Unchaste Signification

Metaphor and Shakespearean Drama

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment
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Abstract

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Maria Fahey

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Taking its name from Henry Peacham's 1593 caution that "there be no uncleane or unchast signification contained in the Metaphore," "Unchaste Signification" explores rhetoricians' efforts to regulate the intercourse between what Peacham calls a word's "proper signification" and its "signification not proper, but yet nigh and like." The attempts, integral to classical and Elizabethan philosophies of metaphor, to control metaphorical discourse by prohibiting unchaste signification belie the fruitful and potentially unruly nature of metaphorical utterances, a nature vividly revealed in Shakespeare's plays.

"Unchaste Signification" surveys how philosophers from Aristotle to Paul Ricoeur discuss the tension inherent in metaphor between the need for difference, distance, and interchange and the need for likeness, proximity, and containment. Metaphor's dual nature, the very source of its fecundity, also is the

source of the anxiety it provokes. Just as a 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 semantic domain, escape notice, and usurp proper meaning. But, as Aristotle describes, metaphors are most powerful when they beget new, adulterous meanings while escaping detection—when an "alien term" is transported without an auditor's full awareness. Shakespeare's plays reveal that a metaphor's power is closely linked to the possibility that during metaphorical transport the alien name might escape and become, as it were, a resident alien in a speech community.

Because in drama a fictional speech community's discourse is scripted by a playwright but not, unlike lyric or epyllion, managed by a narrator, "Unchaste Signification" focuses on the unruly fecundity of metaphor in Shakespeare's plays. Close analysis of *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *King Henry IV Part 1*, and *Hamlet* provides the opportunity to understand various aspects of metaphoric performance, including the sacrificial nature of metaphor, the special power metaphors have to import discourses into speech communities, the carnivalesque qualities of metaphor, and the ghostly power dead metaphor has to haunt living speech.

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Aristotle and Augustine speak of the pleasure of metaphor, a pleasure they recognize is linked intimately to learning. This pleasure, and this learning, multiplies when metaphors are shared in the classroom. It was my students' delighted 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, especially the sabbatical grant and leave of absence, without which I would not have been able to complete this study.

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It makes a difference whether the dawn is called "rosy-fingered" or "purple-fingered."
(Aristotle *On Rhetoric* 3.2.13)

1. Unchaste Signification

> Briefly, a metaphor is an affair between a predicate with a past and an object that yields while protesting.
> (Nelson Goodman *Language of Art* 69)

> But 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 *Aesthetics* 408)

Metaphor's power to move meanings, and in turn audiences, has long been observed, and Shakespeare's power to move audiences has long been associated with his metaphors. Starting with Aristotle rhetoricians have included notions of movement and also of alienation in their explanations of metaphor. Aristotle describes metaphor as "the movement [*epiphora*] of an alien [*allotrios*] name from genus to species or from species to genus or from species to species

or by analogy" (trans. Kennedy 295).[1] In the Elizabethan era George Puttenham builds on this definition, naming metaphor "the figure of transport"[2] and 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 conveniencie with it" (Puttenham 1589, 148-149).

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 provoked great admiration along with some uneasiness. Indeed, for as long as scholars of poetics and rhetoric have defined and praised metaphor,[3] they have cautioned against its misuse. Aristotle asserts that metaphors are "inappropriate if far-fetched" (trans. Kennedy 1991, 228). The pseudo-Ciceronian *Ad Herennium* cautions that "a metaphor ought to be

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

[2] "Transport" is the English translation of the Greek: *meta* (trans- or across) and *phor* (port or carry).

[3] Metaphor's praises are sung by numerous early modern English rhetoricians: Richard Sherry says that "amonge all vertues of speche, [metaphor] is the chyefe. None perswadeth more efferteouslye, none sheweth the thynge before oure eyes more euidently, none moueth more mightily the affections, non maketh the oracion more goodlye, pleasaunt, nor copious" (Sherry 1550/1961, 40); Thomas Wilson notes that "[a]n oration is wonderfully enriched when apt metaphors are got and applied to the matter. Neither can anyone persuade effectuously and win men by weight of his oration without the help of words altered and translated" (Wilson 1560/1994, 198); and Abraham Fraunce claims that "[t]here is no trope more florishing than a Metaphore" (Fraunce 1588, A3v).

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" (trans. Caplan 1981, 345). Following Aristotle, Henry Peacham advises that "the similitude be not farre fetcht"; he also insists "that there be no uncleane or unchast signification contained in the Metaphore, which may offend against modest and reverend minds" (Peacham 1593, 14). In each case the worry emerges that metaphor might allow meaning to become displaced, distorted, even offensive—as if meaning could get loose. 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 "unchaste signification" is likely a concern about obscene speech,[4] 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 1593, 3). The attempts, 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.

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[4] *The Oxford English Dictionary* lists as the definition of *unchaste*: "Not chaste; lacking chastity; impure, lascivious."

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. Concern about unchaste metaphor is propelled by the specter of a world in which linguistic order and thus meaning is lost; concern about unchaste marriage is propelled by the specter of a world in which social order and thus identity is lost. In a patriarchal world unchaste coupling can cause sons to acquire false names: if the progeny of adultery, a son can 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. In other words, 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.

The suspicion that lack of chastity and loss of familial distinctions can cause the loss of linguistic and social distinctions surfaces in Leontes's vehement response 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. (*The Winter's Tale* 2.1.82-87)

Leontes replaces "my lady" with "thou thing" and connects demeaning the name "lady" to obliterating the distinction between prince and beggar. Leontes attempts to defend himself from his allegedly adulterous wife by not calling her by a name, and he imagines in so refusing that he defends social distinctions at large. It is as if Leontes imagines by not calling Hermione a "creature of [her] place" that he can stop adultery, which destroys family order, from also destroying linguistic and social order.

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 who they are. And 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.

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" (*Rhetoric* 3.2.12), and Quintilian notes that metaphor allows us to succee[d] in accomplishing the supremely difficult task of providing a name for everything" (Quintilian VIII.vi). George Puttenham lists "necessitie or want of a better word" as one of the "causes" of metaphor (Puttenham 1589, 149). Transporting meanings across distances and differences gives birth to new senses of words, new senses that live on: as Thomas Wilson observes, "as necessity hath forced us to borrow words translated, so hath time and practice made them seem most pleasant, and therefore they are much the rather used" (Wilson 1560/1994, 196).

Although the conception and naming of new people and things promises belonging, familiarity, and likeness—of children to their parents and words to their objects—such conception and naming also requires difference and mingling. I. A. Richards, who calls metaphor "the omnipresent principle of language" (Richards 1936, 92), says that metaphor is "fundamentally . . . a borrowing between and *intercourse* of thoughts, a transaction between contexts" (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). Quintilian notes that metaphor "adds copiousness of language by the *interchange* of words" (VIII.vi, emphasis mine).

The fecundity of metaphorical discourse, more plainly observed in the twentieth century,[5] provokes both classical and Elizabethan cautions about the trope. If the difference, to use I. A. Richards' distinction, between a metaphor's tenor and its vehicle[6] 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 applies to this worry about metaphor: "They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton" (*Twelfth Night* 3.1.14-15).[7]

Quintilian turns to an agricultural analogy to illustrate how ornament

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[5] Indeed, metaphor has oft been described, metaphorically, in terms of fecundity and pregnancy. José Ortega y Gasset calls metaphor "one of man's most fruitful potentialities" (1968), William Empson relates it to pregnancy (1979, 341), and Umberto Eco calls it the "most necessary and pregnant of all tropes" (quoted in Melchiori 1988, 73).

[6] Despite the important criticism of the terms *tenor* and *vehicle* by metaphor theorists including Christine Brooke-Rose (1965), I am using I. A. Richards' terms because they afford clarity of reference. Richards explains the terms: "I am calling [the tenor] the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means" (1936, 97).

[7] Madhavi Menon adapts this line for the title for her recent 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, whose aim it is to define *linguistic* effects, end up also describing *sexual* effects that offer surprising insight into the nature and concept of early modern desire. Such an insight forces us to both move back 'our' boundaries of sexuality, and move forward 'their' ideas of language. Above all, it compels us to modify the way in which we now speak of the history of sexuality. (Menon 2004, 4)

should be used in the service of chaste fruitfulness. He warns that ornament must be "bold, manly, 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 the following 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. (215-217)

In the Elizabethan age metaphor's fruitfulness is carefully cultivated and contained within Peacham's *Garden of Eloquence* (1577) and plucked as the finest flower for Puttenham's *Arte of Poesie* (1589).

Yet twentieth-century critics and philosophers ranging from I. A. Richards (1936) to Paul Ricoeur (1977) to Mark Johnson (1981) charge that the discipline of rhetoric dwindled because of its containment in such handbooks where the power of figures of speech fades as tropes are pressed into mere catalogs of

ornaments. But I. A. 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, however, overlooks that in rhetoric books metaphor is not presented only as exquisite.

Indeed, classical and Elizabethan rhetoricians simultaneously describe metaphor as 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" (303);[8] and George Puttenham asserts that "of any other [figure] being choisly made" metaphor is "the most commendable and most common" (250). 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

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[8] Quintilian continues: "It is not merely so natural a turn of speech that it is often employed unconsciously or by uneducated persons, but it is 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" (303).

Renaissance descriptions of metaphor as the mechanism for producing new names, for facilitating speech about new issues.

Just how powerful an effect a metaphor can have on speech and thought is at the crux of discussions about whether metaphor occurs at the level of the word, the sentence, or of discourse at large. Mark Johnson asserts that Richards' theory is ground-breaking because it departs from Aristotle's "focus on single words" (Johnson 1981, 6) and instead describes how metaphor "is not a matter of language alone, nor . . . a trope at the level of individual words" (18). Similarly, Paul 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" (Ricoeur 1979, 45).

Richards, Johnson, and Ricoeur criticize Aristotle's theory of metaphor because they take it to imply that because metaphor is an act of substitution it is contained at the place of the word. Ricoeur asserts, furthermore, that "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" (20). However, rhetoric handbooks reveal a more complicated attitude toward metaphor: classical and Elizabethan rhetoricians do not advance the notion that a metaphor's substituting for another word implies that the metaphor doesn't transform the substance of the utterance. Furthermore, Shakespeare's plays suggest that a metaphoric substitution of one word for another is not so easily reversible as Ricoeur imagines.

To some extent Elizabethan English rhetoric books bear out Ricoeur's claim that rhetoric handbooks present metaphor as operating on individual words. In *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1560) Thomas Wilson divides his classification of figures into "Tropes of a Word," among which he includes metaphor, and "Tropes of a Long Continued Speech or Sentence," among which he includes allegory (Wilson 1560/1994, 197-198). Henry Peacham in *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577, 1593), George Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), and Angel Day in *The English Secretary* (1599) all draw the same distinction. Presenting how a metaphor can be extended through and affect a longer speech as a specialized function of metaphor implies that a single-word trope does not inevitably transform a sentence.

Although obscured by the categorical distinction between tropes "of a word" and tropes of a "continued speech or sentence," the notion that even single-word tropes transform sentences and thoughts—not just words—is nonetheless present in Elizabethan rhetoric books. George Puttenham classifies metaphor among "Sensable" figures that "alter and affect the minde by alteration of sense, and first in single wordes" (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 Henry Peacham portrays metaphors as something more than single-word ornaments when he asserts that they "give pleasant light to darke things, thereby removing unprofitable and odious obscurite"; "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 1593, 13). Such a "firme impression" wouldn't be so easily smoothed over.

In the title to the 1577 edition of his handbook, 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" (Peacham 1577), and in the title to the 1593 edition, Peacham announces that he gathers his

"varietie of fit examples . . . chieflie out of the holie Scriptures" (Peacham 1593).[9] The potential 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 use of Similes, we may easily gather, for that the holy Ghost hath so often used them, both in the old and new Testament" (Cawdray 1600, A2v). Cawrday's volume, 860 pages of cataloged and explicated similes, is evidence of an effort to contain these figures but hardly suggests that they are merely ornamental.

Twentieth-century accounts of the fate of metaphor in rhetoric handbooks seem not to be sufficiently 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

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[9] 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 life" (72). Augustine's instruction about 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).

challenged the recent critique 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).[10]

Twentieth-century theories of metaphor, especially those of I. A. Richards (1936), Max Black (1962), and Paul Ricoeur (1979), certainly 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 strange to Aristotle. Nor would it be to Quintilian, who says explicitly that the changes caused by

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[10] 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" (237).

tropes, especially metaphor, "concern not merely individual words, but also our thoughts and the structure of our sentences" (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" (21).

Compared to his classical and Renaissance philosopher ancestors, Paul Ricoeur more fully describes—and embraces—the tension that inevitably accompanies metaphor's power to create what he calls "new semantic pertinences" (7). Ricoeur 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" (7). 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

illuminate a tension in 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. His *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* reveal metaphor's power to transport alien terms without an auditor's full awareness. Aristotle's theories of metaphor are not only seminal to all others that follow it but also to my theory 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 turn, then, to the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*.

Metaphor's status as both alien and native is apparent from the placement of its definition in the *Poetics*. The definition of metaphor follows the classification of qualities of names, among which Aristotle includes "standard, exotic, a metaphor, an ornament, made-up, lengthened, reduced, or altered" (trans. Janko 28). Metaphor is nestled among ways that poets can replace a

standard [*kyrion*] name with another name not standard.[11]

The first three items on Aristotle's list of kinds of nouns—standard, exotic, metaphor—progress from ordinary words spoken by natives (standard) to ordinary words spoken by foreigners (exotic) to nonstandard words spoken by natives (metaphor). Thus, the progression moves from local, ordinary words (standard) to words transported from another geographic domain (exotic) to words transported from another semantic domain (metaphor). Whereas an exotic name has been transported from where it is standard to a place where it is alien, a metaphor has been transported within the same geographical place. Metaphor is alien in its use, yet it is nonetheless familiar.

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. Attempts to balance the advantages of the clarity of the familiar with the appeal of the strange are readily apparent. In the *Poetics* Aristotle asserts that the "virtue of diction is to be clear

[11] 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 "[c]onsequently it is obvious that it is possible for the same [name] to be both exotic and standard, but not for the same people" (trans. Janko 28).

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" (30). In order to obtain diction that is not commonplace, one must risk the potential obscurity of using "unfamiliar names," among which Aristotle includes exotic names and metaphor.[12]

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" (30). Thus, metaphor can make diction strange but potentially comprehensible because it gives the listener, who has access to the standard names of his

---

[12] In Quintilian's rhetoric, built on Aristotle's and Cicero's, the double identity of metaphor remains. Quintilian regards "clearness as the first essential of a good style: there must be propriety in our words, their order must be straightforward, the conclusion of the period must not be long postponed, there must be nothing lacking and nothing superfluous" (209). Such clear language "will be approved by the learned and clear to the uneducated" (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). While lucidity is essential, it is not enough: "rhetorical ornament contributes not a little to the furtherance of our case as well" (213). Quintilian connects ornament to an audience's pleasure which leads, he asserts, to their readiness to believe and be transported by what they hear: "For when our audience find it a pleasure to listen, their attention and their readiness to believe what they hear are both alike increased, while they are generally filled with delight, and sometimes even transported by admiration" (213).

language, the chance to solve its riddle.

In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle again emphasizes both the value of the clarity gained from use of standard, local words and the appeal of the unfamiliar and strange. He suggests, paradoxically, that if the unfamiliar quality of a strange word or metaphor escapes notice, then the meaning can be clear. In one of his earliest remarks in Book 3 about *lexis* or style, Aristotle charges, "let the virtue of style [*lexeös aretë*] be defined as 'to be clear' (speech is a kind of sign, so if it does not make clear it will not perform its function)—and neither flat nor above the dignity of the subject, but appropriate [*prepon*]" (Kennedy 221). Although Aristotle finds poetic style "hardly flat" (221), he determines that it is not appropriate for prose.[13] But the line between what is appropriate for poetry and for prose becomes blurred as Aristotle emphasizes the appeal of the poetic—and of the unfamiliar. And eventually two seemingly contradictory qualities are attributed to metaphor: on the one hand, metaphor elevates speech by altering names, and, on the other hand, metaphor is something all people use to "carry on their conversations" (223). Metaphor's double identity as exotic and familiar is key to understanding the development of rhetoricians' mixed and sometimes

[13] Kennedy notes that although he translates Aristotle's "in bare words" as "prose," Aristotle has no technical term for "prose" (Kennedy page 222, n. 18).

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

After asserting that the poetic style is not appropriate for speech, Aristotle observes that "To deviate [from prevailing usage] makes language seem more elevated; for people feel the same in regard to *lexis* as they do in regard to strangers compared with citizens. As a result, one should make the language unfamiliar, for people are admirers of what is far off, and what is marvelous is sweet" (221).[14] Having reminded us of the appeal of the unfamiliar, Aristotle associates with poetry making language unfamiliar with "what is far off." Curiously, however, the example he employs to illustrate the appropriateness of such unfamiliar language to verse, where "what is said about subjects and characters is more out of the ordinary" (221), instead explains what is inappropriate "even in poetry," namely, for a slave to use fine language or a young man to speak as if he were older (222). Aristotle shifts his discussion of the appeal of the strange to the need for language to reflect social order: fictional people need to speak in a manner suited to their social roles and rank—young or old, slave or citizen. This shift from the nature of appealing, elevating speech

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

that deviates from prevailing usage to the nature of appropriate speech that reflects expected social order exemplifies the tension between difference and likeness inherent in metaphor.

Aristotle's resolution of this tension illuminates metaphor's tendency to operate undercover. Immediately following his expression of the need for speech to match the social status of the speaker, 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). (222)

Matching the style of speech to the status of the speaker 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 doesn't so much advise against adulterous speech as he advises not to be caught: thus "authors should compose *without being noticed* and should *seem* to speak not artificially but naturally" (222 emphasis mine).

Although this discussion is in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle turns to the theater to illustrate his point:

> 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)

"Natural" as Aristotle uses it here is exemplified by the skill of an actor who when performing a character can seem like the character himself. And this undetectable ventriloquism is, in turn, linked to composing with ordinary language. Naturalness is judged by the fullness of the transformation of the actor's voice, in this case Theodorus's, into the voice of the character. "Natural" speech occurs when artifice is so well done it does not seem like artifice. When this occurs, the theft goes unnoticed; the audience doesn't resent the plotting against them, though such plotting has occurred; and the thief is not apprehended.[15] Aristotle's precept that what is strange is more appropriate for

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[15] Longinus makes the point even more explicitly about the kind of plotting required for effective use of figures:

> the 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 a 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; he sees in the fallacious reasoning a personal insult; sometimes he may altogether give way to savage exasperation, but even if he controls his anger he remains impervious to persuasion.
>
> That is why the best use of a figure is when the very fact that it is a

poetry than prose trails off into this discussion of actors who can speak and writers who can write in someone else's voice without detection. Effective metaphor, which can make speech appealingly strange, operates under cover. Because what is strange seems natural and thus is taken as native, the alien term of a metaphor can influence powerfully the domain into which it is transported. Shakespeare's plays reveal how metaphors that circulate in a speech community without full awareness of the speakers and auditors are capable of such influence.

Aristotle next recommends that "one should use glosses and double words and coinages rarely" (222) because "the usage departs from the appropriate in the direction of excess" (222). However, metaphors, along with "a word in its prevailing and native meaning," are, according to Aristotle, alone useful in the *lexis* of prose" (222-223). Whereas in the *Poetics* metaphor is singled out as the use of names which "alone cannot be acquired from someone else"

> figure goes unnoticed. Now greatness and passion 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. (Grube 29)

Later, Longinus reveals that to escape such suspicion, metaphors should be employed when the hearer already is transported by the speaker: "The right time for metaphors is where passion sweeps on like a torrent, carries a large number of them along, and makes them appear necessary . . . the hearer who shares the inspiration of the speaker is not given time to examine the number of metaphors" (Grube 42).

(32), a kind of diction that "is an indication of genius" (32), in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle justifies his assertion that metaphor is one of two types of words useful in prose because "these are the only kinds of words everybody uses; for all people carry on their conversations with metaphors and words in their native and prevailing meanings" (223). Aristotle concludes, paradoxically: "Thus, it is clear that if one composes well, there will be an unfamiliar quality and it escapes notice and will be clear" (223).

