, whence the variant forms *Caniba*, *Caribe*, *Galibi*." Even a transformation so slight as a reordering of letters may submerge some significances beneath the surface, significances that, though submerged in a word's etymology, have the potential to resurface. Readers of *The Tempest*, I would emphasize, have the opportunity to see themselves as simultaneously like and different from Trinculo whose naming Caliban a "fish" unconsciously transports more significance than intended, who realizes and corrects his error, but who cannot entirely unsay the name he realizes he has mistakenly uttered or untangle that name from its larger linguistic network.

When Trinculo calls Caliban a fish, he animates a larger system of beliefs: his speech is part of a discourse in Harry Berger's sense of discourses as "cultural ready-mades with their own logic and agency . . . taken up, deployed, and 'operated' by individual speakers" (Berger 1997, 338). Indeed, the role language plays in the politics of an island onto which a man arrives and becomes master of its already present inhabitants has prompted some scholars to assert that *The Tempest* not only reflects colonialist discourses but also facilitates, performs, or produces them.[17] But arguments about *The Tempest*'s part in British

[17] Paul Brown, for instance, charges that the play is "an intervention in an ambivalent and even contradictory discourse" that seeks "to mystify the political conditions which demand colonialist discourse" and that it is "fully implicated in the process of 'euphemisation,' the effacement of power" (Brown 1988, 131, 147); Francis Barker and Peter Hulme find Prospero's disavowal of Caliban's claim to the

and European colonialist discourses often fail to acknowledge that the fictional conversations that constitute *The Tempest* make visible how a traveler's language—even a seemingly nonsensical name—can acquire the authority to denigrate a native. The play's dramatizing the linguistic process by which Caliban becomes a strange fish does not "euphemis[e]" a discursive phenomena, as Paul Brown charges (Brown 1988, 147): it rather exposes it. The play does not efface but rather depicts how language can shape the order of a place where natives encounter travelers and where struggles over land and sovereignty ensue. Indeed, what *The Tempest* reveals about language and translation in a contact zone, to use Mary Louise Pratt's term,[18] illuminates how discourse can "mystify . . . political conditions," as Brown puts it (131).

In *The Tempest* a transported name keeps current a collective, unacknowledged fantasy about a discovered stranger, a fantasy that disavows the travelers' own desires and instead projects them onto the stranger. The play thereby reveals a metaphoric mechanism by which the pronouncement of a discoverer can be adopted and circulated as true and shows how an unacknowledged metaphoric name can disfigure and disempower a native in a contact zone. Furthermore, the play compels its attentive readers to consider that even as we may laugh at Trinculo's calling Caliban a "fish," we have no name by which to call him other than "Caliban," a name we are thus fated to reiterate even as we acknowledge that it carries some of the very same collective fantasies of the allegedly devouring islander as does "strange fish." This staging of translation and transport invites *The Tempest*'s audience to consider more clearly the European-New World encounters to which it very briefly alludes,[19] even

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island as "itself performative of the discourse of colonialism" (Barker and Hulme 1985, 204); and Ann Thompson discusses "the kind of colonialism idealized in *The Tempest*" (Thompson 1995, 177).

[18] Pratt explains that her term "'contact zone' is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (Pratt 1992, 7).

[19] Various scholars have pointed out the problems of reading *The Tempest*, despite its new-world allusions, as a play about seventeenth-century English or European colonialism. Meredith Anne Skura asserts that such "criticism not only flattens the text into the mold of colonialist discourse and eliminates what is characteristically 'Shakespearean' in order to foreground what is 'colonialist,' but it is also—paradoxically—in danger of taking the play further from the particular historical situation in England in 1611 even as it brings it closer to what we mean by 'colonialism' today" (Skura 1989, 47). David Kastan observes that "[t]he Italian courtiers have no interest in colonizing the island on which they find

if the play is set on an island in the Mediterranean Sea with language and plots borrowed from past and present, classical and new worlds.

