

## John Lyly and the Most Misread Speech in Shakespeare\*

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I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What [a] piece of work is a man—how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action; how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals. And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? (*Hamlet* 2.2.261-74)<sup>1</sup>

In the opening paragraph of *The Elizabethan World Picture*, a 1943 book once celebrated though virtually unread today, E. M. W. Tillyard cites Hamlet's speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as a précis of Elizabethan attitudes: "This has been taken as one of the great English versions of Renaissance humanism" (3).<sup>2</sup> The terms "Renaissance" and "humanism" are long out of fashion, and no one has generalized about a "world picture" in many decades, though there continues to be a lingering tendency to see in Hamlet's words something more than a character's momentary musing. Philip Edwards acknowledges the inclination to extrapolate from the speech: it is "often quoted as an example of the world-weariness not only of Hamlet but of a whole age" (130).

These days most Shakespeareans see Hamlet's words less as a considered meditation on life than as a pose concocted to insulate the prince from those who would ferret out the secret of his transforma-

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\*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/debate/lyly-misread-speech-shakespeare-hamlet>.

tion. According to Brian Vickers, Hamlet's prose "is expressly associated with the Prince's decision to assume 'an antic disposition'" (248). When Hamlet speaks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, writes Milton Crane, he "satirizes the world, maintains a suspicious reserve, admits the fact of his melancholy but conceals its cause" (5). In other words, Hamlet's speech discloses less than it appears to, since it is meant to fend off his inquisitive fellow students who are spying for the king. For Philip Edwards, Hamlet's comments are "a glorious blind, a flight of rhetoric by which a divided and distressed soul conceals the true nature of his distress and substitutes a formal and conventional state of *Weltschmerz*" (47). Peter Mercer similarly finds Hamlet seeking to deflect the curiosity of Claudius's flunkies, who "appear not to take Hamlet's misery seriously": "he is playing to the observers" (185). Accordingly, Hamlet's words are not likely the paeon to orderliness imagined by Tillyard. Although "often regarded as a straightforward piece of praise," the speech "was not written to glorify anything"; for this reason Vickers calls it "the most misread speech in Shakespeare" (253).

Why have Hamlet's words inspired such disparate assessments? I suggest that the distinctive form of the speech is largely responsible: Hamlet's language represents one of Shakespeare's rare forays into euphuism, a "deliberately outrageous" (Bevington xxxix) prose style popularized by John Lyly's early narratives and characterized by "a self-conscious and excessive use of proverb lore, classical allusion, natural philosophy, rhetorical figures, and phonetic devices, especially alliteration" (Di Biase 85). My purpose here is not to enumerate the rhetorical features of Lyly's prose that Shakespeare borrows. Instead, I want to examine the specifically theatrical effects generated by the euphuistic mode: not only Hamlet's evocation of a dazzling cosmos, which finds a visual complement in the Globe theater, but also the frustration of his listeners, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who must be puzzled by the direction of Hamlet's thought and who react, uncertainly, with smiles and laughter.

## 1

Hamlet's words evoke euphuism most obviously by their sound. He speaks as someone who has just stepped out of a narrative or drama by John Lyly.<sup>3</sup> The deliberate tempo of Hamlet's speech represents the opposite of spontaneity. As Jonas A. Barish observes, "the symmetry and exact balance in Shakespeare's prose [...] form one aspect of the ceremoniousness of Shakespearean theater. In the prose as in the verse, we feel that we are never far from incantation or ritual" (*Ben Jonson* 38). The cadence of Hamlet's language almost suggests that a metronome lurks nearby; his speech seems carefully considered and balanced. Whether encountered by a playgoer in the theater or by a reader of the printed page, this quality fixes our attention on what he says, makes it memorable, and lends it the air of significance that Tillyard and many others have felt.

In his edition of Lyly's work more than a century ago, R. Warwick Bond called euphuism "important, not because it eminently hit the taste of its day, but because it is, if not the earliest, yet the first thorough and consistent attempt in English Literature to practice prose as an art" (144). Shakespeare's emulation of the style, which Bond terms "a piece of literary architecture" (145), complements the substance of Hamlet's meditation by echoing the nature of the cosmos, imagined as the epitome of elegant design. In short, the style matches the "goodly frame" that Hamlet describes: hierarchical, organized, majestic.