Metaphor, which begins in the *Rhetoric* as one of the kinds of words that can obscure clarity, emerges as one of the kinds of words that can effect clarity, a clarity through which an unfamiliar quality is nonetheless sensed. Furthermore, metaphor now is allied—almost identified—with standard terms: words in their prevailing meaning and metaphor are "alone useful in the *lexis* of prose" (222-223). Aristotle then asserts that "[m]etaphor especially has clarity and sweetness and strangeness, and its use cannot be learned from someone else" (223). How can we makes sense of Aristotle's grouping of metaphors with "words in their native and prevailing meanings" and observing that they are kinds of words "everybody uses" 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 of appropriateness: "One should speak both epithets and metaphors that are appropriate, and this will be from an analogy" (223). And Aristotle employs 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]" (223). Aristotle's analogy between a metaphor and a cloak is instructive: cloaks both identify and cover, and they go unnoticed if they don't obviously disrupt the social and symbolic order. After giving an example of a metaphor inappropriate because too elevated for its subject, Aristotle observes: "there is no 'theft' [if the metaphor is too flagrant]" (224). Once again, undetected theft is the goal.

Aristotle imagines different words having different qualities, not as entirely exchangeable signifiers. He rejects Bryson's[16] assertion as false that "nothing is in itself ugly, since it signifies the same thing if one word is used rather than another" (225). Aristotle counters that "one word is more proper than another and more like the object signified and more adapted to making the thing appear 'before the eyes.' Moreover, one word does not signify in the same way as another" (225). Aristotle concludes that "It makes a difference whether

[16] Kennedy notes that Bryson was a "Sophist and mathematician, contemporary with Aristotle" (225).

the dawn is called "rosy-fingered" or "purple-fingered" (225).[17]

Aristotle regulates such difference in the next chapter of the *Rhetoric* where he turns his attentions to faults that make language "frigid." Among the four "frigidities" he includes metaphors that are inappropriate because "laughable," "too lofty and tragic," or "far-fetched" (228). But in the midst of examples of frigid and "unpersuasive" (228) uses of words, Aristotle includes an example of a metaphor he judges to be particularly successful. After criticizing one of Gorgias's metaphors as far-fetched, Aristotle notes:

> Yet 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 rebuked the bird well by calling it what it once had been rather than what it is now. (228)

Curiously enough, Gorgias's bird-shit rhetoric reveals the transformative power

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[17] This statement resists Ricoeur's assertion that Aristotle's theory of metaphor implies 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). In addition, the theory of metaphor as a movement of names—or even as substitution—does not imply that there is no information conveyed or that the absent term could be reintroduced without any change in meaning. Ricoeur has not considered well enough Aristotle's thinking about metaphor in terms of how it affects the listener.

of what Aristotle considers to be exemplary metaphor. While Gorgias's 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.[18] This metaphor, singled out by Aristotle for special praise, uncannily resolves the tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar inherent in metaphor. By turning the bird into the mythic Philomela who was herself a woman turned into a bird, the metaphor performs as much an act of repatriation as alienation: the bird is returned, as it were, to its original form as a woman.

In the discussion of urbanities that follows,[19] Aristotle highlights another of metaphor's transformative powers, namely to cause learning. Aristotle reviews the basic principle that "To learn easily is naturally pleasant to all people, and words signify something, so whatever words create knowledge in us are the pleasantest" (245). Metaphor is nestled between "glosses" which are

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

[19] As Kennedy points out, the word *asteia*, translated as *urbanities*, derives from *astu* or town. Kennedy notes that "In contrast to the country, towns cultivate a certain elegance and grace; thus, *asteia*, "things of the town," came to mean elegance of speech, wit, good taste" (244). While not explicitly stated by Aristotle or Kennedy, it seems that towns and cities would cultivate such elegance because people from different areas gather in them and exchange ideas and knowledge. Isn't one more likely to learn something new in a town than in the country because one might have more experiences that would be out of the ordinary?

"unintelligible" and the words we already know "in their prevailing meaning [*kyria*]" (244). But metaphor "most brings about learning" (244).[20] Turning to poetry, Aristotle explains that when Homer calls "old age 'stubble,' he creates understanding and knowledge through the genus, since both old age and stubble are [species of the genus of] things that have lost their bloom" (244). 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" (244-245).

Although Aristotle's theory of metaphor may, as Paul Ricoeur emphasizes, focus on the word, it is nonetheless a theory of metaphor as a form of predication: metaphor says that this is that. And because, as Aristotle emphasizes, the hearer of a metaphor must seek to understand the thisness of that, the impact of such predication extends beyond the speaker. As Ted Cohen points out, 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 to

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[20] 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).

make, or complete, the meaning of a metaphor complicates the agency of metaphoric utterances and contributes to the ways in which metaphoric utterances can develop agency of their own in the speech communities portrayed in Shakespeare's plays.

Metaphor derives its peculiar potency from its ability to move a listener to ponder obscure words which, after pondering, become clear.[21] Aristotle further stresses this moving quality of metaphor by grouping metaphor by analogy with *pro ommatön poiein* ("bringing-before-the-eyes") and *energeia* ("representing inanimate things as animate"), all of which have the power to make speech urbane. Aristotle reiterates his just-right theory of metaphoric distance: "As was said earlier, metaphors should be transferred from things that are related but not obviously so" and comments that "it is characteristic of a well-directed mind to

[21] Although in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle first hails clarity as a virtue of style, he eventually balances this virtue with the power of provoking a listener to ponder words not immediately clear. In his discussion of urbane expressions, he articulates a just-right theory of strangeness: an expression will be urbane if it contains a metaphor which is neither "strange (for that would be difficult to perceive) nor superficial (for that causes nothing to be experienced)" (trans. Kennedy 245). Superficial words, Aristotle specifies, are those that "are altogether clear and which there is no need to ponder" (245). Quintilian too echoes the importance of vividness. He describes the ornate as "something that goes beyond what is merely lucid and acceptable" and adds that "vivid illustration, or as some prefer to call it representation, is something more than mere clearness, since the latter merely lets itself be seen, whereas the former thrusts itself upon our notice" (245). Oratory fails, Quintilian warns, if the facts on which a judge has to give a decision "are being narrated to him, and not displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind" (245). While narration relates facts, "word-pictures" (247) move hearers. And moving hearers through vividness is so important that "we shall secure the vividness we seek, if only our descriptions give the impression of truth, nay, we may even add fictitious incidents of the type which commonly occur" (249).

observe the likeness even in things very different" (250). Traversing the distance to understand the proximity and the difference to see the likeness facilitates learning and makes speech urbane: "Urbanities in most cases come through metaphor and from an added surprise; for 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'" (250). In this way metaphor has an especially condensed power to change someone's mind, to have someone conceive a new idea.

The pleasurable conception provoked by metaphor which Aristotle explicitly compares to philosophy (250) also 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" (trans. Janko 4). People learn as they observe, and they "infer what each thing is, e.g. that this person [represents] that one" (4). Indeed, in the note on *mimësis* in his translation of the *Poetics*, Richard Janko draws a connection between mimesis and metaphor: he asserts that the "emotional effect" of mimesis "depends on our recognition that the representation *is* a representation of action; . . . similarly words themselves are representations of things, and

metaphor is a word which represents another" (220).

Like his theory of metaphor and effective speech, Aristotle's theory of mimesis and effective tragedy emphasizes the importance of words that beget images. As has often been noted, Aristotle names plot, the "origin and as it were the soul of tragedy" (9), as the most important element of tragedy. But Aristotle's subordination of performance and spectacle to plot is no stance against image: it is rather the assertion that the plot—the language—ought to be sufficiently image-producing on its own. Indeed, Aristotle defends tragedy against the charge that epic is superior by asserting that "tragedy can produce its own [effect] even without movement, as epic does" and that tragedy "has vividness in reading as well as in performance" (41).[22]

The listener who compares the plot to life itself is delighted by learning, just as the viewer who compares the image of a creature to some actual creature. Both "delight in seeing images, because it comes about that they learn as they observe, and infer what each thing is, e.g. that this person [represents] that one"

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[22] Aristotle's analogy between tragedy and painting is instructive here: "if someone daubed [a surface] with the finest pigments indiscriminately, he would not give the same enjoyment as if he had sketched an image in black and white" (9). In this analogy, Aristotle figures the plot as figurative. The plot—the words themselves—should be able to bring the action before the eyes of the audience whether or not there is anything other than the words: "the plot should be constructed in such a way that, even without seeing it, someone who hears about the incident will shudder and feel pity at the outcome, as someone may feel upon hearing the plot of the *Oedipus*" (trans. Janko 17).

(trans. Janko 4). Aristotle's valuing plot over spectacle gives agency and responsibility to audience or spectators: they must actively compare representation to object in order to learn, which is the most pleasurable and valuable experience. And comparative activity demands that the listener traverse distance between things seemingly unlike to discover how they are alike. Ultimately, "alien names" are transported by listeners.

Although listeners might make the final transport, the first transport, according to Aristotle, should occur during composition when the poet transports himself by 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]" (22). The genius of the poet who is able to transport imagined events before his eyes by "step[ping] outside of himself" (22) provides another link to the genius associated with metaphor. Aristotle observes that 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; but native talent is associated with the ability to step outside of oneself. Thus, metaphor occupies an uncanny space of native and distant, revelatory and obscure, uncommon and common.

In such territory metaphor can operate as a double agent, at once familiar and strange, that begets meanings and conceives ideas. Metaphor's dual nature, the very source of its great productiveness, also is the source of the anxiety it provokes. 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. Still, as the reluctant Benedick points out, the world must be peopled. So too must it be spoken about.

Metaphor's covert qualities take center stage in Nietzsche's now famous commentary on metaphor in "On Truth and Falsehood in the Extramoral Sense." Whereas Aristotle relates metaphor's illuminating power to its ability to escape detection, Nietzsche worries that human beings delude themselves when they forget the nature of metaphors. 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, trans. Mügge 94). Truth, however, is

> A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, 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 highly 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. However, whereas Nietzsche asserts that such worn-out metaphors are "powerless to affect the senses," 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 worn metaphors may 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 (mis)shape perceptions of reality—to disfigure reality. Nietzsche's observations about the preconceived quality of such metaphors are useful here: when speakers circulate 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 facilitate devastating acts.

Even as Nietzsche charges that ignorantly accepted truths are vestiges of forgotten metaphors—vehicles that have escaped their tenors—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 some reality—even a reality about 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 reality.

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, 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).

But the circulation of metaphors in Shakespeare's plays is more communal in nature than Austin's theory allows. Thus, cultural anthropologists' observations of how metaphors function in rituals are helpful even for thinking about everyday conversations as they are represented in Shakespeare's plays. James Fernandez, in a discussion of Bwiti ritual performance, 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" (102). Fernandez's colleague 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 (Crocker 1977, 50).[23]

Paul 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 7). Ricoeur notes 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 like.' If this is really so, we are allowed to speak of

[23] In their book *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson propose 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).

> metaphorical truth, but in an equally 'tensive' sense of the word 'truth.' (7)

By locating metaphor at the copula, Ricoeur links metaphor not only to predication but also, metaphorically speaking, to procreation. Once again, a link emerges between notions of linguistic and family lines that might signify in an unchaste manner.

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 Judith Anderson has shown, conservative and reformation theologians alike pondered the signification of the words of the 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 Judith Anderson (2005) all have emphasized that because most Protestant reformers were not satisfied with Zwingli and 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 (quoted in Kronenfeld 1998, 44)—and sacramental signs which are conjoined to the truth they represent. Even as reformers rejected a corporeal real presence, they affirmed a spiritual real

presence (Kronenfeld 1998, 45).

The articulation of this *via media* is crucially linked to the status of metaphor. Judith Anderson demonstrates that in his *An Answer unto a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation Devised by Stephen Gardiner*, Cranmer's challenge "was effectively to convey a metaphorical conception of presence" (4). Shakespeare's metaphors suggest that a metaphoric *is* may be both copulative and substantive and that understanding the *is* of "This is my body" as a metaphorical presence would hardly reduce the power of the sacrament.

In their efforts to articulate a spiritual real presence, Protestant reformers distinguished sacramental signs from those signs which were merely artistic. Calvin, for example, asserted: "For Christ is neither a painter, nor an actor, nor a kind of Archimedes who presents an empty image to amuse the eye; but he truly and in reality performs what by external symbol he promises" (quoted in Kronenfeld 1998, 46). Shakespeare's plays, however, suggest that a speaker always risks the possibility that what she or he promises by metaphor subsequently will be performed in reality.

I have chosen to investigate the unruly fecundity of metaphor in Shakespearean drama where a fictional speech community's discourse is scripted by a playwright but not, unlike lyric or epyllion, managed by a narrator. I shall

look closely at *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *King Henry IV Part 1*, and *Hamlet* because of the opportunities these plays afford to understand various aspects of metaphoric performance. In "Martyred Signs" I argue that Aaron's uttering of the metaphor of Lavinia-as-Philomel begins the performance of her rape and mutilation. Using Rene Girard's theory of the *sacrificial crisis*, I compare the substitutive nature of metaphors to the substitutive nature of sacrifices, both of which veer out of the control of their performers. In "Haggard Desdemona" I show that Desdemona's metaphoric language transports falconry discourses into the play-world and initiates the circulation of the anxiety that a haggard-wife is likely to take control of her unrewarding, incompetent falconer-husband. Further developing Patricia's Parker theory of links between plays and larger discursive networks, I suggest that metaphor is an especially potent means by which such networks are linked. In "Base Comparisons" I argue that *1 Henry IV* shows how the carnivalesque figuring of royalty can bring the lofty qualities of royalty down to earth but also can function to reify royalty. In "Ears of Flesh and Blood" I argue that the metaphoric truth that the ear of the state of Denmark has been poisoned slips into a literal lie that the ear of the King of Denmark has been poisoned. After reviewing the debates over the status of *dead metaphor*, I explore metaphor's potentially ghostly nature.

Nietzsche sees "the impulse toward the formation of metaphors" as a "fundamental impulse of man" (97). It is through the "hardening and stiffening" of the "primitive world of metaphors," he says, that man "forgets himself as subject, as what is more, as an *artistically creating* subject" (94). Such forgetting of oneself as subject of what one utters allows the unexpected distribution of "complicities" in "ethical discourses" which Harry Berger discovers in Shakespeare's plays (Berger 1997). 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 claims 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" (97). Instead, Nietzsche asserts, metaphor seeks and finds a new realm in myth and art (97) where lively metaphor thrives.[24] Like Nietzsche, Paul Ricoeur emphasizes this liveliness of metaphor.[25] In his discussion of Aristotle's concept of *mimesis*, Ricoeur observes: "'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). Shakespeare's plays compel us to witness the human conditions under which metaphors can harden into dangerous truths even as it moves our lively understanding of this process.

[24] 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).

[25] Indeed, the French title of Ricoeur's study of metaphor is *La Métaphore Vive*.

2. 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*)

Fie, fie, how franticly I square my talk. (Titus Andronicus)

As many scholars of Reformation theology have observed, Protestant reformers recoiled from the sacrificial elements of the Roman Catholic Mass.[26] Altars were removed from churches when the celebration of the Eucharist, for

[26] See, for example, Deborah Shuger's *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (1994). Shuger proposes 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). She further reports that "Reformation Protestants typically claim that the absence of sacrifice distinguishes Christianity from other religions" (Shuger 1994, 76).

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. 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, a doubt that religious ritual could summon the real presence of Christ. Whereas the Roman Catholic Mass claimed to perform a miracle, the Protestant ritual claimed 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 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).[27] In the Protestant revision 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

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[27] Or, as Stephen Greenblatt has recently summarized, in Protestant worship "[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 a table" (Greenblatt 2004, 90).

accepted by all reformers. Richard McCoy reports that 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" (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 the belief that a trope would not be adequate or effective in the celebration of religious mystery. Amid this theological debate about transubstantiation and its relationship to trope, Shakespeare stages *Titus Andronicus*, a play which 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's "conscience" with its "twenty popish tricks and ceremonies" (5.1.75-76). But aside from these specific references, the play's extravagant sacrificial acts—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 another banquet at which a mother

consumes her sons baked in a pie—also can be considered in the context of the official religious recoil from sacrifice. In *Titus Andronicus*'s darkly comical stagings of sacrifice, cannibalism, and revenge, Roman religious sacrificial rituals collapse into what Tamora calls "cruel, irreligious piety" (1.1.133).

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. If in the reformed Church, as Stephen Greenblatt puts it, "faith should rest not on a gaudy spectacle but on the word of God, not on alluring images but on texts" (Greenblatt 2004, 90), *Titus Andronicus* shows how metaphoric words can be as alluringly imagistic as any spectacle. The play's tropes—especially metaphor and simile, but also synecdoche—have the power to turn things into other things and to move plots into actions. Furthermore, *Titus Andronicus* 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.

Metaphor, like sacrifice, is a phenomenon perched between distinction and conjunction. René Girard's observation that "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) applies fittingly to metaphoric process: 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).[28] 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 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). When sacrifice functions effectively, Girard explains, a "crucial

[28] Debora 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).

social link is missing" between sacrificial victims and the community, so that the victims can be sacrificed "without fear of reprisal" (13). Because a sacrificial victim is substituted for all other potential objects of violence that would demand reprisal, an effective sacrifice cleanses the society of its internal violent impulses without engendering further acts of violence. Girard emphasizes that the sacrificial process tends to conceal the original object of attention for which the sacrificial object is substituted—but not entirely. "Once we have focused attention on the sacrificial victim," Girard observes, "the object originally singled out for violence fades from view" (5). Girard asserts that in this way sacrificial substitution "implies a degree of misunderstanding" (5) and that sacrifice's "vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal this displacement upon which the rite is based" (5).[29] Sacrifice "must never lose sight entirely, however, 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

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[29] Susanne Wofford's investigation of the displacement and obfuscation on which heroic ideology depends further illuminates the porcess 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 substitution 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).

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: while an auditor must take the vehicle for the tenor sufficiently for the metaphor to be meaningful, if the auditor entirely loses track of the tenor, 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. But, as *Titus Andronicus* shows, whoever speaks a metaphor or performs a sacrifice risks the possibility that *that* won't stay distinct from *this*.[30]

Sacrificial victims can be sacrificed without consequence, Girard explains, because they are "exterior or marginal individuals, incapable of establishing or sharing the social bonds that link the rest of the inhabitants. Their status as foreigners or enemies, their servile condition, or simply their age prevents these future victims from fully integrating themselves into the community" (12). Like a sacrificial victim resident in yet alien to a particular social realm, a metaphor's

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[30] Paul Ricoeur recalls a tradition among Majorcan storytellers of beginning a tale by saying, "Aixo era y no era" (Ricoeur 1975, 256). This assertion, "it was and it was not," is for Ricoeur crucial to understanding the nature of metaphor. One might say that a metphor'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.

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 did, 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"(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. 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. Language, however, is inadequate, Girard argues, to express the nature of the crisis: "[b]eing made up of differences, language finds it almost impossible to express undifferentiation directly. . . . No matter how diligently language attempts to catch hold of it, the reality of the sacrificial crisis invariably slips through its grasp" (64).

Girard's theory of the *sacrificial crisis* illuminates how in *Titus Andronicus*'s Rome distinctions between purifying and polluting violence break down.

Whereas Girard suggests that the accompanying linguistic crisis cannot be grasped by language, the play's script makes the crisis intelligible in its collapse of figurative and literal linguistic realms. Furthermore, the potential collapse of figurative and literal realms 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 escapes the figurative realm and is performed by Chiron and Demetrius who literally rape and mutilate Lavinia, the 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, one then can accept his argument that establishing likeness can lead only to more violence. However, Girard's theory does not allow for 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.

Whereas *Titus Andronicus* depicts how the collapse of linguistic order is symptomatic of the collapse into violent destruction, *The Winter's Tale*, for example, shows how grief-induced loss of language has the ability to reorder and resurrect. 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. (5.2.84-90)

Here the transformative power of grief brings not sane people to madness but dead people back to life. Yet Perdita's extraordinary grief—her bloody tears—made the gentleman's heart weep blood. Perdita's grief is 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 thus 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 has the power 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" (5.3.40-42). While 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.

Unlike *The Winter's Tale*, however, Shakespeare's tragedies often reveal the consequences of failed empathy, and Girard's theory illuminates the violent chaos that can ensue from such failings. Such 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.

