

ESCALUS Ay, sir, very well.

POMPEY Nay, I beseech you, mark it well.

(140-8)

Another strategy Pompey uses is to repeat the same word again and again, **ploce**, a common device in argument for achieving a sense of common ground with the audience. Here it's overused, as in the insistent repetition of 'dish' (90-8), and can be recognized as a deliberate way of laying false trails.

Whenever Escalus intervenes, Pompey manipulates the language by taking it literally. Frustrated with the wandering argument, Escalus says, 'Come me to what was done to her' (116), and Pompey replies, 'your honour cannot come to that yet' (117), punning on 'honour' and 'come' in a way that prefigures Isabella's use of words in 2.4. The next time Escalus intervenes, with 'What was done to Elbow's wife, once more?' (137), Pompey again takes him literally, 'Once, sir? There was nothing done to her once' (139). In his summing up, he leads Escalus to the desired conclusion using the sophisticated logic of specious reasoning, to get him to admit that Froth's face is 'the worst thing about him' (152-3), hence he could not possibly have harmed Elbow's wife. And he clinches his argument by taking Elbow's 'respected', a malapropism for 'suspected', for the word it is, which for a Renaissance audience would be a surreal perversion of the *elench* - gathering a conclusion contrary to the assertion - but here the assertion is clearly a mistake:

ELBOW First, and it like you, the house is a respected house [meaning 'suspected']; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.

POMPEY By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.

(158-62)

(with an ambivalent meaning: is Pompey correctly using the word *respected*? or is he taking on Elbow's malapropism and insulting his wife? or is he self-consciously confusing the case by using a word that Escalus will hear one way and Elbow another so that they will not be able to agree?)

Whether we choose to read Pompey's word-play as self-conscious or not, his skill with formal logic, which depends on definition, syllogism and rational argument, offers a salutary counterpoint to the other displays of persuasion in the play.

In *Measure for Measure*, what we think of the characters does affect how we respond to their rhetoric. Is the Duke a wise, careful and thoughtful man - or a manipulator? In a completely different manner *Antony and Cleopatra* presents two central characters neither of whom has a straightforward ethos; in fact none of the characters in this play do. The play is marked from the start by a figure. It realizes a **hyperbole** that is introduced as a contradiction or **antithesis** in the opening lines: is Antony a 'strumpet's fool' or the 'triple pillar of the world' (1.1.13, 12)? Until 5.2.81-2, when Cleopatra claims 'His legs bestrid the ocean; his reared arm / Crested the world ...', and makes him into a colossus, we have no reason to believe one or the other. Nor can the audience be sure of Cleopatra.

Throughout the text we find not rational and syllogistic logic, but persuasive figures that indicate tension, friction and explosion.<sup>1</sup> The repetition of a word from the end of one sentence, to the beginning of another, **anadiplosis**, underlines the way people are pulled in different directions when the two sentences are contraries. For example, Octavia's 'Husband win, win brother' (3.4.18), or the exchange '[Charmian] Madam / She was a widow - [Cleopatra] Widow? Charmian, hark!' (3.3.26-7). Repeated words following immediately on each other (**epizeuxis**), such as 'why, why, why?' (3.7.2) or 'Well is it, is it?' (3.7.4), release rhythm and emotion. **Catachresis**, or the device that wrenches words away from their proper

meaning, as in 'We have kissed away / Kingdoms and princes' (3.10.7-8), or 'he will fill thy wishes to the brim / With principalities' (3.13.18-19), or 'Whose eye becked forth my wars and called them home' (4.12.26) (italics added), has the effect of suddenly intensifying significance as the listener attempts to make sense of the new location for the image. The play is filled with exclamations of vehemence and hyperbole, made more emphatic by the undercurrent of the colloquial. For example the iteration of *thou* at 4.2.11, the device *ploce*, works to construct conversational ease; at the same time the repetition of words with one or more in between, or *diacope*, although similar to *ploce*, has a very different insistent and desperate effect, as in Cleopatra's 'help' at 4.15.13-14. Here it is not formal logic that is effecting the persuasion, nor is it strictly ethos and pathos being constructed in a direct manner. As with most of the plays, and a great deal of everyday language, the logical persuasion is effected through the figures, both tropes and schemes.