The stylistic "architecture" of Hamlet's speech finds a parallel in the Globe's physical structure and decoration, which must have looked spectacular—inside and out—when the theater opened for business in 1599. In a city of mostly single-story buildings, the theater was three stories high, a hundred feet in diameter, and, in its reconstructed form of 1614, topped with a double-gable and tower, making it one of the most prominent edifices in London, witness Wenceslas Hollar's *Long View of London*. The Globe's interior must have been equally striking. Walking into the theater, playgoers "would have entered a world of imagination and possibility far removed from the lath and plaster familiar from everyday life" (Ronayne 121). Eric Mercer describes

Elizabethan interiors as “an uproar of color”: “Throughout the greater part of the period the only reason for leaving anything unpainted seems to have been the physical impossibility of reaching it with a brush” (152). Even today, visiting the rebuilt Globe, one cannot help being impressed by the polychrome painting, meant to emulate the artistic taste and iconography of Shakespeare’s era. This opulently appointed theater itself affirms splendor and harmony. We might even venture to say that the interior of the Globe, densely decorated with paint and plaster and carving, provides a visual counterpart to Lyly’s style.

The taste of Shakespeare’s England had long favored extraordinary adornment. According to Mary E. Hazard, “[o]ne constant in Elizabethan style is manifest in every medium, the use of rich embellishment—whether in the golden flourish of Hilliard’s inscriptions, the sugared conceit of the banquet subtlety, the curious fantasy of gold-threaded embroidery upon a lady’s sleeve, the interplay of precious stones on a jeweled ornament, or the carved interstices of an architectural relief” (79).<sup>4</sup> Hazard’s characterization extends to the literary arts as well. David Evett notes that symmetry, parataxis, and the application of ornament had long been characteristics of Tudor literary style, and “[w]e feel Lyly exploiting them until they almost become the *raison d’être* of the work” (256). Lyly’s distinctive prose, then, evokes the intricate designs on display in so many Elizabethan artifacts.

Hamlet’s speech would have had a special resonance for the Globe, especially in his description of “this majestic roof fretted with golden fire.” Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor comment on the word “fretted”: “Hamlet might be indicating the overhanging roof of the Globe playhouse [...] as well as the sky above it” (287). And “it is traditionally supposed that the original actor of Hamlet here gestured toward the roof of the Globe’s stage, which was painted with *golden fire*, the zodiac and the stars” (Braunmuller 52). Kent Cartwright suggests that “Hamlet’s repeated, gestural ‘this’ tends to make the references to frame, canopy, firmament, and roof immediate and concrete, the pronoun inviting the actor to point toward his stage surroundings as he speaks” (101).

Let us assume that Cartwright's supposition is accurate. What are the theatrical implications? The words "promontory," "canopy," "o'erhanging," "firmament," "roof," and "air" direct the eye upward and outward. "During an afternoon performance in an unroofed theater, 'this brave o'erhanging firmament' is plainly visible to all, and Hamlet's 'look you' seems to invite the audience to verify the words of the play" (Charney 151). The language leads playgoers to imagine a three-dimensional vertical space that opens heavenward. It is easy to imagine a sense of exaltation informing Hamlet's words: "What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable." Marvin Rosenberg, who has exhaustively studied the play's stage history, comments: "This speech is one of the great challenges to the virtuoso art of the actor-reader"; "The words have to soar" (413).

And yet, paradoxically, feelings of vulnerability and dejection seem to fuel Hamlet's remarks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: "I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth"; and he claims to behold "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." To this emotionally burdened speaker, Denmark is corrupt and confining. At least on its surface, the speech expresses frustration and alienation—no matter what Hamlet's underlying attitude may be. He is, he says, unable to respond to that world as, presumably, he once did. There is, then, a sharp incongruity between what he says he feels when he surveys his existence and the "most excellent canopy" he enthusiastically describes to his fellow students. In other words, the image of the "brave o'erhanging firmament" he describes has nothing to do with the world he says he inhabits. How can this be? Looked at in psychological terms, the speech proceeds from an impulse toward wish fulfillment, which finds apt expression in euphuistic style. The geometry of Hamlet's verbal eloquence functions as a kind of scaffolding that supports the image of the world he projects to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, one that lends at least the illusion of stability and connection.