Girard's observation that "[t]ragedy begins at that point where the illusion of impartiality, as well as the illusions of the adversaries, collapse" (46) is confirmed liberally in the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*. Upon Titus's 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's

prized prisoner, and by its final scene, Titus's son Lucius has raised an army of Goths to attack and conquer his native Rome. When Titus honors Lucius's 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" (1.1.125-127). But, with distinctions between native and foreign, friend and enemy already blurred, the sacrifice of Alarbus instead starts a wave of reciprocal violence.

Girard notes that because a warrior is tainted with the slaughter of war, the "returning warrior risks carrying the seed of violence into the very heart of his city" (41). In *Titus Andronicus* the word *brave* transfers this violence from foreign war to domestic strife. Marcus, referring to his brother, announces that a "braver warrior / Lives not this day within the city walls" (1.1.25-26). But, as the word *brave* is uttered with variation, 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"; Chiron complains that Demetrius has "to bear me down with *braves*"

(1.1.529, emphasis mine); Demetrius asks Chiron, "Ay, boy, grow ye so *brave*" (1.1.544, emphasis mine); and Aaron calls them "*brave* boys" as he encourages them to attack Lavinia (1.1.629, emphasis mine). Thus, Titus's noted "bravery" in fighting against the enemy Goths disintegrates into Gothic brothers' "braving," imported into Rome.

The Roman brothers, Saturninus and Bassianus do some domestic "braving" of their own. Indeed, the Goth brothers', Chiron and Demetrius's, quarrel over Lavinia, whom they both claim to "love" (1.1.571), disturbingly follows Saturninus and Bassianus's 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?" (1.1.51, emphasis mine). Titus's language thus muddies the distinction between lawful marriage and rape—Lavinia is fought over, surprised, seized, and carried away first for marriage to a Roman and then for brutal sexual assault by a Goth.[31] Furthermore, Lavinia's brother Lucius foreshadows Lavinia's murder when,

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[31] David Wilbern 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" (Wilbern 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).

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" (1.1.302-303). 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 Lavinia's prospective marriage to the Roman emperor, who has obtained her father's consent, and Lavinia's violent assault in the woods by Goth prisoners are presented as unchaste.

A series of dizzying 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's slain sons, but only minutes later Titus slays his own son Mutius.

As Girard might have predicted, sacrifice does not contain violence: Tamora fails in her efforts to stop the sacrifice of her son by establishing the similarity of her situation to Titus's. In her plea for her son's life Tamora

obliterates the difference between Roman and Goth, captor and captive, and father and mother and 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" (1.1.110-111). The assonance, repeated words, and rhyming couplet stress the similarities. Tamora argues that her sons' purposes are just like Titus's 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? / O, if to fight for king and commonweal / Were piety in thine, it is in these" (1.1.115-118). Although Tamora begs for mercy, crying "tears in passion for her son" (1.1.108), 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, that 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's 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 for revenge: "Remember, boys, I poured fourth 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" (2.2.163-166). Having failed to persuade Titus to see himself as like her and show 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" (1.1.459-460). And, sure enough, at the opening of Act 3, "*Andronicus lieth down*" (sd) in the dust, pleading for his condemned sons. Futilely, he attempts to convince the earth to accept his tears as substitute for his "dear sons' blood" (3.1.22).[32]

Titus had not acknowledged his sons' bloodthirstiness: he does not seem to register that Lucius plans not only to sacrifice Alarbus but first to dismember

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[32] Lawrence Danson argues that the play "presents to us an image of the world in which man's words go unheeded and his gestures unacknowledged, a world unresponsive to his cries, demands, prayers" (Danson 1974, 1). But perhaps "the nightmare world" Danson describes is instead a world in which man's words and gestures are more powerful and uncontrollable than anyone imagines.

his body. Lucius asks for the prisoner so that he "may hew his limbs and on a pile / *Ad manes fratrum* sacrifice his flesh" (1.1.100-101); 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's repetition of the dismemberment plan—plus the darkly comical alliteration in his last statement of it—ensures that the audience doesn't miss this grotesque detail. The repetition of *hewed* and *lopped* and *limbs* also links the chopping off of Alarbus's arms to the chopping off of Lavinia's. Marcus inquires: "what stern ungentle hands / Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare / Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments / Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in" (2.3.16-19). Rather than containing the violence perpetrated against their brother at war, the sacrifice of Alarbus unleashes violence against their sister Lavinia.

Furthermore, Lavinia's lost hands when figured as ornaments are themselves a reduction of the notion of Lavinia in her entirety as "Rome's rich ornament" (1.1.55), a metaphor with which Bassianus had described her. And literally lost hands are soon to become the subject of synecdochical confusion: the loss of Lavinia's ornaments—and the loss of 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's terms (3.2.81). The word *hand*, one of the most common synecdoches in the language, fails in the context of the handless Lavinia and Titus. As the name of this now-missing body part no longer substitutes effectively for some whole, auditors are forced to speak more precisely—and literally—about agency, the very agency elided in Marcus's inquiry into Lavinia's handless condition: "what stern ungentle *hands* / Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare" (2.3.16-17).

Just as violence could not be directed or sufficiently controlled to have a sacrifice in remembrance of a brother and countryman distinguished from a dismembering murder, so language cannot be sufficiently controlled to have a meaningful figure of speech distinguished from a dismembering literal word. *Titus Andronicus*'s absurdly excessive attention to severed and missing hands—in staged horror, grotesque props, and darkly comical punning—links the collapse between martyred bodies and martyred signs.[33] Potentially out of control substitutions of sacrifice and potentially out of control substitutions of language can leave auditors so disoriented that they are unaware of whether they are

[33] The word *martyr*, whose etymology is traced to an Aryan root meaning "remember" (*OED*) comes to mean in the Elizabethan period: "To inflict wounds or disfiguring blows upon; to mutilate; also, to disfigure (the face) with weeping. Obs." (*OED* 4). Thus, the word itself paradoxically contains both notions of remembering and dismembering.

operating in a figurative or literal realm. And 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 literal dismemberment. As Gillian Murray Kendall notes, in *Titus Andronicus* "to lend one's hand is to risk dismemberment" (1989, 299),[34] 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 another body part—their severed heads.[35] 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

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[34] 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" (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 giving "reality" the agency to take vengeance on metaphor problematic and confusing.

[35] Here Titus abandons the substitutive nature of empathy for that of ransom and sacrifice. He announces, when Lucius wipes Lavinia's cheek, that he understands Lavinia's "signs" (3.1.144): "Had she a tongue to speak, now would she say / That to her brother which I said to thee" (3.1.145-146), namely that Lucius's napkin is already too wet with his own tears. Thus, Titus comes to feel he understands Lavinia by seeing her as like him. But Titus concludes "O, what a sympathy of woe is this; / As far from help as limbo is from bliss" (3.1.149-150) and turns to the "help" of Aaron the Moor's plan of ransom.

that the word *hand* when used as synecdoche separates the body part from the full person's agency.[36] Lucius objects that Titus should not send "that noble hand . . . That hath thrown down so many enemies" (3.1.163-164). Marcus agrees, asking "Which of your hands hath not defended Rome" (3.1.168) and asserting that his own "hand hath been but idle" (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" (188). And here, in one sentence, Titus's 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*.[37]

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[36] 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).

[37] As Marcus figures them, Lavinia's hands are ornaments of her body. And in losing these ornaments, Lavinia loses not only the tools with which she, like Philomela, could weave or write her revenge; she also loses the means of making gestures that are integral to speech—especially passionate speech. Marcus's 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). Titus thus again emphasizes the essential role of one's hand in making a speech.

Furthermore, in Ovid's tale the importance of Philomela's hands to her "speaking" goes beyond her renowned weaving: Philomela not only "weaved purple letters . . . which

Titus's grief-induced "madness" is depicted as his inability to distinguish between the literal and figurative realms of speech, an alleged inability he later will exploit 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 without 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" (3.2.16-17). 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" (3.2.21-22). Titus, taking Marcus literally, responds, "What violent hands can she lay on her life?" (3.2.25). 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).

Although Titus's reaction to Marcus's statement may well reflect more about Titus's state than Marcus's, one cannot help but wonder—especially since

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bewraide / The wicked deede of Tereus" (6.737-738) which she sends to her sister, Procne, but once with Procne, "she was fayne / To use hir hand in stead of speache" (6.774). Philomela's hands allow her to assert her innocence.

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's 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 that employ bodies, are no longer intact.[38]

When Titus takes Marcus's 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*,

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

> 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's initial "mad" response is to accuse Marcus of having forgotten Lavinia's handless condition, he subsequently reveals that he doesn't 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. Titus eventually acknowledges, however, that not "nam[ing] the word of hands" would not allow him to forget their handless condition. It is as if Titus wears out the significance of the word which he speaks six times in nine lines. In his wonderfully paradoxical observation, "how franticaly I square my talk," Titus acknowledges that his attempt to shape or regulate his speech is what is frantic or mad, and then he acknowledges that his attempt has failed. Titus's "As if" (3.2.32) concedes that not naming the "word of hands" (3.2.33) cannot allow him to forget his handless condition; he denies, as it were, the potency of the real absence of the word. The allegedly mad Titus comprehends the distinctions between language and reality. Yet, the presence of Lavinia's martyred reality is,

curiously, both figured and forgotten.

Titus's peculiar allusion to Dido's asking Aeneas to retell the story of Troy makes it seem that he has forgotten that they have not "heard" Lavinia's account of how she lost her hands: at this point Lavinia has not yet "told" them by "quot[ing] the leaves" (4.1.50) of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. 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 which caused Aeneas to weep? Even so, what story would Titus tell? After all, Titus was not witness to Lavinia's fall.

Whereas Titus briefly imagines that Marcus's grief has made Marcus forget the reality of the family's situation, Marcus, who either misses or dismisses Titus's conclusion about the difference between language and reality, continues to suspect that Titus's 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's perception of a fly. Titus cannot accept Marcus's murder of the "innocent" (3.2.56) fly until Marcus's 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" (3.2.67-68), Titus praises Marcus for having done a "charitable deed" (3.2.71). Concluding that Titus accepts the story for reality, Marcus attributes

Titus's inability to distinguish literal from figurative to his overwhelming grief, a grief which has "so wrought on him / He takes false shadows for true substances" (80-81). But whereas Marcus's simile establishes sufficient likeness between the fly and the Moor to elicit Titus's murderous behavior, Titus's "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" (3.2.72-74, emphasis mine).

Titus's 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's 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" (3.2.69), 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-cum-sacrifice. The Andronicus banquet soon 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 sacrifice to come.

Titus's acting out the assault on a fly according to Marcus's narrative about that fly leaves Marcus unsure of Titus's sanity. For Titus, it seems to Marcus, speech has become too universally performative in J. L. Austin's sense: Marcus's "uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action" (Austin 1975, 5). The consequences of Marcus's 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's revengeful assault—might seem comically frivolous. But this seemingly trivial case of the transformative power of figurative speech highlights the less comical 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" (5.1.142-143). In *Titus Andronicus* dreadful acts are performed when people are transformed by tropes into objects of revenge or attack.

The transformative power of trope is most striking in the plot against Lavinia who, during the course of the play, is described in more than thirty-five metaphors and similes. The extravagantly figured Lavinia is, of course, also literally disfigured. 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” (*Taming of the Shrew* 1.2.112-113). But Lavinia’s disfiguring happens behind her back as characters act out figures they have not heard spoken, figures which, once uttered, escape the figurative realm and take up residency in the speech community.

Aaron the Moor, the vice figure, has a special ability to speak metaphors powerful enough to circulate and acquire their own agency. When Demetrius and Chiron speak figuratively of Lavinia as the object of their hunt, Aaron transforms their conventional metaphors of courtship-as-hunting into scripts for the physical pursuit of Lavinia during the actual royal hunt. In fifty lines of the conversation during which the plot emerges (1.1.581-631), Lavinia is described with seven different similes and metaphors—some of which are extended: a mill (585), a cut loaf (587), the unfaithful wife of Vulcan (589), a doe (593), “some certain snatch” (595), Lucrece (608), and a treasury (631). At first Demetrius, convinced that he can woo Lavinia with words, asks, “Then why should he despair that knows to court it / With words, fair looks and liberality?” (1.1.591-592). 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 with force. Aaron reminds Chiron and Demetrius that there are "many unfrequented plots" (1.1.651) in the forest where the hunt will take place and instructs them: "Single you thither then this dainty doe" (1.1.617). On the day of the hunt, Demetrius mimics Aaron's instruction when he says to his brother, "Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound, / But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground" (2.1.25-26). Finally, 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).[39] Thus, the transubstantiation of metaphor to violent reality comes full circle when Marcus figures reality with the same metaphor that provoked Chiron and Demetrius's assault on Lavinia. Or perhaps it is more accurate to conclude that Marcus recognizes Lavinia's figured reality.

[39] Heather James has described how 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). James comments that the "grotesque transposition of Dido's fatal passion onto Lavinia's mutilated and raped body invites both comparison of the fates of the two women and speculation on the ways rhetoric manipulates judgment" (56).

When figuring Lavinia as a doe to be hunted, Aaron is explicit in his instructions to Chiron and Demetrius; however, Aaron is more discreet in his figuring Lavinia as Philomel, a metaphor that nonetheless brings about the reenactment of the myth. Aaron first employs the metaphor of Lavinia as Philomel, though not in the presence of her Tereuses, Chiron and Demetrius. Although 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), he first figures Lavinia as Philomel when he tells Tamora that Bassiaunus's "Philomel must lose her tongue today, / Thy sons make pillage of her chastity" (2.2.44-45). Chiron and Demetrius's enactment of the Philomel plot emerges after Aaron uses the metaphor in his private conversation with Tamora. The brothers never hear Aaron utter this metaphor, and, furthermore, their mother, who had wanted to kill Lavinia herself, twice instructs her sons to kill Lavinia. Tamora first commands: "But when ye have the honey we desire, / Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting" (2.2.131-132) and finally "see that you make her sure. / Ne'er let my heart know merry cheer indeed / Till all the Andronici be made away" (2.2.187-189).

How do Chiron and Demetrius come to enact the assault on Lavinia that imitates and outdoes the Philomel plot, a plot articulated by the mastermind

Aaron while they were not present?[40] This question demands investigation because Chiron and Demetrius, though schooled, are depicted as lacking the imagination needed to plot or interpret. 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). Aaron, emphasizing their dull minds, comments aside, "Now what a thing it is to be an ass" (4.2.25).

Aaron's intervening metaphor of Lavinia as Philomel, though not uttered directly to Chiron and Demetrius, nonetheless has the power to bring about the performance of the Philomel story including the cutting out of Lavinia's tongue. With the hewing of her limbs rooted in the dismemberment of Alarbus, the enactment of the rape and mutilation of Lavinia combines metaphorical and sacrificial plots that have escaped their performers. The rape and mutilation of Lavinia following the (dis)figuring of Lavinia as Philomel reveals how sacrificial and figurative speech acts can beget uncontrollable violence.

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[40] Lavinia is not only target but also subject to unwitting reiteration of Aaron's metaphors. In the woods Lavinia insults Tamora by calling her Semiramis (2.2.118), an insult that stirs Tamora to call for a 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.

The unruly metaphor which escapes control of its speaker and operates with its own agency also disrupts the expected sequence of events in the play. In the plot of Lavinia's rape and mutilation, metaphoric and sacrificial collapse allow 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 he could not intend that Titus twice refers to the abduction of Lavinia as a "surprise" (1.1.288, 4.1.51). In each case Titus seems like the one 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 that Marcus has, in his metaphorical language comparing Lavinia to Philomel, already expressed when he first encounters her 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, has thou met,

> And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,
>
> That could have better sewed than Philomel. (2.3.26-27; 37-43)[41]

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.[42] Here metaphor behaves in the manner Girard describes of sacrifice, namely it "depends on its ability to conceal this displacement upon which the rite is based" (Girard 1977, 5).

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[41] A number of critics see Marcus's description of the mutilated Lavinia as revealing the inadequacy of such language. Coppelia Kahn says that the "shocking disparity between Marcus's rhetoric . . . and the maimed body to which it pertains makes it clear that the Lavinia who existed before the rape as an object of desire and exchange was a construction of the language wielded by the men who exchanged and desired her. Marcus's recourse to that language when it can no longer function both highlights it and the place for women that it normally creates, and indicates that Lavinia can no longer occupy those linguistic or social sites" (Kahn 1997, 58-59). Heather James 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). These 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 plots the attack and the verbal alchemy of Shakespeare whose words produce the (fake) spectacle of a mutilated body on stage. Furthermore, with the possible exception of high-tech special effects in a film of the play, Marcus's description of Lavinia—rather than the actress's body playing Lavinia—is probably the most important way in which audiences come to understand Lavinia's mutilation.

[42] Coppelia Kahn observes that "[i]n this play, like Chiron and Demetrius [sic] the text flaunts the rape, then conceals it; points it out, then censors it" (Kahn 1997, 58).

Increasingly, Lavinia becomes a cipher. She has no speech or stage direction in either situation when the question of her being "surprised" is raised. Bassianus answers Titus's charge and Saturninus's question, "Surprised? By whom?": "By him that justly may / Bear his betrothed away from all the world away" (1.2.289-290), and Mutius and Lucius assist Bassianus to "convey her hence" (1.1.291). Lavinia says nothing. Later when Titus asks her if she was "surprised . . . Ravished and wronged as Philomela was" (4.1.51-52), Lavinia literally can say nothing. Like many editors before him, Jonathan Bate adds the stage direction "*Lavinia nods*" preceding Titus's energetic "See, see!" (4.1.54). Although Bate asserts that a "gesture of assent is clearly indicated by 'See, see!'" (214), we cannot fix with certainty the nature of Lavinia's response, especially in the context of Titus's 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. While 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 line" (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.[43] But when Titus asks Tamora to stab Rape and Murder as "some surance" (5.2.26) 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" (5.2.62-63). 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.[44] As Tamora explains, Rape and Murder are "called so / 'Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men" (5.2.62-63). But Tamora isn't able to see that Titus sees that Chiron and Demetrius also are such kind of men. She doesn't sufficiently

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[43] The roles of Rape and Murder might not be invented solely by Tamora. Although the stage direction at Act 5 Scene 2 indicates that Tamora and her two sons enter "disguised," it does not specify the disguises. Since Titus is the first to name Chiron and Demetrius Rape and Murder ("Lo, by thy side where Rape and Murder stands" (5.2.45), there are two possibilities: either Chiron and Demetrius's disguises signify that they are Rape and Murder or Titus specifies their roles and Tamora improvises with Titus's contribution to her plot.

[44] Douglas Greene 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" (Greene 1989, 321).

appreciate the “mad” Titus’s 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). This announcement reveals how Titus’s ironic play with the question of likeness, which he punctuates by feigned doubt of his ability to see likeness and difference clearly, is itself another instance in the play of how articulating a likeness can bring about its enactment. “Good Lord, how like the empress’ sons they are, / And you the empress!” Titus remarks but disavows his observation by noting that “we worldly men / have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes” (5.2.64-66). 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!” (5.2.82-85).

In a kind of inverted simile, Fury, Rapine, and Murder become like the empress and her sons. Not only does Tamora mistake Titus’s similes for madness, she also underestimates the efficacy of such similes, analogies which link the substitutive logic of figurative speech to the substitutive logic of revenge. Titus, finally, instructs Demetrius: “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" (5.2.206-207). 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 indeed, Chiron and Demetrius become the ministers of Revenge as Titus performs it—as the main ingredient for Titus's revengeful feast.[45]

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" (5.3.194-195). Titus and Marcus's son Publius repeat three times the command to "stop up their mouths" (5.2.161, 164, 167). Titus emphasizes his desire for the rapists to hear and not speak, to suffer Philomel's and Lavinia's fate. Tamora's sons find themselves back in Ovid's tale, both

[45] David Wilbern, who points out that Titus's "goal is to see that 'all these mischiefs be return'd again / Even in their throats that hath committed them' (3.1.273-274), remarks that Titus's "ultimate vengeance will liberalize the cliché, by meeting the oral threat with its mirror, oral revenge (Wilbern 1978, 174).

captive audience and unwitting actors of their new roles. They are no longer Tereus but now Tereus's 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 which enact given names.[46]

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 *Titus Andronicus*'s Rome, 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 vehicles in separate linguistic realms: the vehicles become agents of their own acts. And synecdoches, which once

[46] 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).

could be relied on to stand for some whole, become instead horridly dismembered things in themselves. This relationship between sacrifice and metaphor suggests that even if the Protestant Reformation succeeded in downplaying the sacrificial elements of Christianity by disavowing transubstantiation and reducing ritual speech to trope that tropes have their own means of fatal and consuming substitutions.