Shakespeare's work offers many examples of persuasion that focus on the character of ethos above all else: for example, Iago persuading Othello of his wife's infidelity, by seeming reluctant to do so. Yet one of the best examples of the persuasive force of character is not by a villain, but a politician, Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*.

The famous speech Antony makes over the dead body of Julius Caesar in 3.2 is preceded by a speech from Caesar's assassin, Brutus. Brutus' words are marked by assertion, command, circular argument and tautology: all being weak logical devices for persuasion because they are self-justifying. With the naïvety that comes with such self-regard, when Brutus introduces Antony he identifies him with the crowd, immediately giving him an advantage. The persuasive force of this scene is largely to do with the way the speaker is presented, his ethos, and the response drawn out of the audience, or pathos. Mark Antony begins by reversing Brutus'

address from 'Romans, countrymen and lovers' (3.2.13) to 'Friends, Romans, countrymen' (74), calling on them to identify first as 'friends'. Note how the list expands from one syllable to two to three, like a widening arc embracing the audience. He uses proverbs, common knowledge the listeners will accept and therefore begin to find common ground with the speaker:

The evil that men do lives after them:

The good is oft interred with their bones.

(76-7)

Using Brutus' exact vocabulary of ambition, honour and friendship, Antony sets up the refrain of 'Brutus is an honourable man' (83) that will hold the entire argument of the next 170 lines together as he plays with constructing a positive ethos for himself and Caesar, and a negative ethos for Brutus.

When Antony pauses the momentum for development passes to the crowd, and in their responses we recognize their appreciation of his logic:

Mark ye his words? He would not take the crown;

Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

(113-14)

But we also recognize their appreciation of his pathos, 'Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping' (116), and of ethos, 'There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony' (117). His second major development starts off by introducing the words 'rage' and 'mutiny', only to deny that he wants to do this (126), and proceeds by skilfully bringing the crowd together with himself and Caesar as 'friends' (141) implicitly against Brutus. As he walks into the crowd, they call him 'noble' Antony.

Having constructed his own ethos, Antony builds Caesar's. He develops the visual spectacle of Caesar being killed. He shows them the tears in Caesar's gown, saying

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:  
 See what a rent the envious Caska made:  
 Through this, the well-beloved Brutus stabbed,  
 And as he plucked his cursed steel away,  
 Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it . . .  
 This was the most unkindest cut of all:  
 For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,  
 Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,  
 Quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart . . .

(172-6, 181-4)

to conclude that as Caesar fell, 'you, and all of us fell down' (189), with that 'us' fully including the crowd with himself and Caesar. Any treason of Brutus and friends against Caesar becomes treason against the crowd. Note how the refrain of 'honourable' moves here (205) from a praising epithet to irony. Irony always implies a silent background of agreed knowledge: when someone from England looks out at the rain and says 'What a lovely day', people who are used to the inexorability of the rain recognize the humour; strangers may simply wonder if the speaker is feeling all right. At this point in Antony's argument the crowd accepts that the word 'honourable' is twisted when applied to Brutus, for he is now a traitor.

In his final development, Antony has to instigate the crowd to rebellion without openly condemning Brutus, because he has promised not to and has to maintain his own trustworthy ethos. Here he moves into a breathtaking piece of persuasion with 'I am no orator, as Brutus is', but 'a plain blunt man' who loved Caesar (210-1). He continues this humility topos, that constructs his ethos as honest and direct, with:

For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,  
 Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech  
 To stir men's blood. I only speak right on:

I tell you that which you yourselves do know,  
 Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,  
 And bid them speak for me