Indeed, *The Tempest*'s literary and linguistic transports are extensive. Scholarly attention to the play's sources, structure, and poetic style has revealed *The Tempest* to be a play of allusions and translations, a play of repetitions and parallel plots.[20] W. H. Auden calls *The Tempest* a "mythopoetic work" (Auden 2000, 297), and Garber notes that "[t]he play is in effect a palimpsest, on which each succeeding system writes, in its own language, the same message" (Garber 1988, 53). Russ McDonald, in a study of the play's poetic style, describes how the repetition of dramatic poetry "is a fundamental stylistic turn in *The Tempest*" and one of its most notable features (McDonald 1998, 216). With its re-presentations of earlier literature, its internal repetition, and its metadramatic stagings of Prospero's storm and masques, *The Tempest* has long been recognized for its inquiry into the nature of art. The questions about how names and metaphors escape their speakers thus emerge in the context of larger questions about dramatic performance and representation.

As has been much noted, the nature of representational art is brought to our attention in the play's very first scene of a tempest that turns out to be itself a tempest staged by Prospero. We, like Miranda, are audience to the storm and shipwreck, though we cannot at first suspect, as does Miranda, that Prospero has "Put the wild waters in this roar" (1.2.2). Although Miranda demands that her father "allay" the waters if he has made them wild (1.2.2), she nonetheless perceives the storm to be real with dire consequences: she believes that the ship is "Dashed to pieces" and its "Poor souls . . . perished" (1.2.8–9).[21] Prospero must assure

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themselves" and that "[t]he Italians' journey was not to explore or settle a new world but was intended as a return home" (Kastan 1998, 95). He further argues that "[t]he play is much more obviously about European dynastic concerns than European colonial activities" (95).

[20] On *The Tempest*'s translations and reiterations of classical sources, see, for instance, Jonathan Bate's analysis of Ovid allusions and quotations in *The Tempest*, "From Myth to Drama" (Bate 1993, 215–70), and Donna Hamilton's *Virgil and* The Tempest*: The Politics of Imitation* (Hamilton 1990).

[21] Maynard Mack observes that while watching the tempest Miranda "clings to the assurance, as we do too when sitting at an exciting play, that this is only the work of a great magician . . . Yet she responds to what she sees with emotions

Miranda repeatedly that "There's no harm done," interrupting her to emphasize, "No harm!" (1.2.15). We too are subject to the illusory power of representation: we are compelled to experience being caught in the confusion of whether art that represents some reality has real and lingering consequences or if it is merely an illusion whose consequences will vanish with the illusion.

Anne Barton, in her discussion of the first scene's stage direction "*Enter* Mariners, *wet*" (1.1.49 sd), observes the paradoxical effects of the play's realistic stagecraft. Barton points out that "although the realistic presentation of the seamen seems to foreshadow the condition in which Ferdinand, Alonso and the other members of the court party must arrive on the island, in fact it does not" (Barton 1994, 201). If the mariners enter wet, *The Tempest*'s audience also is led to believe that it has witnessed the representation of a storm—not the representation of an artful storm that does not really have storm consequences. Although the audience sees the actors who play the mariners arrive on stage wet, it also hears Ariel report to Prospero that there is "On their sustaining garments not a blemish, / But fresher than before" (1.2.218–19). Gonzalo too is puzzled by the state of their clothes post-tempest: "our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Africa, at the marriage of the King's fair daughter Claribel" (2.1.70–2). But the freshness of the garments—an evidence that the artful tempest did not have the consequences of a natural tempest—is curiously qualified. A little later Gonzalo asks, "Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I wore it? *I mean, in a sort*" (2.1.103–4, emphasis mine). Antonio's punning response—"That sort was well fished for" (2.1.105)—not only suggests that he finds Gonzalo's theory strained and his observation doubtful, but it also evokes how they and their garments recently have been fished out of the sea. The shipwrecked Italians, like the play's audience, remain uncertain about the consequences of Prospero's artful storm.[22]

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whose reality she cannot doubt" (Mack 1962, 278). Mack observes that "[a]ll of Shakespeare's plays show him keenly aware of the processes of audience engagement, and in a few instances he seems actually to make the nature of those processes part of the subject matter of his scene" (278). Mack goes on to cite Miranda's watching the tempest as one such instance.

[22] David Norbrook observes that "[t]he magic island of Shakespeare's play is at once an instance and an allegory of the players' project of opening up new spaces for discourse. It is a place where no name, no discourse, is entirely natural; language and nature are neither simply conflated nor simply opposed to each other" (Norbrook 1999, 172–3).