René 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" (4), illuminates *Titus Andronicus*'s 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 of a society in 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 facilitates much of the destructive chaos, ironically produces the distinguishing issue of the play's final act. Aaron's baby, with its distinctive 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 emperor. And while 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 "coal-black" (4.2.101) baby, 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. Aaron remarks when Chiron and Demetrius don't get the point of the threatening Horace verses attached to Titus's arrow, "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-

129). 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 conjoined 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" (5.1.63-66). But before Aaron will tell these tales of classic tragedy—or, perhaps, tragic farce—Aaron 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 his 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. Aaron's rational approach to language's irrational potential is all the more

striking when attributed to a Moor, one whose stereotypic source of power might be portrayed, as Brabantio does Othello's, as the practice of "foul charms" and abuse of people with "drugs or minerals" (*Othello* 1.2.73-74).

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.' (5.1.135-140)

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

Aaron's baby foils 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 discourse" the crying babe

(5.1.26). Aaron's language, which has controlled so much of the previous action, is rendered powerless 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*'s 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, from 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" (5.3.113-114). Realizing he hasn't accomplished his goal, Lucius stops his speech: "But soft, methinks I do digress too much, / Citing my worthless praise" (5.3.115-116). Marcus steps up and offers a different proof: "Behold the child: / Of this was Tamora delivered, / The issue of an irreligious Moor" (5.3.118-120).

The play ends, as it began, with an Andronicus burial ritual, this time Marcus's 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" (5.3.155-158). Lucius's 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 the now Emperor Lucius 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" (5.3.198-199). Lucius's prohibiting pity for Tamora ominously echoes Titus's lack of pity for Tamora that started the cycle of 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" (5.3.164-165). And here, in a final substitution, art—even art about violence—might substitute for violence itself.

3. Proving Desdemona Haggard: Metaphor and Marriage in *Othello*

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* 8)

If I do prove her haggard,

Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,

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! (3.3.266-276)

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 manned hawk. 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,[47] Othello reveals that he is prepared to cut out a part of himself to be rid of an adulterous wife. 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 feet.

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

[47] Although the term also was used figuratively starting in the late sixteenth century (*OED* 2), *heartstrings* were "[i]n old notions of Anatomy, the tendons or nerves supposed to brace and sustain the heart" (*OED* 1).

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. 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.[48] But Othello imagines himself metaphorically as an unsuccessful falconer, which leads quickly to the disclosure that he imagines himself literally as an unsuccessful husband. Othello worries that he is like a falconer who cannot provide a sufficiently satisfying reward to lure his hawk's return, and he is explicit about how he feels inadequately rewarding: he is black; he lacks "the soft parts of conversation / That chamberers have"; and he is old.

It isn't Othello, however, who first imports the falconry discourse into the play's world: Desdemona herself unleashes these threatening fantasies when she jokingly figures herself, in a conversation with Cassio, as her husband's falconer, one who will "watch him tame" (3.3.23). Although Iago is not present during Desdemona's conversation with Cassio, Iago reiterates the metaphor when, speaking to Othello, he figures Desdemona as a falconer who was able to "seel

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[48] In his study of "Shakespeare's Falconry," Maurice Pope comments that the haggard's "fault is unruliness, the cure training" (Pope 1992, 142).

her father's eyes up" (3.3.213). Then, after Iago exits, Othello figures her as "haggard" (3.3.264). Circulating through the play's pivotal Act 3, the falconry metaphor transports a larger falconry discourse into the speech community without Othello's or Desdemona's full awareness.

Here I borrow Harry Berger's definition of discourses, namely, "cultural ready-mades with their own logic and agency [which] are taken up, deployed, and operated by individual speakers whose language may be interrogated for traces of discursive activity and motivation" (Berger 1997, 326). Desdemona's metaphor imports the discourses of falconry into the play-world and initiates the circulation of the anxiety that a haggard is likely to take control of her unrewarding, incompetent falconer. Once spoken, the metaphor of Desdemona as alternately falconer and haggard—and the larger discourse these metaphoric vehicles transport—take hold in Othello's mind and in the play-world where Desdemona's pursuit of Cassio justifies her identity as such. Harry Berger's explanation of textuality illuminates the phenomenon of how such discourses can circulate:

> [O]ne may conceive of textuality as the unconscious of the subjects constructed by dramatic speech—not, however, the textuality of language pure and simple, nor the unconscious of an individual

> speaker. The textuality is that of the discourses of language-games that circulate through the fictive community of speakers, constitute the community of their speech, and disclose the pressure of collective patterns of desire and motivation on their language. (Berger 299)

Falconry discourse, imported by metaphors of marriage-as-falconry, circulates through *Othello*'s community of speakers. Thus the community is shaped, unwittingly, not only by marriage discourses but also by performative metaphors which script marriage roles within falconry conventions. Tragically, the first threads of the "web" with which Iago "ensnare[s]" Cassio (2.1.168)—and Othello and Desdemona—are spun by Desdemona herself.

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. Most recently, Edward Berry has offered an extensive discussion in his chapter, "The 'manning' of Katherine: falconry in *The Taming of the Shrew*" (2001, 95-132), and Frances Dolan has called attention to the parallels between marriage and falconry in her texts and contexts edition of the play (1996, 304-312). Although editors of *Othello* generally gloss its falconry terms, little critical attention has been focused on its

overall effects in *Othello*, a play in which falconry imagery is sparse but significant in understanding the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona's marriage.

Perhaps because *Othello* investigates and presents such a dark view of how desire operates in the triangle of falconer-husband, hawk-wife, and prey-object of desire, the play seems to compel critics to try to rescue some more promising notion of dyadic sexual desire and union. Several critics who illuminate how Desdemona and Othello's marriage is construed as adulterous (Boose 1975/1994, Greenblatt 1980, Neill 1989/1994), do not treat the very notion of Desdemona and Othello's desire with analytic scrutiny. In her study of the significance of the handkerchief and its "verbal echo" in the word *work*, Lynda Boose asserts that "[b]y the power of the reverberations that have collected around the term [work], Shakespeare has brought to tragic conclusion the central paradox of the play, the potent disequilibrium latent in the most loving act of humankind" (Boose 1975/1994, 62). Stephen Greenblatt identifies Desdemona's "erotic submission" and explores how it subverts Othello's fashioned identity (Greenblatt 1980, 239). He asserts that there is a quality in Othello's "love itself that unsettles the orthodox schema of hierarchical obedience and makes Othello perceive her submission to his discourse as a devouring of it." Greenblatt "perceive[s] this quality most clearly in the exquisite moment of the

lovers' reunion in Cyprus" (240). Michael Neill asserts that "the more Othello is made to feel his marriage is a violation of natural boundaries, the more estranged he and Desdemona become; the more estranged they become, the more he desires her" (Neill 1994, 203). Boose does not, however, explain her designation of sexual intercourse as "the most loving act of humankind"; Greenblatt does not show how Desdemona and Othello's reunion on Cyprus is "exquisite"; and Neill does not demonstrate the increase in Othello's desire. In the end *Othello* foils these attempts to salvage loving acts, exquisite moments, even increasing desire.

The metaphor of Desdemona as haggard provides a way to explore how desire functions in the play, and three Early Modern English books on hawking provide important context. Thus, a description of George Turberville's *Book of Faulconrie or Hauking* (1575), Symon Latham's *Falconry* (1614), and Edmund Bert's *Treatise of Hawkes and Hawking* (1619) precedes my discussion of the falconry metaphors in *Othello*. Attention to the varied uses and meanings of the word *haggard* in these falconry books published in England around the time the play was composed provides an especially rich context for understanding Othello's perception of his relationship with Desdemona. The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s first definition of *haggard* is "a wild (female) hawk caught when in her adult

plumage," and the second "figurative" listing is "a wild and intractable person." But additional meanings emerge in these early modern English falconry books which are significant to understanding how figuring Desdemona as haggard helps to plot her fate. The metaphor of Desdemona as haggard, understood through a fuller familiarity with the discourse on falconry, helps to reveal that the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona's marriage is crucially connected to the tragedy of a marriage conceived on the model of falconer and hawk.

In reading the 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). These links are especially active when metaphor is involved[49]. The anthropologist Roy Wagner's description of

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[49] Paul Ricoeur has observed that "[t]o affect one word, the metaphor has to disturb a whole network by means of an aberrant substitution" (Ricoeur 1979, 21). Judith Anderson, in her study of the word *invest* in *2 Henry IV* and *Hamlet* observes that "an awareness of the history—indeed the story—of the word *invest* facilitates meaning more distinctly and even contributes directly to it, enlarging and reshaping its nuances" (Anderson 1998, 247). Anderson concludes that her point "at least in the early modern period . . . is to argue the possibility of a salience in the metaphoric word, a persistence of its etymological trace, and, in short, a constructive capacity in the word that can markedly defer or exceed subsumption by the sentence.

metaphorical process illuminates a metaphor's peculiar function in culture. Wagener notes that

> a metaphor expands the frame of its self-referentiality by processual extension into a broader range of cultural relevance—a larger frame, a larger metaphor. 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. (Wagner 1986, 9)

Othello reveals how Othello's attempt to "prove" Desdemona "haggard" (3.3.266) is not the instananeous flash of a trope, but rather a process by which Othello comes to know Desdemona as a woman so threatening that he feels obliged to kill her.

Early Modern English notions of *haggard*, as revealed in the falconry treatises of the time, expose the threat of role reversal: a haggard threatens, as it were, to become the falconer of her man, who, in turn, would become like the tamed hawk. Male falconers did in fact train and hunt with tamed female hawks

because female hawks are larger and more powerful than their male mates. Thus, the comparison of a woman to a hawk, a species in which the female naturally exceeded the male's strengths and abilities, inverts the hierarchy considered natural among human beings. The extent to which a wife is like a female hawk interrupts the belief that females of the species are naturally weaker. Indeed, figuring marriage in terms of falconry, and thus comparing taking a wife to making a hawk, reveals that a man needs to tame his wife because she is naturally more powerful than he and naturally averse to subjugating herself to him.

While descriptions of the power and sovereignty of the female hawk occur in the hawking treatises of George Turberville (1575), Symon Latham (1614), and Edmund Bert (1619), Latham's description is particularly striking. In a chapter devoted to the "Hawgard Faulcon, with the manner and course of her life, while shee is wilde, and unreclaimed" (5), Latham describes the haggard falcon

> like a Conqueror in the contry, keeping in awe and subjection the most part of all the Fowle that flie, in so much 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 subject vnto at the spring time: and then she suffereth him to draw towards her, but still in subjection, which appeareth at his coming, by bowing down his body and head to his foot, but calling 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 5)

Latham portrays the male "Tassle gentle"—even during mating season—as cowering and infantilized, the female "Hawgard" temporarily subject only to nature's provoked "inclination" to mate.

George Turberville (1575) also describes the natural dominance of female birds of prey who are "ever more huge than the male, more ventrous, hardie, and watchfull" (3). He suggests that the art of falconry is "a matter almost quite against nature and kynde"(5) 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 thus 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 *haggard* features the word's association with a hawk that a falconer first catches as an adult,[50] a definition that references—and certainly fits—Turberville's use of the word in his *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonets* (1567).[51] However, Turberville's first uses of the

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[50] haggard n2:

> 1. A wild (female) hawk caught when in her adult plumage. (With some, in 17th and 18th c. = peregrine falcon.); b. fig. A wild and intractable person (at first, a female); one not to be captured. Obs." haggard a: "1. Of a hawk: Caught after having assumed the adult plumage; hence, wild, untamed; said also of an owl (obs.). a. Wild, unreclaimed, untrained (often with direct reference to 1). b. "Froward, contrarie, crosse, vnsociable (Cotgr.).

[51] As *The Oxford English Dictionary* notes, Turberville's first published use of the word *haggard* appears in his book of poems, *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets* (1567). In his poetry Turberville's use of the word haggard matches *The Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition. See, for example, "The Lover to a Gentlewoman, that after great friendship without desart or cause of mislyking refused him" which begins:

> Have you not heard it long ago
> of cunning Fawkners tolde,
> That Haukes which loue their keepers call
> are worth their weight in Golde;
> And such as knowe the luring voice
> of him that feedes them still:
> And never rangle farre abroade
> against the keepers will,
> Doe farre exceede the haggarde Hauke
> that stoopeth to no stale;
> Nor forceth on the Lure awhit,
> but mounts with euery gale. (14)

word *haggard* in his hawking book, 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* (1575), *Haggart* first appears as the name of a type of eagle: "the huge and royall Eagle, which is the Haggart or Passenger" (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). While 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 "that 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" (23-24). Turberville is attracted by the strange story of the strange practice even as he doubts its veracity. Thus, the word *Haggart* first appears in an English falconry book in association with Cyprus and dubious tales of noble Turks.

While the term *Haggart* first appears as the name of the most impressive

"ryghte eagle"(22), in the very next section of Turberville's book, *Haggart* appears as the name for a type of falcon.[52] Disagreeing with his "author" who reports that the Haggart is "tender to endure hard weather" (26), Turberville asserts that "shee should be better able to endure colde than the Falcon Gentle, because she dothe come from forayne partes a straunger, and a passenger, and doth winne all hir praye and meate at the hardest by mayne wing" (26). Although the term Haggart shifts from eagle to falcon, its association with foreignness remains. Furthermore, the haggard falcon's foreignness is now linked to her hardiness of nature, to her ability to endure cold and to win prey, adding to a haggard's overall power.

Some pages later, Turberville devotes a section to the etymology of the term *Haggart* in which, following the perspective of an Italian author on whose work parts of his book are based, he pronounces Haggart Falcons as "the most excellent byrdes of all other Falcons" (33). Below I quote at length from this section of Turberville's book to demonstrate the repeated portrayal of the Haggart Falcon as foreign—a stranger, traveler, passenger, pilgrim, foreigner,

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[52] 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 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 seventy-four pages to a taxonomy of eagles and falcons and records Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and German names for varieties of birds.

"rangler,"[53] and wanderer in Italy. In his study of the "causes" for which these falcons have been 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. And this I know for truth, they are not disclosed or eyred in Italie, and besides that there are few in Italie, that do take them at any time, by the greatest store of them are brought and conueyed thither from forayne regions but if they shoulde be termed Perrigrine or Haggart Falcons, for this onely cause and onely in respect hereof and nothing else, then might we as well bestow that name also upon all other Falcons, that are not bredde in Italie, as upon the Tunician and other Hawkes that are passengers. Wherefore I am of opinion, that for three causes principally and in chiefe, they are called Haggart, or Peregreine Falcons.
>
> 1 First, because a man can not finde, nor euer yet did any man Christian or Heathen, fynde their eyrie in any Region, so as it

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[53] rangler: rover, Obs. (OED)

> 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.
>
> 2 The second cause 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, because they do seeke so many straunge and forayne coastes, and do rangle so far abrode.
>
> 3 The thirde and last cause, I do thinke, may be their beautie and excellencie, bycause this worde (Peregrino) or Peregrine, doth many tymes importe an honorable and choyce matter, had in great regard . . . . Wherefore I conclude, that these Haggart Falcons are not of Italie, but transported and brought thither from forayne places, as namely from Alexandria, Cyprus, and Candie. (33-34)

Here, in his etymological investigation of the reasons the falcons are called Peregrine or Haggart, Turberville extends the association of haggard with strangeness beyond the sense of a foreign hawk living in Italy. The first “cause”

depicts a haggard as a hawk whose origin is almost mythically unknowable: never has any man—Christian or Heathen—found the aerie of the Haggart Falcon in any region. In this sense Desdemona's being "haggard" suggests transience and lack of origins, which is, curiously, the identity Roderigo assigns Othello—the "extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and every where" (1.1.138-140). But Desdemona, as a woman within a patriarchal society, also fits this sense of haggard. Brabantio's response to his daughter's eloping, "I had rather to adopt a child than get it" (1.3.191), 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" (1.3.198-199). Although, as editor E. A. J. Honigmann notes, clogs are "blocks of wood, etc., attached to the neck or legs of man or beast to prevent escape" (n. 199 on page 147), Turberville uses the word for a hawk's luring bells. He notes that when a haggard "rangle[s] out from her keeper . . . Then shal you *clogge* hir with greater lewring bells . . . to teache hir holde in, and knowe the man" (Turberville 1575, 151 emphasis mine). Desdemona thus fits the notions of *haggard* as unknowable and in need of restraint.

Turberville's second "cause" for the term *haggard* is a hawk's seeking out strange and foreign coasts. Again the term 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), telling his "travailous" or "Trauellors" history (1.3.140)[54] of his journeys to lands of cannibals and Anthropophagi (1.3.144-145), a story which, understandably, Desdemona "swore . . . was passing strange" (1.3.161). Although from Italy, Desdemona too "rangles" far away when she "g[ets] out" (1.1.168) from her father's house and again when she insists on accompanying her husband to the foreign coast of Cyprus. Turberville's third "cause" of the term *haggard*, "beautie and excellencie," which also applies to Desdemona, follows the unknowably foreign and traveling nature of the Haggart Falcon and thus indicates the link between the suspicion of and attraction toward mysterious haggards.

As Turberville goes on to compare and contrast the Haggart and the Falcon Gentle, he emphasizes how the Haggart's independence is linked to her power: "bycause she hath bene forced often to praye for hir selfe and hath not been subject to the order of any keper, neyther hath had any hande kepte upon

[54] Honigmann chooses "travailous" and notes the following variants: "trauells *Q*; Trauellours *F*"(144).

hir, to make hir eger and greedie of the praye, more than naturally she is accustomed to flee at hyr seasons, to gorge hir selfe, whiche she doth both aduisedly and to great aduantage" (37). In this description of the hawk's independence, the idea emerges that the "hand kepte upon" a hawk can make her greedy of her prey. It suggests that a hawk's being subject to a keeper makes her more desirous "than naturally she is accustomed to." Figuring Desdemona "haggard" lends credence to Iago's portrayal of her as a woman whose "eye must be fed" (2.1.223) and one who, because Othello is "defective" in "manners and beauties" (227-228), will "begin to heave the gorge" (230-231).

Later in his book, Turberville again stresses the Haggart's independence and indicates how the very quality that makes the Haggart such an effective hawk is also the quality that makes the Haggart challenging for her keeper. Turberville notes that you need not train a Haggard as often as a Soarehawke because Haggards "haue bene accustomed to praye for themselues, and doe by experience knowe one fowle for an other" (151). He asserts that a Haggard's "gadding moode and gallantnesse of mind" leads her, more than any other cause, to "rangle" out from her keeper (151). If the falconer expects to have the advantage of this desirable and desirous hawk, he must expect his skill to be tested by that desire. Acknowledging that the hawk's desire cannot be

suppressed, merely redirected, the keeper is warned that he must "aboue al 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 commaundment, but make you followe hir" (152).

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, instead of the hawk following her falconer, the falconer will be compelled to follow the hawk as he tries to get her back. This potential that a haggard will, by acting directly on her own desire, reverse roles and take control of her falconer illuminates Desdemona's portrayal of herself as a falconer who will "watch [Othello] tame" (3.3.23) and Iago's portrayal of Desdemona as a falconer who tamed her father by "seel[ing]" his eyes (3.3.213), scenes to which I shall return for full analysis.

Whereas Turberville is inconsistent about the Haggard falcon's status, sometimes ranking her second, sometimes first, Symon Latham is explicit that the Haggard falcon is most desirable. In the introduction to his book, Latham states that the Haggard falcon is "the birde, and hawke, that (in these daies) most men doe couet and desire to prepare, and make fit for their pleasure" and announces that he will devote his entire book "to shew of her nature and

disposition: And after how to alter and change the same into loue and gentlenesse, with subjection to the man, and so to rule, and gouerne her" (2). 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. He will call hawks "by such as in our memories as at this present are most familiar, and ordeinarily vsed amongst vs" (4). Latham nonetheless asserts that if any falcon deserves to be placed first in a taxonomical hierarchy, it is the Haggard falcon who is "more able to endure both wind, weather, & all sorts of other extraordinary seasons" (4).