To suggest that the speech springs in part from the speaker's psychic disturbance and need for reassurance is not to question the ar-

guments of Vickers, Crane, Edwards, and Mercer: namely, that Hamlet's purpose is to fend off the scrutiny of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. We cannot doubt, at this point in the dramatic action, that he has, as he tells them, "forgone all custom of exercises" and that "it goes [...] heavily with my disposition." And as the speech nears its close, he seems unable to find his bearings. Deep feeling on his part and the determination to throw his adversaries off the scent are not incompatible. Why may he not achieve his goal by constructing a verbal stratagem out of the materials of his own life, especially his broken idealism?

## 2

Besides providing the scheme for elaborate description, the euphuistic mode that informs Hamlet's speech accomplishes something else as well—it allows for thoughtful perusal: "Lyly's Euphuism is not simply a decorative style, employing antitheses, balanced clauses, and matching parts of speech for euphonic pleasure alone. It is a style of inquiry and analysis" (Altman 197). Lyly uses the term "anatomy" in the subtitle of his 1578 narrative, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, and his "choice of the word 'anatomy' to describe his work seems to indicate that he wanted to conduct an analysis that would put everything in its place" (Hodges 21). Arthur Kinney observes that Lyly's *Euphues* "witnesses to the process of life as the progress of learning, playing on the scholastic use of anatomization or analysis as the chief means to wisdom" (135). In short, euphuism opens up a space for thoughtfulness.

If we take the prince at his word, he surveys the "goodly frame" and anatomizes its glorious parts, while simultaneously assessing humankind and naming the features that render us masterpieces: "how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals." This is the sort of classifying and enumerating of correspondences that euphuism is superbly suited to accomplish: "An anatomy is an analysis, a break-

ing down into component parts. It exposes the relationships that are inherent in a static situation" (Hunter 18). Perhaps significantly, "Lyly was the first writer to use the term in a literary sense" (Kesson 34).

Shakespeare's resort to prose as Hamlet ponders the cosmos owes a good deal to Lyly's precedent. In contrast to the verse employed for virtually all drama before the 1580s, Lyly pioneered the new medium when he turned from his narrative *Euphues* and its sequel, and began writing plays: "[T]he real movement towards prose in the drama begins with Lyly in 1584" (MacDonald 479), when *Campaspe* was performed for Queen Elizabeth on New Year's Day. Lyly thereby created a form of dramatic speech unprecedented in the theater. As Jonas Barish observes, "Lyly invented, virtually single-handed, a viable comic prose for the English stage" ("The Prose Style" 34). All of his plays, with one exception, eschew poetry for the most part, and his example encouraged Shakespeare and other playwrights of the 1590s to experiment with prose and to amplify its use in all manner of plays—comic, tragic, and historical—written chiefly in iambic pentameter.

Shakespeare has a specific reason for casting Hamlet's speech in prose: to create a pause in the action. Douglas Bruster explains that, while "verse conveys the forward movement of time in a play," prose "functions as a space and a discourse outside of time"; it is "as though an imaginary clock were stopping while the speaker analyzes some action, object, or idea outside the normal pace of the dramatic event" (105). Hamlet's leisurely speech of nineteen lines contrasts with the much briefer remarks of his interlocutors (mostly one or two lines in length) and has the theatrical effect of arresting the pace of the dialogue. The medium of euphuistic prose invites the exploration of an issue.

To some Shakespeareans, Hamlet's words sound so personal that they might almost constitute a soliloquy. And if the prince turns away from his fellow students while speaking, he may easily project a sense of self-absorption as though communing only with himself.<sup>5</sup> Hamlet's diction, Ralph Berry proposes, suggests his position on the stage: "Hamlet may well be close to the edge to bring out the force of 'prom-

ontory'" (7). If so, his situation onstage emphasizes his essential aloneness.