(214-19)

which in the vocabulary of 'wit', 'words', 'worth', and later 'action', 'utterance' and 'power', precisely delineate the rhetorical skill he denies he has. At the same time, Antony uses obvious conceits that he could expect them to notice,<sup>2</sup> especially the device of vivid representation necessary to an illusion of reality, or *enargia*, to present a gross vision of Brutus with his tongue in every wound of Caesar's body. The argument peaks as he links his name with Brutus' and moves them to rebellion in Brutus' name. Antony succeeds because he understands pathos and ethos, while Brutus relies on logic. Manipulating the grounds on which the crowd believes things, Antony begins by identifying with Brutus, gradually distances himself from him while reducing him to a traitor, and then in a daring reversal claims that Brutus speaks through him urging them to rebellion:

But were I Brutus,

And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony  
 Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue  
 In every wound of Caesar that should move  
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

(219-23)

It is a curious fulfilment of Brutus' final words, 'I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death' (45-7). At the same time Antony starts off distanced from Caesar, gradually reclaiming him from Brutus' accusations, making the crowd identify first with himself, as noble, and then through him with Caesar.

Note that both identifications occur by means of Caesar's physical body, a visual spectacle or *hypotyposis* that is used as a

prop by Antony to claim proof and authenticity for his persuasion: the Renaissance as now could argue that 'seeing is believing'. But more than this, note the figures he uses to construct this spectacle, which develop tropes in an embarrassed way in order to persuade: the metaphor of Caesar's wounds as 'poor poor dumb mouths' (218), the excessive vulnerability and complete disempowerment that renders Caesar not only a presence that can no longer speak, but to the position of a baby or an aged, toothless human being, that needs protection. And the final figure that invites the crowd to put 'a tongue / In every wound of Caesar', to become Brutus, to become killers, to 'rise and mutiny'.

Formal logic never works on its own, and this is something the sixteenth century knew better than today. The Duke, Angelo and Isabella all to some extent get trapped in it, while Pompey has the sense to make fun of it. But logic as the structuring of argument and persuasion, what Erasmus called *dispositio*, is far more subtle than formal rationalism. It goes a long way to define what we think of today as character or ethos, the position of the speaker, and can help us also to recognize our own positions when we read a text. To understand the complexity of persuasion in Shakespeare's dramatic language we need to understand the persuasive system, rhetoric, that he is using: not only logos, but ethos, pathos and especially the ordering structures of the figures that pervade our use of language.

## NOTES

- 1 For other figures in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and other writing of the period, see Joseph, listed below.
- 2 See David Daniell's notes to this speech in the Arden 3 edition of *Julius Caesar*, p. 265.

## FURTHER READING

Joseph, Sister Miriam, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* (New York: Hafner, 1966)

Although written many years ago, this work is still a mine of information about the different elements of language in the Renaissance, and what commentators at the time had to say about them. Mainly concerned with Shakespeare's plays, but providing some material written by his contemporaries, Joseph works through the persuasive effects of grammar, argument, logic, pathos and ethos. Every device is illustrated with examples from the plays, and her index allows us to locate devices used by particular plays.

Murphy, James J. (ed.), *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983)

The essays collected in this volume bring together some of the most thought-provoking writers on persuasion in the Renaissance. They range from education in schools and universities, to cultural contexts in Europe, to the issue of deceitful versus morally persuasive rhetoric, to specific work on style in sixteenth and early seventeenth-century writing. Many of these essays have subsequently been developed by the writers themselves and others, especially in the journal *Rhetorica*. Nevertheless they provide a good starting point, and represent probably the most comprehensive approach to argument and persuasion in the Renaissance.

Vickers, Brian, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)

This book offers a historical context for literature and rhetoric and a summary of the main parts of rhetoric, as well as one detailed chapter on the Renaissance and another surveying a range of the figures, with useful examples found in an appendix. Vickers argues that the Renaissance brought together rhetoric, logic and philosophy, after fragmentation during the medieval period. This theory is highly contentious, but his argument is an effective demonstration of some of the issues. A later chapter on rhetoric in the modern novel offers a platform for those concerned with relevance to the present day.