Latham's admiration for the Haggard falcon leads him to devote a chapter to the bird's natural history, the "manner and course of her life, while shee is wilde, and unreclaimed" (5). In this chapter, the young Haggard falcon emerges as so hardy as to be a danger to herself. Latham notes that "the Passenger-soare-Faulcons, or the yong Hawgards" are of such "great mettall and spirit, that for want of vnderstanding their owne harme, do venture vpone 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" (5-6). While there is no way to be certain if this perception of young haggards extended beyond Symon Latham, the possibility

haunts the notion of Desdemona as a young haggard, who, not understanding her own harm, does not get the chance to "leave off to meddle" with her "unwealdy pray."

In his next chapter, Latham again distinguishes his book as more practical than Turberville's by announcing that he will show how to reclaim a Haggard falcon "and make her subiect to the man" according to the "order and method used" in his own "practice" (8). Latham stresses how the hawk's "stomacke"—her appetite and desire—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 subjection to the man, & it is the spurre that pricketh her forwarde to perform the duty she oweth to her keeper, and that which hee requireth from her to be effected" (11). In a number of places Latham suggests that a keeper's failure to fulfill his hawk's desire leads to problems in her subjugation. Placing the blame for misbehaved hawks firmly on their keepers, Latham rejects the theory that the practice of luring haggards with live doves is inherently flawed, making a haggard "carry" the dove away rather than returning it to her keeper. Latham asserts that this carrying behavior rather is caused by "either the vnskilfulnes or negligence in their keepers; who haue not painefully and with diligence ordered them aright in their reclaiming and first making, neither haue

they taken due time therin, nor vsed them with that respect of loue and gentlenes, whereby they might winne and draw their lure vnto them" (14).

As he continues to diagnose the origin of a hawk's carrying a live dove from her keeper, he explains how a keeper's neglect of his hawk's desire will lead to her straying. 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: "slight matters" like pelts of pigeons won't do. Latham goes on to admit 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)" (15), and in so confessing Latham implies that the alternatively imagined "cause" would be that the hawk somehow wanted to come back to its man for love or loyalty. This idea that a haggard returns to its man only for tangible reward, not for loyalty or love will emerge as key to understanding the insecure Othello's willingness to believe Iago's account of Desdemona's behavior. As a falconer cannot reclaim his haggard with the slight matter of a pigeon's pelt, Othello cannot reclaim Desdemona's love with the slight matter of a handkerchief. Latham further describes how a hawk who has been badly

rewarded and "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). If Othello suspects he lacks the qualities of a husband that would reward a Venetian wife, we can see how he would suspect Desdemona would rise and carry away a live dove like Cassio.

Latham shows that falconers were well aware of how the hawk's natural desire for its prey cannot be suppressed but must be subtly redirected to involve the falconer. He describes at some length the excitement a deprived hawk feels when she gains access to her object of desire, the lure of a live dove. When a hawk feels a dove "stirre and flutter in her foote, the nouelty of that from which shee hath beene so long estraunged, makes her iocund and so ouercomes her, with sudden joy and gladnesse, that shee knowes not for the time how to sit" (16). Paradoxically, in order eventually to gain what he desires most—the upper hand—the falconer must literally lower himself as he rewards his Haggard. Latham advises:

> you must restraine her and draw her gently to you with your lure or cryance, not suddenly or rashly, but by degrees, and giue her some bits of meat with your hand, being on your knees, to please

> and content her . . . and by vsing this course you shall find such a suddaine alteration in her that shee wil . . . be willing to change a whole doue with you for a bit of meat at your hand, and what can you desire more. (16)

Othello, convinced that he has no sufficient reward for Desdemona, cannot see that she intends to change the whole dove Cassio for a bit of meat at his hand.

Five years after Latham's *Falconry*, Edmund Bert publishes *An Approved Treatise of Hawkes and Hawking* (1619), and he too describes how the Haggart is "harder to be brought to subjection and obedience" because she "hath liued long at liberty, hauing many things at her command" (3). For Bert, the word *Haggart* indicates the stage of life at which the hawk is taken and tamed. He asserts that the Haggart will be "very louing and kinde to her keeper, after that he hath brought her, by his sweet and kinde familiarity, to vnderstand him" (5), but he warns that if the Haggart "fall into any vice, shee is most hardly reclaimed from it" (4). Bert's emphasis on the obdurate nature of the vice-prone haggard fits most closely the sense of the word in Othello's speech: if his wife-hawk is haggard in the sense of difficult to reclaim, Othello's plan to cut the jesses and let her down wind makes some sense. But Bert's book suggests that even if a haggard is potentially incorrigible, a sufficiently skilled, loving, and rewarding

falconer-husband could reclaim his haggard-wife.

Part of Othello's inability to imagine himself as able to reclaim Desdemona is revealed by how the metaphor of Desdemona as haggard transforms her not only into an uncontrollable wife but also into one who usurps those aspects of Othello's exotic identity from which he draws greatest strength. The associations of *haggard* with foreignness, and particularly with the Mediterranean and Cyprus, implicitly align Desdemona with the foreignness that is explicitly attributed to Othello in the play. Recovering a fuller meaning of *haggard* that includes its association with foreignness and traveling is key to understanding fully Othello/*Othello*'s notion of Desdemona as haggard. A "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). And as she does so, Othello loses his special status as the strange warrior who had lured Desdemona. The more Othello is convinced of Desdemona's being haggard, the more Othello feels that his roles—as her keeper and also as the hard-to-confine foreign traveler—have been usurped. Whereas a man's fear of adultery typically relates to his fear of the usurpation of his lineage—of his identity in the hereafter—Othello's murderous response to his fear of Desdemona's adultery is provoked by his fear of the usurpation of his

identity in the here and now.

In his lament about the "curse of marriage" (3.3.274), 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" (3.3.275-276 emphasis mine). Othello's statement as a generic husband indicates that although he may be perceived, by himself and others, as foreign, even exotic, Othello nonetheless participates easily in male marriage discourse, borrowed from falconry discourse, on the dangers of being involved with women, dangers first described by Desdemona's father.

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. 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" (1.1.168-169). Eventually Othello announces his murder of Desdemona as the same public service: "Yet she must die, else

she'll betray more men" (5.2.6). Although he fails, Othello tries to construe Desdemona's death as a "sacrifice" (5.2.65), apparently an attempt to restore patriarchal authority.

Shakespeare's *Othello* reveals how Othello's anxiety about what it means to be married to a woman—any woman—makes possible the murder of a particular woman, Desdemona, who has not committed adultery. *Othello* also reveals that even though Desdemona is able to escape from her father's house and defy Venetian notions of a proper marriage, she is unable to escape the deadly conception of marriage as a relationship in which one spouse profits from the control of the other. Indeed Desdemona's qualities that identify her desirability with that of a haggard—that she pursues her own desires "with greedie and willing minde" (Turberville 1575, 5), that she is likely to "rangle and wander" (33), that she is excellent and beautiful (34)—condemn her even as they make her desirable.

When Othello imagines that Desdemona might find him undesirable enough to turn elsewhere, he includes that he has not the "soft parts of conversation / That chamberers have" (3.3.268-269). Othello's awareness that he is not a chamberer reminds us that Othello envisions himself literally 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 (1.2.26-27). 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 enter this condition.

Ironically, Othello makes his first home with Desdemona at the site of a battle. The image of a house that “circumscribes and confines” a “free condition” is further clouded when Brabantio’s house emerges as the place that could not confine Desdemona. Indeed, in arguing that Othello should not trust Desdemona, 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. (3.3.212-214)

In Iago’s narration, Desdemona is the falconer who tames her father by *seeling*

his eyes.[55] 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."

Iago's image likely persuades Othello because the comparison of Brabantio to a tamed hawk who 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" (1.3.130), Desdemona would "dispatch" with "house affairs" to catch fragments of his stories. The effectiveness of Iago's figuring Desdemona as her father's falconer shows how a young woman who chooses a husband according to her desires instead of her father's is forever suspect.[56] The speed with which Iago can induce Othello's fear that Desdemona will go on to tame any man seemingly in control of her demonstrates both the power of the metaphor and the cultural significance of the haggard.

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[55] 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 close enough to be heard as a pun.

[56] We can only assume that Desdemona thought that Brabantio would not have sanctioned the match: why else would she have eloped?

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 a defiant woman 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" (1.2.60-61), responds Othello to Brabantio's threats. But once the battle for Desdemona is won, 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 "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" (1.3.263-266). 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 enough to continue to lure her to return to him? How, to use Turberville's terms, will he ensure "hir pleasure of hir rewarde" (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. (1.3.269-275)

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—dissembling. It is just this anxiety that Iago exploits: Cupid won't seel Othello's eyes, but Desdemona will. Afterall, 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 controlled her father.

Othello arrives on Cyprus without having had the opportunity to prove himself a warrior: he is victorious only to the extent that 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" (2.1.179) and carries on about her enough to worry that he "prattle[s] out of fashion" (2.1.205). Indeed, something rings uncomfortably conceivable in Iago's remark to Roderigo that Desdemona "first loved the Moor / but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies" (2.1.220-221). 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 desire for Othello: "Will she love him still for prating?" (2.1.222).

After Othello suggests that they send for Desdemona to "let her speak of [him] before her father" (1.3.116-117), Othello says he will "confess the vices of [his] blood" (1.3.125) as they wait for her to arrive. Whatever confession we might anticipate from the newlywed—especially after Iago's maliciously lewd descriptions of his wedding night activities (1.2.86-87)—Othello's confession turns our attention from blood as passion or sensual appetite (*OED* 5, 6) to blood as lineage, race, stock, or nationality (*OED* 8, 9). Othello doesn't confess any act: he confesses confessing his "travailous [traveler's] history" (1.3.140) which builds his identity as the "extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and every where" (1.1.138-140). Indeed the predatory sensual appetite is ascribed to Desdemona

who, Othello reports, “with a greedy ear / Devour[ed] up [his] discourse” (1.3.150-151). As haggard, Desdemona threatens to devour not only his discourse but also his identity as the traveler, the stranger of here and everywhere.

Brabantio claims that Othello’s ability to conjure a self that captures his desired object is empowered by witchcraft and insists that Othello has literally “enchanted” his daughter (1.2.63). For Brabantio, only “chains of magic,” “foul charms,” or “drugs and 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” (1.2.68), suddenly eloped with a Moor. Brabantio’s incredulity, however, does not withstand the pressure of his own response: when first alerted to his daughter’s absence, Brabantio admits, “This accident is not unlike my dream, / Belief of it oppresses me already” (1.1.140-141). Brabantio’s comment reveals a prophetic knowledge that his daughter would not be containable; it also emphasizes that the very “belief” of a woman’s transgression is itself oppressive—especially when masculine identity depends on effective control.

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 known nothing" (3.3.348-350). But *Othello* reveals that it's not possible for a husband to "know nothing" of his desirable wife's wildness because, just as a haggard, her desirability 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 you prove my love a whore" (3.3.361). Othello displays his urgent need for the removal of doubt by proof that Iago has based his suspicion on fact, but *Othello* 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 isn't in a society that invents "wife" as a tamed creature who remains wild enough to bring prey back to her husband, a creature whose most desirable quality provokes greatest anxiety.

Brabantio, unable or unwilling to acknowledge publicly his daughter's agency that he's suspected all along, 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 parallels the representation of wooer-husband as falconer. Each representation starts with a clear vision of male power in the relationship: 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.

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. Iago reminds Othello that Desdemona blinded her father: "She that so young could give out such a seeming / To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak— / He thought 'twas witchcraft" (3.3.212-214). In figuring Desdemona as a falconer who seels her father's eyes and as a witch who with "seeming" witchcraft can beguile him, Iago makes explicit a connection that likely already existed in English. For its third, obsolete, definition of *haggard*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists "A hag, a witch."[57] Desdemona is revealed as both haggard and hag, and in each role she takes over the position of power in her marriage.

Othello's exotic stories and roles establish Desdemona's identity, characterized by Othello as her "devour[ing]" of them (1.3.151), to a greater

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[57] Frances Dolan further demonstrates this connection by explaining how the procedures used for "watching" a hawk to tame it were also used to secure confessions from accused witches (Dolan 1996, 312-314).

extent than they establish Othello's identity as he performs them. The Venetian responses to Othello and his marriage to Desdemona demonstrate some anxiety about Othello's difference—skin color, religion, ethnic origin—but these differences are portrayed as ultimately containable as he functions 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 getting people to focus on his being a Moor any more than Brabantio can have Othello arrested just for being a Moor who marries his daughter. Othello's strangeness, including his association with witchcraft, seems to be eclipsed, instead, by the allegedly ever-adventurous, ever-hungry Desdemona. Although the play raises anxieties about Othello's being exotic, even more troubling are the anxieties it raises about Desdemona's ability to usurp even her husband's exotic features and powers: she becomes the traveler, the haggard, the hag.

The sign of what is perhaps Othello's most obvious difference—his blackness—is the very quality that could relieve his worries about being unwittingly cuckolded by his wife. In *Titus Andronicus* Aaron the Moor relishes in his newborn son by Tamora, noting that his "seal [is] stamped in his face" (3.2.129) and asserting that "Coal-black is better than another hue; / For all the

water in the ocean / Can never turn the swan's legs to white, / Although she lave them hourly in the flood" (4.2.101-105). Indeed, Othello need not worry about unknowingly raising the child of Desdemona by Cassio: unlike other cuckolded husbands, Othello would have the ocular proof of his wife's bearing a child by another (white) man. That even Othello's blackness somehow is effaced demonstrates the powerful and powerfully illogical nature of his reaction to Desdemona.[58]

Othello reveals the tragic effects on Desdemona and Othello of a Venetian society ready to accuse them of witchcraft when their desires stray outside the boundaries set by the Venetian patriarchy for a woman and a Moor. But perhaps even 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 institution of marriage which demands that someone play the witch/falconer/man and someone the charmed/tamed/woman. As

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[58] René Girard observes that "[o]rder, peace, and fecundity depend on cultural distinctions" and that "it is not these distinctions but the loss of them that gives birth to fierce rivalries and sets members of the same family or social group at one another's throats" (49). Girard asserts that such loss of distinction "strips [men] of all their distinctive characteristics—in short, of their 'identities'" (51). Othello's loss of his status as "different" from others in Venetian society signals the collapse Girard describes.

Desdemona strays outside the boundaries set for a daughter and a wife, she does so in a manner that merely inverts the roles of man and woman. Although it's easy to applaud Desdemona's refusal to sacrifice her desires to the role of obedient daughter and wife, it's difficult to applaud her well-intentioned desire to control her husband—especially since Othello is excluded from privileges extended to the wealthy, curled Venetian darlings.[59]

These unsettling power reversals are enacted most dramatically in Desdemona's determination to grant Cassio's suit (3.3). When Desdemona strays into the business of her husband and the state, she assumes her husband's role.[60] Desdemona gives Cassio "warrant of [his] place" (3.3.20), something she only can presume to give by imagining Othello under her control. Desdemona says that she pursues Cassio to bring something valuable to her husband—like a manned hawk returning to its falconer with the valuable prey—yet Othello feels rather like a hawk who, unwittingly, has brought Cassio to Desdemona, even as

[59] 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).

[60] Desdemona's movement is emphasized by the preceding scene in which Othello announces he "will be walking on the works," seeing the "fortification" (3.2.3-5). Ironically, the threat is inside his house.

Brabantio had brought Othello to Desdemona. Although Desdemona escapes the limited role of wife, she does not escape the model of marriage that relegates one spouse to falconer and one to hawk.

Indeed, before Iago or Othello ever uses a falconry metaphor, Desdemona figures herself a falconer. In her description of how she will treat Othello as she attends to Cassio's request, she says, "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" (3.3.22-25, 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* 16). Thus, Desdemona announces to Othello's discharged lieutenant, however playfully, that she intends to tame her husband like she would tame a hawk. And Desdemona's motivation to help Cassio is never satisfactorily revealed: it seems that her interest in this "suit"—which can mean "pursuit, chase" or "that which is pursued in hunting; the scent or quarry" (*OED* 5)—is, in fact, an interest in exerting and displaying power over Othello, even if she "sue[s] . . . to do a peculiar profit to [Othello's] own person" (3.3.79-80). 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). Furthermore, although neither Iago or Othello is present for Desdemona's exchange with Cassio, Iago afterwards easily compels Othello to remember that when he was wooing Desdemona Cassio "went between us very oft" (3.3.100).

Othello's remembering that Cassio "went between" 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 One 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 One 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 Three who, unmarried, was the go-between in Othello's courtship of Desdemona.[61]

Made desperate by the revelation that he is married to a delicate creature whose appetite he cannot control, Othello tells Desdemona the fantastic story of

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[61] William Empson 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 doesn't fully account for the incongruity.

the charmers and sybils responsible for the magic of the handkerchief which Desdemona refuses to fetch, thereby reasserting his identity as an enchanter. Othello tells two contradictory versions, exposing that this exotic story is improvised, not merely reported. In his first story, Othello says an Egyptian charmer gave the handkerchief to his mother (3.4.57-58); later, Othello describes the handkerchief as "an antique token / [his] father gave [his] mother" (5.2.214-215). As Othello feels he's 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 to 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. I did so, and—take heed on't!
>
> Make it a darling, like your precious eye!—
>
> To lose't or give't away were such perdition
>
> As nothing else could match. (3.4.60-70)

The alleged function of the handkerchief could be integrated easily into Venetian conceptions of marriage—with a twist. In Othello's story, his 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" (3.4.63-64), 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.

Since Desdemona knows that she has lost the handkerchief, her refusal to fetch it is understandable. But Desdemona does more than try to 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:

> DESDEMONA It is not lost, but what an if it were?
> OTHELLO How?
> DESDEMONA I say it is not lost.
> 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! (3.4.85-94)

Desdemona's manner might exacerbate a tense situation even if Othello didn't suspect Cassio to be her lover. She rejects the demand to fetch a symbol of her loyalty, and in so doing she refuses to fetch his story of marriage, namely that a

woman should fear losing her husband. Although it is easy to applaud Desdemona's refusal to fetch the handkerchief, the sign that her appetite is his, it is difficult to applaud her alternative that Othello play the role she demands in her suit for Cassio. Desdemona has claimed that she is pursuing Cassio like a tamed hawk returning the prey to her husband: "'Tis as I should . . . sue to you to do a peculiar profit / To your own person" (3.3.76-80). Ironically, however, by the end of the scene Othello can be compared to the wife who is terrified at having lost the handkerchief, and Desdemona can be compared to the husband whose spirits hunt after new fancies.

In light of Desdemona's alleged rapacious appetite for Othello's exotic stories, her rejection of the handkerchief story could be perceived as a new form of devouring, an unwillingness to allow Othello the power of witch. But how new is Desdemona's response to Othello's enchanting stories? As Othello describes it, even during their courtship her desire is wonderfully—and threateningly—ambiguous:

> 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. (1.3.163-167)

Just as Desdemona wishes that she had never seen Othello's handkerchief, Desdemona 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 that could mean either that Desdemona would like to *have* a man like Othello or would like to *be* a man like Othello—perhaps both. While Desdemona's inquiry about Othello's "friend" might very well be coy, the method of flirtation is 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 represents the fantasy that a woman can unman her husband, and Desdemona unwittingly enacts this unmanning as she participates in the discourse of manning haggards.

Harry Berger's assertion, in an essay about *King Lear*, that "[t]he pressure, the insistence, of discourse in the field of the text converts [the characters'] desires and unknown fears into the forces that drive the plot" (Berger 299) helps to make sense of Desdemona and Emilia's final exchange:

> EMILIA O, who hath done
> This deed?
> DESDEMONA Nobody. I myself. Farewell. (5.2.121-122)

"Nobody, I myself" (5.2.122) might express the truth that as *Othello*'s characters speak and act within the deadly marriage discourse that their desires and fears drive the plot. 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" (204). Neill further explores the idea of this adulterous tableau in relation to Othello's black body and criticizes Stephen Greenblatt's concern with the construction of Othello's marriage as adulterous as insufficiently concerned with the question of race. 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" (205), misses 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," (5.2.131), 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 an otherwise 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 and hawks and scripted from discourses of haggards 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 much darker and more problematic view of the roles in their marriage. In such a world even if a wife is honest, chaste, and true, there's no man happy. No woman either.