Hamlet's rumination about the world and humankind, however, which seems more appropriate to a soliloquy than to a conversational comment, does not actually take the form of a soliloquy: Ben Crystal notes that this is a "rare moment when [Hamlet] explores an idea with other people onstage instead of the audience" (54). What follows from this? First, the audience is not necessarily listening to the private thoughts and feelings of the speaker, as Brian Vickers and others have recognized. Therefore we cannot simply take the contents of that speech, especially its image of creation, at face value as E. M. W. Tillyard and his followers apparently assumed. The speech, moreover, is cast in prose rather than verse, and "prose is not a guarantee of authenticity in Shakespeare. Quite the opposite" (Wills 57). Second, Hamlet's words are part of an ongoing discussion, which has just consumed seventy lines of dialogue. A conversational dynamic is at work, one that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern almost certainly hope will help reveal Hamlet's secret. That is why they are talking with the prince in the first place. He forestalls their effort by the sheer amplitude of his euphuistic speech. In other words, he deflects his listeners' agenda, throwing them off balance. When the three-way conversation resumes after Hamlet's words, the subject has changed. The speakers are no longer talking of Denmark as prison, dreams of ambition, or claims of friendship. The next sixty lines are occupied with a practical matter: the imminent visit of the players to Elsinore.

### 3

Hamlet's scrutiny is truncated when he interrupts his train of thought—stops in his tracks, so to speak—and asks abruptly: "And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?" This about-face, which frustrates a satisfying discovery, belongs to the indeterminacy of euphuism. Leah Scragg's analysis of Lyly's prose style highlights its essential unwillingness to arrive at a summary judgment: "the perva-

sive ambivalence at the heart of the euphuistic mode endows Lyly's work with a far greater degree of ambiguity than its subject matter initially suggests" (4). The same may be said of the prince. Despite his air of authority, he suddenly and unexpectedly changes direction. In keeping with euphuistic practice, Hamlet's speech to the king's flunkies is strangely inconclusive and its effect unclear. He never reaches a destination that the listener has been led to expect.

Basic to the ambiguity of Lyly's style is an extraordinary reliance upon analogy. For Lyly, analogy is indispensable to analysis. As Paul Salzman writes, "euphuism argues through analogy rather than logic, through the proliferation of supporting examples" (40), the piling up of what Janel Mueller calls "serial superlatives" (406). "Lyly's *Euphues* lives in [...] a forest of analogies" (Maslen 237). In much the same spirit Hamlet's thoughts are here couched in his analogy involving the various forms of life he catalogues—human, angelic, divine, animal: "in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals." This analogy is the single most memorable and aesthetically attractive part of the speech, and it bespeaks overall coherence, at least on its surface.

Although it may seem to point toward a reliable conclusion, the strategy of analogy suffers a drawback: it does not offer a secure route to anything. In Lyly's world, the accumulation of ingenious design takes the place of logic: "Lyly's motive in *Euphues* seems to have been to dazzle by the intricate structure of his periods, rather than to convince by the weight of his arguments" (Jeffery 131). According to Raymond Stephanson, discussing the subtitle of *Euphues*, "[t]he wit can merely disguise its epistemological inadequacy by inventing truth, by using analogy and a belief in parallel order to create the illusion of truth and security in an uncertain world" (15). *Euphues*, which bombards the reader with analogies, "draws the reader not towards an irresistible conclusion, but into a series of branching avenues leading progressively further from an inevitable goal, frustrating the drive of the narrative towards finality and closure, and proliferating the propositions from which a judgement might be reached" (Scragg 5).

Lulled by the rhythm of Hamlet's words, we may feel ourselves, as his onstage listeners do, led ineluctably toward a resolution likely to compel assent. But the prince, for all his eloquence and intellection, arrives at no conclusion rooted in his elaborate description: "what is this quintessence of dust?" Are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (and we) meant to be reassured or disturbed or something else?