In fact, Prospero himself seems unsure of the consequences of his art. He confidently tells Miranda:

> The direful spectacle of the wreck . . .
> I have with such provision in my art
> So safely ordered, that there is no soul—
> No, not so much perdition as an hair,
> Betid to any creature in the vessel
> Which thou heard'st cry, which thou sawst sink. (1.2.26–32)

Yet as soon as Miranda is asleep, Prospero asks Ariel, "But are they, Ariel, safe?" (1.2.217). What Prospero has assured Miranda—that there was "not so much perdition as an hair" (1.2.30)—is thus confirmed only when Ariel responds that "Not a hair perished" (1.2.217). Prospero cannot be certain of his art because he is not entirely certain of his command over the spirit Ariel, the vehicle of his representations.

If, as oft has been suggested, the master Prospero's directions for his servant Ariel are like a playwright's script for an actor, then Prospero's repeated questioning of Ariel underscores that a script never can guarantee a faithful performance. Like an actor from a playwright, Ariel must separate from his master to stage his commands: the master Prospero's "project" (5.1.1) is dependent upon Ariel's performance which is, at least in part, autonomous. Indeed, Prospero would not otherwise need to threaten Ariel with returning him to the imprisonment from which he released him in order to convince Ariel to do his bidding (1.2.277). The jester Trinculo loses control of his representation of Caliban as a fish, but the magus Prospero is not solely or surely in control of his representations either.

The echo of the word *cloven* in the play—used both in the sense of *to cleave to* and *to cleave from*—underscores this paradox. Prospero wields the threatening memory of how Sycorax had "Imprisoned" Ariel "Into a *cloven* pine" when Ariel had refused "To act her earthy and abhored commands" (1.2.273–8, emphasis mine). Prospero's "Once in a month" strident rehearsal of the debt Ariel owes for his release suggests that Prospero is worried that Ariel will cease to act his commands and separate from him permanently (1.2.262). Ariel assures his master, "Thy thoughts I *cleave to*" (4.1.165, emphasis mine), yet Ariel also must be cloven from Prospero in order to enact those thoughts. A metaphor's tenor is similarly dependent upon its vehicle which must operate at some distance from the tenor in order to be effectively transporting. Yet even as the vehicle is cloven from its tenor, it also must cleave to it for

the metaphor to signify. This need in any representation, including in any metaphor, for separation along with adherence, for freedom along with confinement—for cleaving from and cleaving to—is what provides the opportunity for a representation, including a name, to escape its speaker's intentions.

The tension between confinement and freedom is rehearsed again in the play's final scene and epilogue. After Prospero promises Alonso "calm seas, auspicious gales / And sail so expeditious that shall catch / Your royal fleet far off" (5.1.315–17), he tells Ariel, "That is thy charge. Then to the elements / Be free, and fare thou well" (5.1.318–19). In the epilogue, however, Ariel's task is reassigned to the play's audience, whom Prospero petitions:

> release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands.
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. (Epi. 9–13)

Although, as editor David Lindley notes, this speech is "[a]s an appeal for applause . . . entirely conventional" (Shakespeare 2002c, 80), it nonetheless calls attention to a Prospero who cannot, on his own, end the play he has set in motion. The task of transporting Prospero from the "bare island" (Epi. 8) so that he may travel back to Naples is conflated with releasing the actor who plays Prospero from the stage, the audience's breath conflated with the wind. The epilogue's Prospero admits, "Now, 'tis true / I must be here confined by you, / Or sent to Naples" (Epi. 3–5). The audience, confined in a theater, is, like Ariel, freed to become a vehicle for realizing Prospero's plots. At the play's end, the audience is free to release Prospero who, it turns out, has been confined by the audience to his role as the island's master. The release of the audience and the master of representations is necessarily mutual, perhaps simultaneous. And here we are reminded, with the allusion to the Lord's Prayer, of the mutuality needed to bring such a fiction to life—and the mutuality needed to be freed from it: "As you from crimes would pardoned be, / Let your indulgence set me free" (Epi. 19–20).

The Tempest, Shakespeare's last solo play, compels us to consider the transformative and sometimes unruly effects of the theater even as it compels us to consider the transformative and sometimes unruly nature of *translatio*—of translation and metaphor. Even as a magus-playwright's

rough magic can unleash a tempest, a jester's rough name for a stranger can unleash metaphoric forces difficult to allay. Metaphor, like drama itself, emerges as begotten of speaker and audience, tenor and vehicle, always potentially unchaste. Like dramatic art, metaphor transports meanings that may be powerfully transformative but hard to control, meanings from which, on occasion, we too would pardoned be.

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