4. Base Comparisons: Figuring Royalty in Shakespeare's *King Henry IV Part 1*

Yet herein will I imitate the sun. (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.187)

I shall hereafter ... / Be more myself. (*1 Henry IV* 3.2.92-93)

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself, / Assume the port of Mars (*Henry V* Pro 1.5-6)

Before the Chorus of *Henry V* tells us that in the theater our "thoughts ... must deck our kings" (Pro. 28-30), he wishes for the real thing: "A kingdom for a stage, princes to act, / And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!" (Pro. 3-4). 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" (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 princes? If we were to witness an actual spectacle of royalty, then, the Chorus asserts, Harry should "like *himself* / Assume the port of Mars" (Pro 1.5-6, emphasis mine). Even in the Chorus's fantasy of being able to stage Harry himself—instead of 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" (Pro. 6).[62] When the Chorus imagines presenting the king himself, the king appears in another role.

Whereas *Henry V* opens with the problem of conjuring Henry's royal presence for a theater audience gathered generations after the king's life, *1 Henry IV* traces the revelation of Prince Henry's royalty, a revelation which relies on effective theatrical techniques. The royal self always is represented as being like

[62] 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 character)" (*OED* 4), but it also could mean "To take as being one's own, to arrogate . . . to usurp" (*OED* 7). Thus the word *assume* inherently connects playing a role with usurping that role. The *port* of Mars could mean the "the deportment or behavior" of Mars (*OED* n. 4) but also the "place" (*OED* n. 1) of Mars. The idea of assuming the place of a god evokes another meaning of *assume*, namely "to receive up into heaven" (*OED* 1b).

something other than the heir apparent. Paradoxically, as Prince Henry's royal self is likened to other things, his royalty is affirmed as authentic, inimitable, and unmistakable.

Prince Henry's royalty is revealed through comparison most lavishly on the day of the Battle of Shrewsbury where Prince Henry "redeem[s]" himself on "Percy's head" (3.2.151). The rebel Vernon, reporting to Hotspur about the king's army, gives an exuberant description of the armed Prince of Wales. Vernon speaks nine similes in thirteen lines, and two of the similes are extended (4.1.97-109). When Vernon perceives Prince Henry as "gorgeous as the sun at midsummer" (4.1.101), he affirms that the Prince has kept his promise to "imitate the sun" (1.2.187). But Vernon also compares the prince who is "all furnished, all in arms" (4.1.97) to ostriches, eagles, images, the month of May, goats, bulls, and Mercury. The similes function like Prince Henry's armour: 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 filled with what Prince Henry refers to as "base comparisons" (2.4.242). The figurative and punning language of the tavern world can debunk royalty through such "base" similitudes and metaphors. At

the same time, however, the worldly materials of the base 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. *1 Henry IV* 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" (2.4.479-480) complicates the idea that the Prince is essentially royal while seemingly wayward. But what exactly does Falstaff mean in asserting 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" (2.4.466-467), 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" (471-472). Also 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" (2.4.478-481).

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.[63] 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." 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 are somehow made. And yet Falstaff—and the play—ultimately uphold Prince Henry's royalty. *1 Henry IV*'s base comparisons suggest a way to understand

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[63] 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" (3.3.132), Falstaff cleverly shifts the terms of value: "A thousand pound, Hal? A million. Thy love is worth a million. Thou owest me thy love" (3.1.135-136). 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.

how royalty can be thought of as at once essential and made. This paradox, likely obscured from subjects in the everyday reign of a monarch, is revealed to the audience of this staged history.

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

In *Richard II* after King Richard is deposed, York describes how Richard

was received by the people "As in a theater the eyes of men, / After a well-graced actor leaves the stage, / Are idly bent on him that enters next" (*Richard II* 5.2.23-25). York's description is especially fitting here because Richard's bad acting cost him his kingdom. *1 Henry IV* depicts the heir-apparent's approach to the royal role in a time when the monarchy's legitimacy has not been guaranteed solely by patrimony, a time when acting convincingly like royalty is crucial to retaining 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.[64] In such a system, legitimacy of kings depends on preventing queens' adultery. But in *1 Henry IV* 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. "That thou are my son I have partly thy mother's word" (2.4.392-393), Falstaff says to Hal when playing the role of his disapproving father-king.[65] Only in the tavern world burlesque is the heir-apparent's legitimacy discussed in the terms of bodily

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[64] Jean Howard and Phyllis 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).

[65] Similarly, in *2 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" (2.4.231).

conception. At court, cuckoldry becomes a figure of political abstraction.

The actual king is himself accused by the rebels of being the usurping cuckoo, 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. (5.1.59-63)

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

King Henry's doubts about his own legitimacy overshadow any doubt about the paternity of his son. Indeed, Henry imagines his wayward son as divinely conceived, bred from his blood by God as a punishment 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)

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 as an illegitimate king who raises a wayward prince. Indeed, King Henry wishes that "it could be proved / That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged" his Harry Plantagenet for Harry Percy (1.1.84-88).[66]

While Worcester sees Henry IV as a usurping cuckoo, Henry IV sees Prince Hal as a bird whose "affections ... do hold a wing / Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors" (3.2.30-31). Hal's wayward flight takes him from the court to the tavern. King Henry IV wonders if the tavern's "rude society" could

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[66] 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).

"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. (2.4.400-404)

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 is "proven" by the authorized name for the thing known as pitch.[67] Pitch "doth defile" and "so"

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[67] 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 up thy words, and will not spare to do thee hurt, and to put thee in prison. (Ecclesiasticus 13. 2, 4 & 12).

does the company the Prince keeps defile. But although these ideas are linked by the word "so," the later only follows from the former through the power of the implied analogy, namely *Prince Henry's company is like pitch*. [68]

While playing king Falstaff reveals how claims and values can be authorized by establishing the legitimacy of a word, a symbol, and its heritage. The gaps and slips in these lineages that become obvious in the tavern parody cast a shadow of doubt on the lines of authority established at court. As William Empson remarks of another instance of doubling in the play, "[t]he double plot method is carrying a fearful strain here" (Empson 1974, 46). These tavern parodies of court as well as the ongoing tavern banter, brimming with figures and puns, threaten to disorder accepted, and obscured, linguistic lineages.

Words, like men, can be defiled by the company they keep, and these defiled words can, in turn, defile society. Doll Tearsheet makes this point

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[68] Whereas, as I shall discuss, "base comparisons" can be considered an element of what Bakhtin calls the *grotesque*, epic similes are more like what Bakhtin describes as the *classical* body: "isolated, alone, fenced off from all other bodies. All signs of its unfinished character, of its growth and proliferation were eliminated; its protuberances and offshoots were removed, its convexities (signs of new sprouts and buds) smoothed out, its apertures closed" (Bakhtin 1984, 28). This closed-off quality is particularly characteristic of epic simile form in which the boundaries of the comparison are explicitly drawn: it is introduced with "like" or "as"; the quality of the vehicle to which the tenor is compared explained in some detail; the closing is signaled with "so" or "even so"; and the comparison is summed up to end the simile. In the parodic drama, however, where Falstaff's epic simile is fallacious, the epic simile is revealed as a form that can hide a gap in logic.

explicitly when, in *2 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" (2.4.114-116). 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 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 "bull's pizzle" and "stock-fish" (2.4.239) that the Prince refers to Falstaff's metaphors as "base comparisons" (2.4.243). "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 less impolite.

The tenor of a metaphor can be ill-sorted by its vehicle. When representing something abstract or intangible, the vehicle of a metaphor or simile debases its tenor by bringing it down to the material world for comparison with some sensible object. Indeed, Thomas Wilson in *The Arte of Rhetorique* lists this type of metaphor as the first kind of metaphoric "translation":

> 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 1560/1994, 173)

Here Wilson demonstrates how a metaphor can bring something conceptual down to something corporeal—from thought to smell, from emotion to digestion. Similarly, Wilson's description of *similitude* 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.[69] (Wilson

[69] 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" (44). Even to understand divine scripture one must have knowledge of material things.

1560/1994, 185)

In the types of metaphors and similes 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. And it is this type of metaphor and simile 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 mind to body translation. The Prince tells Falstaff that he sees no reason why he should "demand the time of day" (1.2.11) unless "hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawd, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta" (1.2.6-10). 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.

Many critics have discussed the carnival aspects of the tavern scenes of *1 Henry IV*.[70] The metaphors and similes that represent something abstract by

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[70] 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).

presenting it as material reveal one mechanism by which the carnivalesque nature of the tavern world emerges. These "base comparisons" can be thought of as *grotesque* in Bakhtin's sense:

> The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity. (Bakhtin 1984, 19)

Metaphors and similes allow us to understand something (the tenor) by perceiving it in relation to something different (the vehicle). But the differences between the tenor and the vehicle turn out to be a foil for some essence the vehicle and tenor share. Puns, on the other hand, connect seemingly similar words—words that sound alike—that turn out to be essentially different. While metaphor and simile generate new understanding by logically conjoining different words that share some similar quality, puns spawn new ideas by echoing like-sounding 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 and similes are.[71]

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[71] In this way, puns fit yet another aspect of Bakhtin's notion of the *grotesque*: they are "a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming" (Bakhtin 1984, 24).

One of Falstaff's very first speeches (it 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 another meaning of the word: "attractiveness, charm" (*OED* 1) or "an individual virtue or excellence, divine in its origin" (*OED* 11e).[72] These more lofty meanings of *grace* are degraded as Falstaff moves the word into its new context where it signifies a short, common blessing recited before an unceremonious meal.

While some metaphors lower the abstract to the material, others figures can raise the material to the abstract. In his *Aesthetics*, Hegel, observing both directions in which such metaphors can work, describes that a "principal task" in

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

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" (Hegel 405). Giving the examples of "*laughing* fields" and "*angry* flood" (405), Hegel observes that the "natural and sensuous" can be "imaged in the form of spiritual phenomena and therefore elevated and ennobled" (405). Conversely, "something spiritual is also brought near to our vision through the picture of natural objects" (405).[73]

Hegel distinguishes between the poetic invention of new metaphors and the "mass of metaphors" "already contain[ed]" in every language. In his discussion of these conventional metaphors, now often referred to as *dead metaphors*, Hegel cites the examples of *fassen* and *begreifen* (which can mean *to*

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[73] 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:

> Forwhy, 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. (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" (*Richard II* 1.3.208), the breath at which Bolingbroke earlier wondered: "how long a time lies in one little word!" (1.3.206). Once disempowered of its kingly performative power, Richard's words seem instead like pathetic figurative speech, indicating Richard's deluded imagining that "senseless brands" would feel for his fate.

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" (Hegel 1975, 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 form 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 to think of perceptible grasping by the hand. (404)

The lively metaphors of the tavern world remind us of the concrete pictures, the sensuous reality from which the spiritual is derived. The figurative speech of the tavern world reveals how although the spiritual is built on the material, the spiritual eventually can bury its material foundations. The demeaning figures uncover these material origins. But such excavations do not merely lower value: they guarantee the value of an abstraction by providing some tangible proof,

like gold guaranteeing paper currency.

When, after a punning exchange, Falstaff exclaims that Hal is the "most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince" (1.2.77-78), Falstaff refers most immediately to the Prince's comment about the "melancholy of Moorditch," a pun which brings the humour causing Falstaff's alleged melancholic condition down to the literal black bile of a drainage ditch.[74] Changing the subject, Falstaff asks the Prince to "trouble" him "no more with vanity" (1.2.78-79). 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"(1.2.80-82). Falstaff moves from the profitless punning to his desire to buy good names, his and the Prince's names 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* v2) but also *to estimate the worth of* (*OED* v1) and connects the bad behavior which warrants scolding to

[74] Editor David Kastan notes that Moorditch was a "foul drainage ditch north of the City of London" (155).

royal value. When the Prince expresses reluctance to participate in the robbery, Falstaff's punning response degrades royalty to mere money: "thou cam'st not of the blood royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings" (1.2.133-134). 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—kingly (*OED* 1) and the name of an English gold coin (*OED* 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 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 the abstract royalty. [75]

1 Henry IV suggests that Hal, at the start of the play, does not fully

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[75] Whereas *Richard II* exposes the notion of an essential value of royalty as artifice, *1 Henry IV shows* how that rift 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. (*Richard II* 3.2.58-62)

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" (5.5.67-68).

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 leading up to the robbery indicates that the Prince does need lessons in learning how that singular and exclusive identity can be masked—and in *1 Henry IV* masking identity emerges as a process 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'll 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, Bardolf and Gadshill. An ambivalent thief, the prince appears in this scene as naïve about disguises and plots, all of which must

be laid out 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" (1.2.165-167), Poins has to explain to Hal that they'll hide the horses, change their vizards, and mask their outward garments with buckram (1.2.168-171). 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 turnd back" (1.2.173-174, 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?" (2.2.73). [76]

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

> The 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

[76] Hal's mentoring by Poins complicates the Prince's representation of himself as schemingly in control all along. It is likely that the discontinuity between a Prince who claims "I know you all" (1.2.185) and a Prince who worries that their friend "will know us ... to be ourselves" (1.2.165-167) motivated Gus Van Sant to rewrite this scene for his film *My Own Private Idaho* in which the Hal character, Scott Favor, suggests the joke as a means to persuade the Poins character, Mike Waters, to join the robbery.

> least he fought with, what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lives the jest. (1.2.176-177)

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 doesn't imagine is the one Falstaff will tell about how instinct prevented him from killing the true prince (2.4.261). This lie about an undisguisable and protected royal presence provides cover for more than Falstaff's cowardice. Falstaff's excuse is funny because everyone, including the audience, knows he is lying. But the excuse also rings true, incomprehensible as it may be. Within the world of the play, this likely feels true to everyone in the tavern, and it also likely feels dramatically true to everyone in the audience: Falstaff simply couldn't kill Hal because Hal is the true prince. Thus, even as Falstaff's cowardice is revealed, so is the Prince's royalty. In this scene royal presence is presented paradoxically both as "essential" in the sense of given at birth and as "made" in the sense of constructed by man. Falstaff's comic "inability" to kill the true prince, one of "many" marching in buckram suits,[77] will be reiterated as history when the

[77] 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).

rebels are unable to kill the king, one of many marching in the king's coats (5.3.29).[78]

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" (1.2.133-134)) acquires an unexpected accuracy. By participating in the robbery—by standing for royals—the Prince demonstrates his royalty. As Poins predicts, in Falstaff's reproof lives the jest. But this denial also gives life to the re-proof 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 true prince, even as he prepares to re-create himself, even as we laugh.

The alternation between the Prince's base comparisons to earthly, tangible matter and lofty comparisons to heavenly, intangible essences is a crucial part of the effective revelation of his royalty. By imitating both the heavenly sun and the corporeal son of flesh and blood, the Prince becomes aligned with the powerful mystery of the divine incarnation. When, before the Battle of

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[78] David 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.

Shrewsbury, Vernon lavishes praises on the Prince, Hotspur quiets him and shifts to a new comparison: "They come like sacrifices in their trim, / And to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war / All hot and bleeding will we offer them. The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit / Up to the ears in blood" (4.1.112-116). Although Hotspur conjures a classical god, he also conjures sacrifice which unwittingly aligns the Prince with a symbolic source of power. As Hotspur figures the "nimble-footed madcap" (4.1.94) as a victim of his slaughter, he casts the Son as a sacrificial victim, helping, in a Christian world, to figure him divinely royal.

When Hal promises his father that he will "redeem all this on Percy's head" (3.2.132), he promises that he will "wear a garment all of blood / And stain my favours in a bloody mask, / Which washed away shall scour my shame with it" (3.2.135-137). Here Hal evokes the language of Christian sacrifice and revelation. On the day of the Prince's battle with Hotspur, the King remarks "How bloodily the sun begins to peer / Above yon bulky hill" (5.1.1-2), and on this day the bloody son redeems "all this" on Percy's head.

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 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)

How does the Prince who did not know, as Poins did, that Falstaff and the others would be too cowardly to fight suddenly claim to "know you all" just as soon as Poins leaves the stage? How does the Prince who couldn't figure out how he and Poins could disguise themselves so that the others wouldn't know them "to be ourselves" (1.2.167) suddenly conceive so subtle a relationship between mask and self? How does Prince Hal, who needed Poins's detailed instructions to participate in the Gad's Hill jest, acquire a nearly Iago-like grasp of scheming and seeming? As the Prince "reveals" himself and his purposes, however, these discontinuities are buried by the soliloquy form which sanctions Hal's self-proclaimed princely self and helps us to forget the man who needed to learn from Poins how to disguise and represent himself.

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 license: 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 constitute order" (Holderness 142). This shift in message and linguistic style that Berger and Holderness observe consolidates the Prince's power as the official voice of royalty as it consolidates our amnesia about how his official royal power is staged. The soliloquy enables the audience to forget that the prince we just had witnessed with Poins isn't the same prince speaking this soliloquy and prepares us for the Hal who, after the robbery, will tell Falstaff confidently: "Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down" (2.4.247-248).

In his soliloquy the Prince steps out of his tavern role by leaving behind the communal, punning, morphing prose for individual, directed, and didactic verse containing systematic metaphors and similes. "I will imitate the sun," he announces and then explains the nature of the sun in a six-line epic digression.

Indeed, the Prince almost speaks an epic simile: he announces his likeness to the sun and then explains the 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 doesn't make explicit, for example, 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. 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. Starting with "If all the year were playing holidays" (1.2.194), the Prince speaks three quatrains, though unrhymed, followed by a couplet. In form the Prince leaves epic for lyric; in content he leaves the cosmic and royal for the mundane and individual.

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 he makes this shift, the Prince 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; in the second part his reformation shines like bright metal on a sullen ground.[79] In imagery, the Prince moves back to the world of work and holiday, debt, coins, and jewels, the world where, 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).[80]

On one level the courtly imagery of the sun and the more common imagery of work and holiday assert the same idea in two different modes. If we take "you all" to refer to his tavern companions, Prince Henry says that he will uphold the unyoked humour of their idleness, the feature analogous to the base contagious clouds. How would the premise of the sonnet section apply to Falstaff? "If all the year were playing holidays, / To sport would be as tedious as to work." But one man's work is another man's idleness: as Falstaff jokes, his

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[79] The Q4 variant "soile" instead of "foil" (1.3.205) underlines that, while the primary meaning of "sullen ground" is, as editor David Kastan notes, "dull background," the sense of earth, dirt, the bottom is also lurking.

[80] 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).

"vocation" (1.2.100) is purse-taking. However ironically we understand Falstaff's comment that "'tis no sin for man to labour in his vocation" (1.2.100-101), the premise of the Prince's "sonnet" doesn't fit Falstaff's notion of work and idleness: 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. Thus, in his soliloquy the Prince not only reveals that he is participating in the tavern world as a foil to the revelation of his royal self; the actor-prince marginalizes Falstaff as unsuited to the categories by which he defines the world as he includes the audience in that world.

Ted Cohen's assertion that metaphor functions in "the achievement of intimacy," is illuminating here:

> There is a unique way in which the maker and the appreciator of a metaphor are drawn closer to one another. Three aspects are involved: (1) the speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation; (2) the hearer expends a special effort to accept the invitation; and (3) this transaction constitutes the acknowledgment of community. . . . This 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. (Cohen 1978, 6-7)

With his metaphor about work and holiday, the Prince begins to reshape who will be in and who will be out of his community. As his metaphoric language functions in the way Cohen describes, 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 suited to inviting private discourse between sonneteer and auditor. And with this intimacy, the Prince establishes, for the audience, rule as everyday and misrule as holiday.

Poins, the Prince's sometime mentor in disguise and jest, participates in but ultimately fails to understand the jest Hal subsequently proposes to perform at the expense of the drawer Francis. The Prince, noting 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" (2.4.16-18). The Prince enlists Poins' help to make the drawer Francis's "tale to . . . be nothing but 'Anon'" (2.4.31). Although the jest

works—Francis repeatedly responds "Anon" as the Prince and Poins demand his attention from different rooms—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). 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 provoke Falstaff's outrageous tale, the point of the Prince's jest is to prove that Francis has "fewer words than a parrot" (2.4.95-96). Whereas Sir John Falstaff is prompted and caught in the performance a highly imaginative lie, Francis is prompted and caught in the performance of his ordinary and frustrating lowly role.[81]

Prince Harry's education in using figurative language to shape

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[81] Although the Prince doesn't answer directly Poins's inquiry about the "cunning match" or "issue" of the jest, the Prince's subsequent claim about his relationship to time in turn evokes the rich meanings of Francis's oft-repeated "anon": "in one" (*OED* 1), "at once" (*OED* 4), "soon" (*OED* 5), and "a response by a servant etc. called: 'Immediately! presently! coming!" (*OED* 7).