## 4

Hamlet's listeners onstage react with apparent humor, betraying bemusement. In response to their facial expressions, Hamlet says: "Man delights not me—nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so" (2.2.274-76). Perhaps Rosencrantz and Guildenstern resort to nervous laughter because they simply mistake his point; he takes them to understand him as referring to women. (Earlier in their conversation, they had joked about the privates of Fortune; 2.2.229-30.) But if they suppose so, they are surely mistaken; the speech does not mention women till its close when Hamlet notices his listeners' reaction to his words and acknowledges their laughter. And there is nothing salacious in his remarks. It is also possible, of course, that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern respond the way they do because they imagine some intimacy with their fellow student and feel that they are in on a joke. Do they sense skepticism and even self-mockery on Hamlet's part? The dialogue fails to provide a clear answer.

Sly humor, born of wit, is a chief source of euphuism's attraction. Stephanson observes, "Lyly's educated audience would have undoubtedly appreciated the humor inherent in the characters' foolish belief that analogy is the only form of argument" (19). Lyly's appeal depends, of course, on verbal cleverness: "He is a wit, a man of letters to his finger tips" (Lewis 313). The subtitle of Lyly's 1578 *Euphuus* is, as we have seen, *The Anatomy of Wit*. Edward Blount, in publishing six of Lyly's plays, a nostalgic revival of the sensibility of the 1580s and early 90s, advertises them on the title page as *Sixe Court Comedies [...]* by the onely Rare Poet of that Time, *The Witie, Comicall, Facetiously-Quicke*

and unparalleled John Lyly (1632). To the extent that he captures something of Lyly's verbal flamboyance, Hamlet displays the wit that he has exhibited from his first moments onstage. However serious the matter of Hamlet's speech, by its style it skirts the borderline of the comic and thereby complicates the playgoer's response.

However much amusement Lyly afforded theatrical audiences and readers for twenty years and more, his "scrupulously patterned" (McDonald 110) prose was becoming old-fashioned by the time Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. Prodigious popularity gave way to a feeling of surfeit especially as such other writers as Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge began emulating his style. Derek Alwes notes that, although "Lyly's two Euphues works—*Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580)—were the most popular works of fiction in the sixteenth century," the fad "had largely run its course by the time Elizabeth died in 1603" (28). And other narratives were establishing new models: Lyly's style lost "its dominance to works inspired by Sir Philip Sidney's massive prose romance, *Arcadia*" (Hadfield 582).

The "continual 'wearing' of Euphuism ultimately caused Lyly's syntactical garment to become threadbare" (Guenther 32). By the turn of the century, Lyly's style had become ripe for parody. That is why in *1 Henry IV* (acted 1596-97) Shakespeare casts Falstaff's impersonation of Hal's father in euphuistic style: "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. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also" (2.4.339-44). The contrast between the seedy tavern and the equally seedy knight, on the one hand, and the faintly courtly syntax, on the other, between the grubby and the highfalutin, generates a ridiculous effect. Shakespeare thereby makes clever use of what Donald Beecher calls the "parodic self-consciousness inherent to the style" (15). Hamlet's speech also flirts with the risible in a way that may not be obvious to an audience today.

Although Lyly's work of the 1580s perpetuated euphuism in that decade and beyond, particularly in narratives, his style harbored a liability in the theater. Whatever appeal euphuism may hold for readers, "the ornately symmetrical prose style filled with fantastical similes and constructed in rhythmic swirls of alliteration and antithesis" (Daniel 11) can have an off-putting effect onstage. The style is so dense, the figures of speech so plentiful, that Hamlet's speech "might have been designed to show that prose can double poetry" (Kermode 111). A listener will likely find an actor's euphuistic speech both syntactically complex and emotionally blank. Significantly, Lyly's plays fail to powerfully engage audiences in the way that those of other dramatists, especially those working in the public theaters, routinely do; for this reason his drama is seldom performed today.