> POINS But hark ye, what cunning match have you made with this jest of the drawer? Come, what's the issue?
> PRINCE I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of Goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight.
> What's o'clock, Francis?
> FRANCIS Anon, anon, sir. (2.4.87-93)
> PRINCE That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a parrot, and yet the son of a woman! His industry is upstairs and downstairs, his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning. I am not yet of Percy's mind . . . I prithee, call in Falstaff. I'll play Percy, and that damned brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife. (2.4.87-108)

The Prince tells Poins that he wants to stage the jest "to drive away the time till Falstaff come" (2.4.27) and then announces himself as full of time. The o'clock is anon, but the Prince is "not *yet* of Percy's mind."

community distinguishes him from his double, Harry Percy, whose failure as a leader emerges as connected to his markedly uncommunicative use of language. Unable to participate in the give-and-take of word play, Percy fails with his figures and puns 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" (1.3.108-209) 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. (1.3.210-217)

Here we see 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). Hotspur's puns thwart intercourse, a point that 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 (2.3.72-73)
>
> ....
>
> Lady Percy but if you go—
>
> Hotspur So far afoot? I shall be weary, love. (2.3.80-81)

Hotspur interrupts Lady Percy's question and asks one for her ("So far afoot?") that guarantees his ability to give a punning response. It's as if he doesn't 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, on the other hand, learns to participate in a community of mutual figurative language at the tavern. He will not, however, allow this community any discourse with his courtly life. We see Prince Henry draw 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)

Hal'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 Hal 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 Hal exits, Falstaff puns on Percy's name: "Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him" (57). Although the end of *1 Henry IV* 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.[82]

1 Henry IV has figured prominently in the by now familiar debate over the extent to which Shakespeare's plays subverted or reproduced the dominant political and social order. Critics' opinions range from the assertion that the play effectively contained any subversive energy it unleashed thereby furthering the status quo to the assertion that the play helped to bring about the social change leading to the deposition of Charles I. Stephen Greenblatt, for example, 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 the central character, charming us with its

[82] 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 (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).

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). Decades earlier C. L. Barber makes a similar point when he asserts that "the 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 1990/1959, 205). David Kastan, on the other hand, argues 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 by describing how the play stages the exclusion of women from the historical process but subverts that order to the extent that it reveals how the reproduction of patriarchal authority is dependent upon such exclusion. All of these critics, and many 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.

Figurative language connects and mediates Prince Henry's relationships to the court and tavern communities. While Prince Henry, as he announces in his soliloquy, has a specific purpose at the tavern where he rehearses dialects and styles of speech not spoken at court, the carnivalesque language of the tavern community shapes Prince Henry's royalty in ways that extend beyond the Prince's conscious plan. Figuring royalty with "base comparisons" does not only degrade royalty; 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.

C. L. Barber remarks that "at the heart" of the Henry IV plays "there 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, 194). "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: *1 Henry IV* demonstrates how although a single

man might not be able to make words things, a community of speakers can accomplish such reification through collaborative processes that are not entirely conscious. Barber argues that Shakespeare

> used the resources of a sophisticated theater to express, in his idyllic comedies and in his clowns' ironic misrule, the experience of moving to humorous understanding through saturnalian release. . . . The saturnalian pattern appears in many variations, all of which involve inversion, statement and counterstatement, and a basic movement which can be summarized in the formula, through release to clarification. (3-4)

In *1 Henry IV* the "humorous understanding," of which Barber speaks—the "clarification" which follows "release"—is an understanding of a paradox about royalty that Falstaff expresses when he says that the Prince is "essentially made without seeming so."

5. 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* 25)

But however stone dead such metaphors seem, we can easily wake them up.
(I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* 101)

The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures.
(Lady Macbeth)

John Marston brilliantly imagines the haunting nature of similes for a scene in *Antonio's Revenge* in which Balurdo relates his dream about the appearance of the ghost of a simile:

> Verily, Sir Geoffrey had a monstrous strange dream the last night.
>
> 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 Monsieur *Even-so* following after, whilst Signor Simile stalked most prodigiously in the midst. At which I bewrayed the fearfulness of my nature, and—being ready to forsake the fortress of my wit—start up, called for a clean shirt, ate a mass of broth, and with that I awaked. (*Antonio's Revenge* 1.3.61-71)

Balurdo's dream-simile reveals an inherent tension between this figure's formal and protean nature. The simile's entourage proceeds in the expected order: Signor Simile's page "Master *Even-as*" goes before Signor Simile, and page "Monsieur *Even-so*" follows after. And yet the ghost of this simile is perceived by Balurdo as so "abominable" and "misshapen" that it causes Balurdo to "bewra[y] the fearfulness of his nature" and "forsake the fortress of his wit." Considering that "bewray" can mean "befoul," this paradoxically shapen and misshapen simile with orderly but ugly pages has the power to cause Balurdo to lose the ability, in his dream, to contain himself: it has the power to transform his body and his mind.

Marston's tropical nightmare expresses a more general worry about the shape-shifting nature of figurative language, especially simile and metaphor. Such shape-shifting may be formally contained by a simile, where the transformation of *this* into *that* is announced and contained by the convention of announcing the comparison with *even as* or *as this* and announcing the transition back to the subject with *even so* or *so that*. Nevertheless, these figures threaten to shift the shape of those who encounter them.[83] Franco Moretti has argued that metaphors "*give form* to the unknown: they contain it, and keep it somehow under control" (Moretti 46-47), but in Shakespearean drama the unknown and potentially unruly realities expressed by metaphorical language never are entirely contained by the form of a metaphor— or even by the form of a simile. Metaphors and similes haunt the worlds of Shakespeare's plays because the progeny of a metaphorical coupling has the potential to escape its formal container, live its own life, and transform the world into which it is released. The uncontainable and liminal nature of metaphor—its situation at the border of waking and sleep, life and death, reality and dream, vision and

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[83] Robert Watson sees a kind of violence in a simile's "like," only surpassed by metaphor: In a discussion of simile in *As You Like It* he says: "While there may be 'great virtue in If', in 'Like' there lies the temptation to a great sin, an appropriative violence; . . . 'like' is a gesture of conquest—a kind of temporary occupation that stops just short of the totalitarian presumption of metaphor" (Watson 2003, 89).

hallucination—helps propel the controversy over *Hamlet*'s famous ghost scene.

But before turning to *Hamlet*'s ghost, I shall set the scene with an account of *dead metaphor*, 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. The fate of such metaphors has provoked controversy that parallels some aspects of the controversy over *Hamlet*'s ghost. Do dead metaphors become mere literal words? Or do metaphorical traces linger? If dead metaphors no longer demand our conscious solving of a riddle, is there nonetheless some other demand they do make? Are dead metaphors points of contact for ancestral, once living words, sites at which we can witness their 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?

Nelson Goodman frames the question about dead metaphor's status by asking, "Is a metaphor, then, simply a juvenile fact, and a fact simply a senile metaphor?"(Goodman 1976, 68). Indeed some philosophers have argued that

when metaphors die they become literal words. Donald Davidson is skeptical of the idea that a literal word would be haunted by a ghost from a past metaphoric life: "Once upon a time, I suppose, rivers and bottles did not, as they do now, literally have mouths" (Davidson 1978, 35). Here Davidson relegates to fable ("Once upon a time") the possibility that a dead metaphor (*mouth* as applied to river or bottle) was once a live metaphor—and he even qualifies the possibility in fable ("I suppose"). Taking the example of *mouth* as applied to rivers and bottles, Davidson argues that

> [t]hinking of present usage, it doesn't matter whether we take the word "mouth" to be ambiguous because it applies to entrances to rivers and openings of bottles as well as to animal apertures, or we think there is a single field of application that embraces both. What does matter is that 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. There is no similarity to seek because it consists simply in being referred to by the same word. (Davidson 1978, 35)

This noticing of likeness that a live metaphor demands is provoked by

what Ricoeur calls *semantic impertinence*. Ricoeur explains that "the metaphorical sense of a word presupposes contrast with a literal sense; as predicate, this contrasting sense transgresses semantic pertinence" (Ricoeur 1979, 290). And because dead metaphors no longer transgress semantic pertinence, Ricoeur, like Davidson, asserts that "dead metaphors are no longer metaphors but instead are associated with literal meaning," a transformation that "extend[s] its polysemy" (290). Ricoeur argues that "the study of the lexicalization of metaphor . . . greatly contributes to dispelling the false enigma of worn-out metaphor,"[84] and he blames the efficacy attributed to dead metaphor on word-centered metaphor theories: "The effectiveness of dead metaphor can be inflated . . . only in semiotic conceptions that impose the primacy of denomination, and hence of substitution of meaning. These conceptions thereby condemn the analysis to overlook the real problems of metaphoricity, which, as we know, are related to the play of semantic pertinence and impertinence" (290). Ricoeur's assertion, however, does not account for I. A. Richards' theory of metaphor which features how metaphors affect entire sentences and thoughts and also asserts that dead

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[84] Judith Anderson challenges the applicability to the early modern period of Ricoeur's notion of the lexicalization of metaphor: "The very meaning of lexicalization in the early modern period presents another problem for Ricoeur's metaphorics. What would Ricoeur make of Robert Estienne's highly tropic, etymologized lexicalization of *gravis*, for instance? What would he use as lexical measure of English in the absence of a comprehensive lexicon representing the word-stock of the language?" (Anderson 1998, 241).

metaphors retain metaphoric potential.

William Empson and I. A. Richards, who embrace interactive theories of metaphor, nonetheless claim an afterlife for dead metaphors, particularly metaphors in the English language and as used by Shakespeare. In *Seven Types of Ambiguity* Empson asserts that "All languages are composed of dead metaphors as the soil of corpses," and he singles out English as a language "perhaps uniquely full" of dead metaphors. Although Empson's own simile ("as the soil of corpses") suggests complete decomposition in which old metaphors would not be recognizable but from which new ones could grow, Empson reserves the possibility that these decomposed metaphoric corpses somehow are not entirely dead but rather "sleeping" (Empson 1930, 25). Furthermore, Empson notes that such "dead" metaphors, even when they seem like literal speech, retain metaphorical powers: "while making a direct statement" they "colour it with an implied comparison" (25).

I. A. Richards would agree. In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* he complains that Lord Kames's rule to "avoid mounting metaphor upon metaphor" not only would "make havoc of most writing and speech"; it would make "Shakespeare the faultiest writer who ever held a pen" (Richards 1936, 101). Richards's main objection to disregarding some metaphors by classifying them as "dead" is that

doing so disavows the essentially metaphorical nature of speech. Such "dead" metaphors, he argues, are "the most regular sustaining metaphors of all speech" (101). Furthermore, Richards contests the alleged inefficacy of such metaphors: "however stone dead such metaphors seem, we can easily wake them up" (101).

Empson and Richards thus claim an agency for dead metaphors after their lively days of provoking conscious semantic impertinences have long passed. Jacques Derrida, in his study of the metaphoric nature of metaphysical concepts, takes up the question of whether or not we have access to such metaphoric remains. At the opening of "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" Derrida rehearses a dialogue from Anatole France's *Garden of Epicurus* to expose how France "undertakes an etymological or philological work which is to waken all the sleeping figures" (212). Derrida doubts being able to reach sleeping figures via this kind of archaeological philology because he questions the supposedly continuous process by which they have built up, one that is allegedly exposed as metaphysical concepts are revealed to have effaced sensory figures.

Noting that the "history of metaphysical language is said to be confused with the erasure of the efficacity of the sensory figure and the *usure* of its effigy" (210), Derrida observes *usure*'s double import: "erasure by rubbing, exhaustion,

crumbling away, certainly; but also the supplementary product of a capital, the exchange which far from losing the original investment would fructify its initial wealth, would increase its return in the form of revenue, additional interest, linguistic surplus value" (210). But Derrida challenges the idea that after a metaphysical metaphor has "erased piles of physical discourses, one always should be able to reactivate the primitive inscription and restore the palimpsest" (212). Furthermore, he observes that *usure* is "a metaphor that implies a *continuist presupposition*: the history of metaphor appears essentially not as a displacement with breaks, as reinscriptions in a heterogeneous system, mutations, separations without origin, but rather as a progressive erosion, a regular semantic loss, an uninterrupted exhausting of the primitive meaning: an empirical abstraction without extraction from its own native soil" (215). Derrida wonders, "The exergue effaced, how are we to decipher figures of speech, and singularly metaphor, in the philosophical text?" (219) and instead attempts to recognize "the *condition for the impossibility* of such a project" (219). He concludes that "one metaphor, at least, always would remain excluded, outside the system: the metaphor" (219-220).[85] Thus, Derrida condemns the search for metaphoric

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[85] Ricoeur explicitly challenges Derrida's analysis: "This perplexing tactic has proven to be only one episode in a much vaster strategy of deconstruction that always consists in destroying metaphysical discourse by reduction to aporias" (287).

remains as misguided because impossible.

Hegel, in the *Aesthetics,* had suggested that just this kind of continuity exists. Citing the examples of *to grasp* and *to comprehend*, Hegel 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). Commenting on Hegel's account, Derrida notes: "This is an almost constant characteristic in the discourse on philosophical metaphor: there are said to be inactive metaphors, which have no interest at all since the author *did not think of them*, and since the metaphorical effect is to be studied in the field of consciousness. The traditional opposition between living and dead metaphors corresponds to the difference between effective and extinct metaphors" (225-226). But Derrida, stressing the metaphoricity of metaphor, rejects the idea of being able to reach such an origin. 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. . . . Supposing that we might reach it (touch it, see it, comprehend it?), this tropic and prephilosophical resource could not have the archeological simplicity of a proper origin, the

virginity of a history of beginnings" (229).[86] Thus, Derrida doesn't reject the metaphoric ghost "inscribed in white ink," the "invisible design covered over in the palimpsest" (213), but he doesn't think such a ghost will appear or speak to us. He declares the impossibility of reaching ancestral origins of words or ideas. Indeed, for Derrida, who concludes that metaphor "always carries death within itself" (271), metaphor is already inherently a kind of ghost.

The twentieth-century notion that language is composed of dead metaphors evokes earlier accounts of the primacy of metaphoric language. Philosophers ranging from Giambattista Vico to Jean Jacques Rousseau to Friedrich Nietzsche have asserted that metaphor is more primal than and predates literal language, though they differ greatly on the mechanism by which the figurative leads to the literal and on what is gained and what is lost as sensual and passionate perception gives way to rational abstraction.

Vico sees metaphor as "the most luminous figure, and hence the most basic and common," and he claims that "the earliest speech, that of the theological poets, did not use words which suited the nature of the things they

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[86] Ricoeur challenges Derrida's reading of Hegel: "Where Hegel saw an innovation of meaning, Derrida sees only the wearing away of metaphor and a drift towards idealization resulting from the dissimulation of this metaphorical origin" (Ricoeur 1979. 286). Judith Anderson asserts that Ricoeur has misinterpreted Derrida (Anderson 1998, 240) because he fails to see that "Derrida actually understands" Hegel's *Aufhebung* "as an economic 'surplus'—hence a plus—that masks its (material) source" (240).

expressed. . . . Rather, their first speech was a *fantastic speech based on animate substances*, most of which they imagined to be divine" (Vico 1999, 158-159). Vico regards figures of speech "which were previously thought to be the ingenious invention of writers" instead as "necessary modes of expression in all the early poetic nations" (162). "These expressions," Vico asserts, "became figurative only later, as the human mind developed and invented words which signified abstract forms" (162).

Like Vico, Rousseau imagines the first speech of men to be that of poets rather than "geometers" (Rousseau 1997, 252). In the "Essay on the Origin of Languages" Rousseau claims that men "did not begin by reasoning but by feeling" (252) and that speech arose from passion, not necessity: "Just as the first motives that made man speak were passions, his first expressions were Tropes. Figurative language arose first, proper [or literal] meaning was found last" (253). To illustrate his claim, Rousseau gives the example of a savage who when frightened at meeting a stranger will have perceived the stranger as larger and stronger and therefore will have called him a *giant*. Rousseau's example shows that what he is calling "figurative" is in fact a literal term that happens to be wrongly applied when a speaker's heightened emotion distorts his clear perception. Fear makes the savage perceive the stranger as a giant; thus, the

name literally matches the savage's deluded perception. Eventually, in a calmer state, the savage perceives that the so-called giants are no stronger or larger than he, at which point he invents another name common to them both, namely *man*. Then the savage "will restrict the name *Giant* to the false object that had struck him during his illusion" (253). 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" (253).

Rousseau's claim that figurative language developed first is thus a retrospective claim from an enlightened age. Whereas Rousseau trusts the enlightened mind to correct the errors of language distorted by the passions, Nietzsche finds the enlightened mind to be the distorting culprit that obliterates the actual differences perceived among objects to produce abstractions. These concepts named by words are then accepted as truths by deluded human beings. In "On Truth and Falsity in their Extramoral Sense" Nietzsche asserts that the "drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive" (97), and he celebrates those metaphors we form as we freshly perceive the world. Nietzsche imagines a silent—and sinister—agency to our forgetting the

metaphoric nature of our perceptions and the obliteration of differences among those perceptions that are required to make human-centered abstractions seem like truths. Man forgets "that he himself is an artistically creating subject" in order to live with "repose, security, and consistency" (94), though at the cost of a prison-like existence.

How do these questions raised about dead metaphor—(Does it stay dead without influence on the living word? Does it decompose to become the soil for living metaphor? Is it beyond our reach?)—and the questions about figurative language's relationship to primal heightened emotional circumstances echo aspects of the questions raised about *Hamlet*'s ghost? Written, as has been long observed, at a time when Roman Catholic rituals for contact with the dead had been outlawed by the church and state of England, *Hamlet* continues, centuries later, to provoke questions about ghosts and the dead. What, as Hamlet asks, would this gracious figure (3.4.105)?

The Wittenberg-schooled Prince starts the interrogation of the "questionable shape" (1.4.43) when he first encounters the ghost and asks, "Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd" (1.4.40). Hamlet's question lays the foundation of others critics have raised: Does the ghost lie or tell the truth? Is it literal or figurative? Critics and directors have struggled to understand if the

ghost is outside or inside of Hamlet: as Macbeth asks of the dagger, is it a "fatal vision" or a dagger "of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain" (*Macbeth* 2.1.37-40)?[87]

Critics also have imagined Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost—the remains of his father—as a confrontation with origins. Marjorie Garber (1987, 27), Patricia Parker (1994, 136), and Stanley Cavell (2003, 183) all have argued that the ghost scene is a kind of primal scene. If so, how might Vico's, Rousseau's, and Nietzsche's notions of primal scenes of figurative discourse apply along with Freud's of primal scenes of parental intercourse? Hamlet longs for chaste conceptions and a world not out of joint. Yet, the ghost's words slip between worlds. What starts as a figurative report on Claudius's lying to Denmark's subjects ends as a literal report about poisoning the king's ear. This shift may indicate a slip in which a metaphor's vehicle usurps the status of literal truth. It may also fuel the critical commentary that slips from whether or not the ghost is honest to whether or not the ghost is real. I shall turn now to that controversy.

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[87] Directors' and critics' reasons for locating the ghost inside of Hamlet tend to have a slippery logic. Director Jonathan Pryce, for example, staged and played the ghost scene as Hamlet's being possessed by his father's spirit: Pryce, as Hamlet, also spoke the Ghost's lines in a contorted ghostly manner. In the documentary *The History of Hamlet*, Pryce explains that he did this to make the ghost believable to twentieth century spectators who likely wouldn't believe in ghosts. But why would someone who didn't believe in ghosts believe in possession by spirits? Unconsciously, it seems, Pryce's attempt to make the Ghost believable led him to make the Ghost speak from inside of Hamlet.

"But this eternal blazon must not be / To ears of flesh and blood" (1.5.21-22)

"Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath / And breath of life, I have no life to breathe / What thou hast said to me" (3.4.199-201)

Stanley Cavell, in his essay "Hamlet's Burden of Proof" (2003), takes up W. W. Greg's nearly century-old claim that Hamlet hallucinates the ghost's story. Greg had argued 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*" (Greg 1917, 401).[88] Noting that no one has satisfactorily answered Greg's claim, Cavell argues that the claim that the king doesn't see the dumb-show or that he sees it but is able to suppress his reaction until the repetition of the scene with words seem "essentially weaker than

[88] Although Christopher Pye incorrectly asserts that "Greg concludes . . . Claudius must be innocent" (Pye 2000, 105), Greg, in fact, does not question Claudius's guilt but rather his murder method.

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" (3.2.73-74). Cavell notes that he "simply assume[s] that by his 'imaginations' Hamlet is referring not alone to Claudius as a murderer but to the vivid pictures he paints of Claudius as his mother's lover" (183). How might doubts about the Queen's honesty—her intercourse, relate to doubts about the Ghost's honesty—his discourse?

The nature of the Ghost's speech is a problem that extends beyond the question of whether the Ghost is either lying or telling the truth.[89] Hamlet's

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[89] The question of the nature of the Ghost's discourse thus extends beyond "veracity," the term to which Cavell shifts after the first pages of his essay. By switching terms Cavell narrows Hamlet's doubt about the original assessment that the "vision . . . is an *honest* ghost" (1.5.144 emphasis mine)—with its broader emphasis on honor, respectability, and even chastity (*OED* 1, 3)—to a doubt about its *veracity*—with its narrower emphasis on speaking the truth.

encounter with the Ghost 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 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.

Hamlet's own uncertainty about the Ghost's status seems to destabilize critical views of 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 their charges that the ghost lies into charges 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 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" (182-183).

Greg argues that although Hamlet imagines that his father's Ghost has told him a story of death by poison in his ear, Hamlet actually recalls this story from the plot of a play he had seen. Greg thus asserts that Hamlet's staging of the dumb-show and the *Murder of Gonzago* is the staging of a play with which he already was familiar but imagined that he heard from his father's ghost (Greg 1917, 403). Cavell proposes that the "Ghost's story" is actually Hamlet's memory of his fantasy of a primal scene of parental intercourse. Cavell thus asserts that what Hamlet stages is the memory of a childhood fantasy (Cavell 2003, 183).

As Greg and Cavell discover pre-Ghost sources for Hamlet's plotting of the dumb-show and *Murder of Gonzago*, they rely on the unargued assertion that either the ghost is real and tells a literal, truthful 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 Ghost might not tell an entirely truthful story of King Hamlet's death. Keeping in mind Cavell's observation that to question

whether the dumb-show and *Murder of Gonzago* present accurately the way in which King Hamlet was murdered is not necessarily to assume that the Ghost is a figment of Hamlet's imagination, I shall return to the scene of the Ghost to investigate how a real ghost might have lied and how the questions about the Ghost's and Gertrude's honesty might reveal anxieties about the nature of conception in marriage and metaphor.

If Claudius's lack of reaction to the dumb-show indicates that the performance does not represent accurately the way in which King Hamlet was killed, then the Ghost himself has given out, as it were, a forged process of his own death.[90] But what kind of forgery? Does the Ghost plainly misrepresent the manner in which he was murdered? The Ghost's figure of the "ear of Denmark" and the metaphoric truth he expresses in his observation that the ear of Denmark has been "by a forged process of [his] death / Rankly abused" (1.5.36-37) may propel what moments later becomes the account of his own death by poison in the ear. The Ghost's account may slip from the metaphoric truth about the state's metaphorical body into a literal lie about the king's actual

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[90] Although, in his post-Mousetrap soliloquy, Claudius admits to murdering his brother, he never marvels at the plot of the dumb-show or *Murder of Gonzago*, nor does he wonder how Hamlet could have discovered his particular deed. Claudius knows that Hamlet is dangerous to him, but we cannot be sure whether Claudius feels he has been found out or merely threatened by the Prince.

body. If so, then the problem with Hamlet's attempt to catch the conscience of the king is that his encounter with the Ghost inspires a kind of 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 literal truths or lies, his attempts to forge proof for the ghost's story are foiled by his method of simply re-presenting the ghost's story and observing Claudius's reaction. Hamlet has conceived too simple a test for a world in which the ghost of your father may speak figurative as well as literal truths, 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), 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?

Indeed, 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" (1.5.102-104), 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. Hamlet's writing down the Ghost's words as an act of exclusive reverence is further foiled by Rousseau's observation that "Writing, which might be expected to fix language, is precisely what adulterates it; it changes not its words but its genius; it substitutes precision for expressiveness" (Rousseau 254).

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*.[91] 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 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" (Adelman 1992, 27). Hamlet struggles to keep the Ghost's words

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[91] Margaret 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, 295). Patricia Parker also observes that "a pun on 'matter' and female 'matrix' . . . runs through *Hamlet*" (Parker 1994, 121).

honest—unmixed with baser matter—even as he struggles to keep human conception pure. But Hamlet confronts his mother's unchaste marriage and his father's unchaste speech.

When the Ghost begins to speak, he narrates a literal and amazing account of his 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 Hamlet's "serious hearing" (1.5.4), 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 literal account of the unearthly horrors he has experienced, he uses figurative language to describe the potential effects of the forbidden tale on Hamlet: 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" (1.5.20). But, the Ghost claims, his literal tale is unspeakable: "this eternal blazon must not be / To ears of flesh and blood" (1.5.21-22). He cannot unfold these eternal horrible truths to the mortal Hamlet. Here the threat of how the literal tales of the forbidden world of bodiless spirits would transport Hamlet remain conditional similes: the threat of Hamlet's transformation is guarded against 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 tales begin to mix.[92]

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 of earthly Denmark, he employs the well-established metaphor of the state figured 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" (1.5.37-38). The story "given out" (1.5.34)—that a serpent stung King Hamlet while he was sleeping in his orchard—is, the Ghost reveals, a literal account of the king's death that happens to be a lie. The Ghost transforms Claudius's literal lie about a serpent's stinging King Hamlet into a metaphorical truth about Claudius: "The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears

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[92] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart commented that the ghost's speech in Hamlet would be far more effective if shorter. On November 29th, 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. The speech of the subterranean voice can be easily shortened and it will thereby gain more than it will lose. (Spaethling 2000, 218)

Mozart's observation that the more a ghost says, the less believable he will be as a ghost is of particular interest given the tradition of *Hamlet* critics who have proposed that the Ghost's story is not real. Somehow this ghost's lingering and speaking ruins his credibility as nether worldly.

his crown" (1.5.38-39). At first the metaphoric nature of the truth 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 the literal lie, framed by an obvious semantic impertinence (serpents don't wear crowns, and kings don't sting), is then recognized as true on another, figurative level.

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 metaphoric truth may become literalized and, wittingly or unwittingly, the Ghost may end up telling a literal lie. Such a slip would be facilitated by the conventional metaphoric equation of the 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 could slip quietly into *being* the literal ear of the king of Denmark. And so the truth that the metaphoric ear of the state Denmark has been metaphorically poisoned could become the lie that the literal ear of the King of Denmark has been literally poisoned. In this scenario, once uttered, the metaphor of Denmark's ear being abused generates the details of the literal

account of the murder of the King of Denmark. 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 literal truth. The kind of lie told by shifting a metaphor to a literal truth 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.

The possibility of such a slip from the figurative into the literal recalls Nietzsche's description of how man forgets "that the original metaphors of perception *are* metaphors, and takes them for things themselves" (Nietzsche 94). The discrepancy between the reality of King Hamlet's murder and the way it is told by the Ghost and then performed in the dumb-show and *Murder of Gonzago* could, in this analysis, be attributed to the discrepancy between a literal and figurative version of the murder—a discrepancy that is no longer recognizable because something uttered figuratively has been circulated as and become a literal truth. 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" (Nietzsche

94).[93] The Ghost scene suggests that when a dead or sleeping metaphor is aroused from its deathly slumber, it may have, with its new literal status, even greater power to affect a hearer. Longinus's account of how "the best use of a figure is when the very fact that it is a figure goes unnoticed" (29) is useful here. Longinus cites "greatness and passion" as "wonderful help and protection against the suspicions aroused by the use of figures" (29). With his passion aroused, Hamlet may hear the Ghost's figurative account of his death as literal speech.

Nelson Goodman, in an observation about conventional or "frozen" metaphors, addresses directly the question of its claim on veracity:

> A frozen metaphor has lost the vigor of youth, but remains a metaphor. Strangely, though, with progressive loss of its virility as a figure of speech, a metaphor becomes not less but more like literal truth. What vanishes is not its veracity but its vivacity. (Goodman 1988, 68)

[93] In his analysis of Shakespeare's ghosts, Stephen Greenblatt names "three fundamental perspectives to which Shakespeare repeatedly returns: the ghost as a figure of false surmise, the ghost as a figure or history's nightmare, and the ghost as a figure of deep psychic disturbance. Half-hidden in all of these is a fourth perspective: the ghost as a figure of the theater" (Greenblatt 2001, 157). The Ghost in *Hamlet* might be said to combine the figure of false surmise with the figure of history's nightmare. Indeed, Greenblatt's notion that the "hardening of dream into reality is, in effect, what Shakespeare calls history" (174) could be adapted: the hardening of metaphor into reality is what Shakespeare calls history.

Perhaps when a dead metaphor is resurrected (or a frozen one thawed) its vivacity is restored, its veracity intact. The ghost inhabits a domain in which vivacity vanishes while veracity becomes more literal. When a dead metaphor is roused from its sleep of death, it appears to awaken with a new material authority.

Hamlet risks his own vivacity by misapprehending the realm of the Ghost's veracity. Claudius, on the other hand, likely maintains his distance from the dumb-show because although it is an "*image* of a murder" (3.2.233 emphasis mine) and "something *like* the murder of [Hamlet's] father" (2.2.591 emphasis mine), it is no mere reenactment. Poison in Denmark's ear is a metaphoric account of the murder of King Hamlet misunderstood and presented as literal. It is a metaphor that has usurped the status of literal truth.

Although Hamlet may not fully grasp the effects of the potential discontinuity between figurative and literal speech, he is troubled greatly by the potential discontinuity between words and deeds. 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" (2.2.385), 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" (2.2.400). Considering that "modesty" means not only "freedom from excess" (*OED* 1) but also "scrupulous chastity of thought, speech, and conduct" (*OED* 3a), Hamlet stresses, as it were, the unacted play's chastity: devoid of the excesses that make "the matter savoury" (2.2.401), he remembers one who called it "an honest method" (2.2.403). In choosing this speech that commingles modesty and cunning, Hamlet imagines the possibility of imparting chaste, fruitful knowledge;[94] in choosing a speech about Pyrrhus' vengeful killing of the "Old grandsire Priam" (2.2.422), Hamlet imagines regicide and revenge in an ancient kingdom in which the conjunction between father-king and state is fully operational.

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[94] 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" (3.2.40-43, my emphasis).

Although Pyrrhus misses when he first strikes at Priam, the "whiff and wind" (2.2.431) of Pyrrhus's sword causes Priam to fall. So then does Ilium itself: "senseless Ilium / Seeming to feel this blow . . . Stoops to his base" (2.2.432-434) and the "hideous crash / Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear" (2.2.434-435). With his ear prisoner, Pyrrhus "Did nothing" (2.2.440). The mere gesture and sound of Pyrrhus's attempt on Priam causes the crash of Ilium, which in turn deafens and immobilizes Pyrrhus: the gesture and sound of the assault on "father" (2.2.432) Priam destroys Ilium itself. Furthermore, the widowed queen spontaneously expresses her horror, and that "instant burst of clamour" (2.2.473), in turn, rouses the gods' passion (2.2.474). Whereas in Denmark only in Hamlet's wry joke "father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh" (4.4.54-55), in Troy man and wife and gods are effectively conjoined.[95]

The Ghost of King Hamlet tells his son that the forged process of his death—the whiff and wind of a lie, as it were—abuses the state of Denmark. But

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[95] Various critics have commented on the problematic and failed conjunctions in *Hamlet*. Frank Kermode comments on the tension or strain caused by the play's many hendiadys (1985, 35-63). George Wright, in his discussion of the effect of hendiadys in the play, asserts that "what the play suggests, and what hendiadys helps to convey, is that the conjunctions on which life depends, on which the world's customs and institutions are founded, cannot be trusted" (Wright 1981, 181). Richard McCoy, tracing the "matrimonial implications" and "mystical political significance" of the term *conjoined*, has described 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).

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" (2.2.506-507). Yet, the avenging Prince feels he "must hold [his] tongue" (1.2.159), that he can "say nothing" (2.2.521). 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 Troy or in King Duncan's Scotland, in King Hamlet's Denmark there is no cosmic response to the king's murder. Nothing happens that is "unnatural, / Even like the deed that's done" (*Macbeth* 2.4.10-11), as the Old Man in *Macbeth* describes the "Hours dreadful and things strange" (*Macbeth* 2.4.3) that follow the murder of King Duncan. In Scotland "dark night strangles the traveling lamp" (2.4.7-8), and "darkness does the face of earth entomb" (2.3.9). But in Denmark it is round-the-clock human activity that disturbs the time: the "sweaty haste" that "make[s] the night joint-labourer with the day" (1.1.80-81) is the new king's military preparations to defend the country against young Fortinbras.

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's murder of Priam and eventually speaks explicitly of being "prompted to revenge" (2.2.579-580) and of his failure to take the appropriate action. But Hamlet is at first more concerned about his inability to say something, to make an appropriate and moving speech.

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 Hamlet himself has (2.2.556). In this hendiadys, "motive and cue," Hamlet shifts from the abstract *motive*—"that which moves or induces a person to act in a certain way" (*OED* 4)—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* 1). The hendiadys thus reveals the process by which Hamlet's move to metaphor moves him to another realm of action. *Cue*, the 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 answers his own question about what the player would do with his motive and cue for passion 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 appall the free, / Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed / The very faculties of eyes and ears" (2.2.556-560). The expression of such grief, Hamlet imagines, would have an effect strikingly similar to Ilium's fall.

Hamlet condemns himself for being able to "say nothing" (2.2.564) before he condemns himself for having done nothing.[96] Hamlet's disgust at "unpack[ing his] heart with words" and "cursing like a very drab" surely evokes the alternative action of revenge. 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. Even when Hamlet summarily asserts "If a do blench, / I know my course" (2.2.593-594), 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 great

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[96] Even when Hamlet argues that he must be a coward because he already "should ha' fatted all the regions kites / With this *slave's* offal" (2.2.575-576 emphasis mine), we cannot be sure that his thoughts are entirely about killing Claudius: given his self-reference as a "peasant *slave*" (2.2.544 emphasis mine) and his attraction to "self-slaughter" (1.2.132) and making "his quietus ... with a bare bodkin" (3.1.75-76), Hamlet also might be referring to the courage he lacks to leave his own corpse for the kites.

father-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 and Grandsire Priam causes "senseless Ilium" to "Stoo[p] to his base" (2.2.433-444)—might turn out to be metaphor in Denmark—that lying about the state is figured as poisoning the king's ear.

E. M. W. Tillyard describes how the "Elizabethan[s] hover[ed] between equivalence and metaphor" (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 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). Yet Shakespeare's *Hamlet* shows a prince unable to be flexible in this way, one who instead turns nostalgically to the ancient world in which these correspondences were perfectly intact and to the theater where he hopes to 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.[97]

After Claudius leaves in the middle of the performance of the *Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet asks Horatio about Claudius's actions: "Didst perceive?" But Horatio's polite and plain answers, "Very well, my lord" and "I did very well note him" (3.2.283-284), only confirm that Horatio was observing Claudius, not what Horatio concluded from censuring Claudius's seeming.[98] Horatio's

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[97] 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" 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 distinction 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." (41-42)

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 not recognize only how Hamlet's metaphors turn his speech violent but also how his metaphors turn his violence into speech.

[98] Although in his post-*Mousetrap* soliloquy Claudius admits to murdering his brother, he never marvels at the plot of the dumb-show or *Murder of Gonzago*, nor does he wonder how Hamlet could have discovered his particular deed. Claudius knows that Hamlet is dangerous to him, but we cannot be sure whether Claudius feels his very deed has been found out or whether he feels that his life has been threatened by the Prince.

observation of Hamlet when he first encounters the Ghost, namely that Hamlet "waxes desperate with imagination" (1.5.87), 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 183). Why does the play excite Hamlet so?

Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, Cavell suggests that Hamlet is excited by his staging of the primal scene of sexual intercourse. But Hamlet may be as excited by a primal scene of verbal intercourse. A child witnessing the primal scene of his parents' intercourse must confront the material mixing of human conception: he must confront the knowledge that he 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 immaterial 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. Yet, the Ghost scene may be the primal scene at which Hamlet confronts how human beings—and how words—are conceived not by chaste copying but by unchaste mingling.

Questions about both the nature of female matter and linguistic matter emerge. Patricia Parker observes that the "female 'matter' is the 'woman's part'

in man . . . that undermines and adulterates the perfect copying or reproduction of parthenogenesis" (Parker 1994, 138). Parker's observation helps to clarify Cavell's argument that the Ghost scene is a Freudian primal scene of sexual intercourse, a scene at which Hamlet confronts the adulterous nature of conception.

If, as Janet Adelman notes, the mother traditionally is aligned with matter and the father with spirit (27), then the adulterating *mater* in a marriage—the woman—can be compared to the adulterating matter in a metaphor—the vehicle. Conjoined to his wife, a man produces progeny; conjoined to its vehicle, the tenor produces metaphoric meaning. When a marriage or metaphor is terminated by death, the matter threatens to escape undetected, its own agent. Inquiring about the widowed wife, Gertrude, Jacqueline Rose asks, "So what happens, indeed, to the sexuality of the woman, when the husband dies, who is there to hold its potentially dangerous excess within the bounds of a fully social constraint?" (Rose 1986/1995, 159-160). Rose's question might also be applied to dead metaphor: what happens to the conjoining potential of a vehicle when a metaphor dies? What is there to hold its potentially dangerous excess within the bounds of linguistic constraint? A *dead metaphor*—where vehicle and tenor are no longer obviously conjoined—leaves behind, as it were, a widowed vehicle.

Marjorie 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 1988, 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 stages the liminal space between death and life that allows us this knowledge of conception, a knowledge Hamlet frantically resists.

Hamlet attempts to rid the play scene of adulterating matter by holding a mirror up to nature. However, he first seems 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). While he has claimed that such "metal" is "more attractive" (3.2.108), 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" (3.2.241-242), he quips, but eventually abandons even that role to play chorus for *The*

Mousetrap. If, as Janet Adelman has argued, 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), then Hamlet rehearses and rejects this contact at the scene of the play before attempting to cause Claudius's conception instead.

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 is excited by the perpetuation of the fantasy that allows him to disavow this knowledge of the conception of meaning and the conception of human life; he is excited by 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 moved" (1.5.53) and Lust "Will sate itself in a celestial bed /

And prey on garbage" (1.5.56-57). The Ghost offers the fantasy of a world of essences not images, of being not seeming. Hamlet himself has insisted that his seeming—"the trappings and the suits of woe" (1.2.68)—cannot "denote [him] truly" (1.2.83). 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 things will appear just as they are.

At the scene of the ethereal remains of his father-king, we hear Hamlet express his pity for his father, "Alas, poor ghost" (1.5.4). But Hamlet 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 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 the effects of pity. Hamlet urges his mother: "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" (3.4.126-128). Only at the scene of the material remains of his father's jester is Hamlet able to express fully his pity and grief: "Alas, poor Yorick" (5.1.178).

Perhaps the gravedigger whom Hamlet has just accused of "play[ing] loggets" (5.1.9-91) with human bones knows that the skull he hands to 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" (5.1.158-159), presumably at the memory of his physical contact with the living Yorick, on whose back he would ride, along with present physical 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.[99]

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" (5.1.272-273).

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[99] Phillipa Berry has argued that "Hamlet never occupies the solid place of the earthly father instead he is distinguished by a mutability of identity which implicates him in the more sexually ambiguous sphere of nature and spirit, and identifies him especially with the mobility of air and wind" (Berry 1997, 64). Although it occurs too late to change Hamlet's tragic outcome, I nonetheless see the graveyard scene as an important exception to Berry's analysis.

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 rightful King of Denmark, “This is I, / Hamlet the Dane” (5.1.250-251). Thus Hamlet claims his identity as the son of his murdered father not prompted by a dead man’s remaining ethereal apparition and the right to revenge, but prompted by a dead man’s remaining 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 love, “I lov’d Ophelia” (5.1.264). Here Hamlet voices the tragically collapsed and 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.

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