John Barton's book *Playing Shakespeare* offers a useful insight when it looks at a euphuistic speech in *Julius Caesar*, written in the same year that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. This is how Brutus justifies the murder of his friend: "As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition" (3.2.21-25). In a conversation with Barton about this funeral oration, entirely in prose, Ben Kingsley comments: "it is so studied and so mechanical with its levers and pullies that it's like an engine. It's not human. Its built-in antitheses and rhythms strike me as not spontaneous and therefore not moving" (Barton 79). Barton, co-founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company and director of more than fifty productions, responds: "The antitheses are so laboured that it all sounds prepared, as if Brutus has conned it in the study in front of his mirror" (79). Brian Vickers, who observes that Brutus speaks verse immediately before and after his oration, makes much the same point: "this is a prepared speech, penned and learned in a vacuum" (243). Garry Wills, who finds the prose speech "as contrived and artificial as Shakespeare could make it" (41), imagines that the actor playing Brutus "reads his cold and studied text" (59). All of these remarks have an application to Ham-

let's "What [a] piece of work is a man" discourse, a compilation of truisms cast in the most self-conscious of prose styles.

What may we conclude? David Daiches provides a useful summing up when he describes Brutus's encomium over the body of Caesar: it "is brisk, logical, and abstract, apparently sincere yet oddly artificial" (36). That last word has been applied to Lyly by C. S. Lewis—"He is consistently and exquisitely artificial" (317)—apparently meaning artful rather than affected. Daiches's term captures the exceedingly peculiar quality of Brutus's utterance, which is in keeping with his strangely impersonal sense of loyalty to Caesar. What Daiches says of Brutus we may say of Hamlet, who also manages to sound simultaneously both sincere and artful in the extreme. Because Hamlet's melancholy mood seems in keeping with our sense of his character, we are inclined to interpret his words as genuine; we may even feel moved by their account of psychic pain. But because the speech sounds so contrived, we keep him at arm's length. Like the smiling Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, we are not sure how seriously to take him. Is he simply toying with us, deploying eloquence as a buffer? Or is he revealing profound conviction? What makes the speech so intriguing is that, by its euphuistic mode, it straddles both possibilities.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Quoted after the edition by Thompson and Taylor, which preserves the Q2 (1604-05) reading: "What peece of worke is a man." The 1623 Folio has "What a piece of worke is a man!" The speech is (except for spelling and punctuation) virtually identical in both of these texts. No one knows why the speech fails to appear in Q1, along with most of the three-way conversation between Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern that leads up to it. What we can say is that Q1 is only about half the length of Q2 and F1. Terri Bourus, in *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet*, argues that Q1 is Shakespeare's first version of *Hamlet*, dating from 1589, and that he revised the play twice, first in 1602 and then in 1604. She believes that F1 represents the first revision, and Q2 represents the second.

<sup>2</sup>Tillyard's generalization in 1943 reflected prevailing opinion. For instance, Wells in 1940 had written that Hamlet's speech was "the most perfect of all expressions of Renaissance philosophy" (177).

<sup>3</sup>From the beginning of his career, Shakespeare was attracted to Lyly's sense of artifice. See, for example, Peter Berek's article on Lyly, Nashe, and Shakespeare. As a young man, Lyly was "the most fashionable writer in England, then achieved the position of leading court dramatist in the 1580s" (Bate 167). Elizabeth Oakes argues that, in Polonius, Shakespeare "caricatured Lyly himself" (155). She also observes that "Polonius' precepts [in his speech to Laertes] are similar to Eubulus' advice in *Euphues*" (157). She cites a page in Bond's edition of Lyly's works (165) that shows a number of such instances. Shakespeare may well have "parodied a rival playwright" (154). But parallels in content are not the same as parallels in style. At no point does Shakespeare give Polonius euphuistic speech. Euphuism is a prose style; Polonius usually speaks in verse.

<sup>4</sup>In this sentence Hazard employs the word *subtlety* as it was sometimes used in the sixteenth century: to describe a feature of fine dining. The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers as one definition: "Cookery. An ornamental figure, scene, or other design, typically made of sugar, used as a table decoration or eaten between the courses of a meal" (4.b).

<sup>5</sup>Discussing Maurice Evans's 1953 TV production of *Hamlet*, Kliman remarks that Hamlet "does not speak his 'What a piece of work is a man' to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern but almost to himself as he turns away from them and looks out a window" (124).

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