Brave Spirits Theatre's approach to

EARLY MODERN VERSE, RHETORIC, AND TEXT ANALYSIS

by

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Our Mission: Brave Spirits Theatre stages visceral and intimate productions of Shakespeare and his contemporaries with a focus on female artists and feminist perspectives.

Alexandria, VA

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STEPS TO TEXT ANALYSIS

1. **Paraphrase**: look up unfamiliar words and phrases and create word-for-word substitutions.
2. **Scansion**: note irregularities in verse and think about what they mean for the character.
3. Divide verse and prose into **sense units**.
4. **Operative words**: pick the most important word for each sense unit.
5. **Rhetoric**: identify patterns of language.
6. Look for opportunities for **audience contact**.
7. **Other features of the text**: thee vs. you, modes of address, alliteration, assonance, embedded stage directions, archaic language, monosyllabic lines, rhyme, bawdy, etc.

None of these steps should be thought of as merely an intellectual exercise. At every step, ask what does this mean for my character, in performance? Each step is open to interpretation.

STEP ONE: PARAPHRASING

Look up words and meanings using the Oxford English Dictionary, Shakespeare Lexicons, Arden editions, and other resources. Over 90% of words in this era are in use today with the same meaning. **Early modern plays were written in today's English**, *not* Old English or medieval English. Occasionally, however, you will run across words that are familiar to you, but the meaning has changed. One example is "naughty." Today naughty means disobedient or mischievous. In Shakespeare's era, the word had the stronger meaning of evil or wicked. *(Early modern refers generally to the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. More specifically, it has frequently replaced the term Renaissance and is often used in reference to the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries from the 1570s to 1640s, also covered by the terms Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Carolinean.)*

PORTIA: O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
— *The Merchant of Venice*

When the Oregon Shakespeare Festival announced their Play On! project in 2015, which commissioned playwrights to "translate" the entire canon, academics, practitioners, and audience members weighed in on whether this was necessary, or even interesting. Much was written and discussed about the difficulty of language in Shakespeare. But in my opinion, we were having the wrong conversation.

What makes Shakespeare and his contemporaries difficult to understand is not necessarily the individual words themselves, since not many of them are actually archaic, but the order in which the words appear. Playwrights of the era often use unconventional and complex word order, which is why BST's paraphrasing exercise is so important. Often the words are simple, but the ideas or imagery the character is trying to express is complicated.

For example, one of the densest, but most beautiful, passages in Shakespeare is Richard II's soliloquy at Pomfret Castle. If you look at the words individually, however, they are mostly recognizable to today's English speakers. There are 253 distinct words in this speech. Of those, 247 are words that we would use today. Most of the unfamiliar words are archaic verb forms or contractions: doth, hath, 'tis (do, has, it is). Even holp is an older form of the verb help. Beget is likewise a old verb meaning to procreate, but it may be recognizable to anyone who has read the King James Bible. Postern, or a small gate, may be unfamiliar to audiences today, but it still means the same thing and is still in use, for example, whenever you read about castle fortifications.

a
again
against
all-hating
am
ambition
an
and
any
are
as
back
be
bearing
because
been
before
beget
beggar
beggars
being
bell
better
blessing
brain
broke
brooch
but
by
camel
cannot
cheque
clamorous
cleansing
clock
come
compare
concord
content
contented
creature
crushing
daintiness
dial
die
disordered
divine
do
doth
ear
ease
eased
endured
eyes
father
female
find
finger
first
flatter
flinty
fooling
for
fortune's
from
generation
gives
groans
ha
had
hammer
hard
hath
have
he
hear
heart
here
his
holp
hour
how
humours
I
I'll
in
intermixed
is
it
itself
jack
jar
joy
keep
kept
kind
king
kinged
last
let
like
little
live
lives
love
mad
made
madmen
mads
make
man
many
may
me
men
mine
minutes
misfortunes
more
music
must
my
myself
nails
needle's
no
none
nor
not
nothing
now
numbering
of
on
one
others
out
outward
own
passage
penury
people
person
persuades
play
pleased
plot
point
pointing
populous
postern
posting
pride
prison
proportion
proud
prove
ragged
refuge
ribs
runs
same
scruples
seems
set
shall
shame
show
sighs
sign
silly
sir
sit
sitting
slaves
small
so
sometimes
sort
soul
sound
sour
stand
state
still
still-breeding
stocks
straight
strange
strike
string
studying
such
sweet
tear
tears
tells
tending
that
the
their
them
themselves
then
there
these
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things
think
this
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thought
thoughts
thread
through
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till
time
times
'tis
to
treasons
true
two
unkinged
unlikely
unto
upon
vain
walls
was
waste
wasted
watch
watches
weak
what
whatever
when
where
whereto
which
while
who
will
wise
wish
with
wits
wonders
word
world
yet

Frequently when people talk about Shakespeare being hard to understand, they focus on the individual words he uses, when in fact Shakespeare can be hard to understand because of complex poetry and word order. Still, the paraphrasing exercise is vital to helping actors truly own the language and understand the turns of thought their characters are experiencing.

Spending quality time looking up definitions and meanings is even more important to BST since we often produce early modern plays with less performance and editorial history. If you are unsure of meaning, flag the phrase or word to discuss during tablework, and/or email the director and dramaturg.

Paraphrasing is ideally undertaken well in advance of the rehearsal period. If you wait until the last minute to paraphrase, it will make memorizing the script's text more difficult. Paraphrase when you first get your script and then put the paraphrases away until table work.

Paraphrasing is not writing out a general sense of the meaning; it is a **word-for-word substitution**. Following this step is imperative: the actor must have full grasp of what they are saying in order to properly convey meaning to the audience.

GUIDELINES FOR PARAPHRASING

- Replace **all** nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Even if you already know what the word means.
- Don't worry about proper nouns, pronouns, and conjunctions.
- Match word order.
- When the playwright is using a word with multiple meanings, sometimes you can find a paraphrase that covers them all, but more often you may need to write two or three options.
- When the playwright repeats a word multiple times, you may choose to repeat a paraphrase, or you may choose a different paraphrase for each repetition, if they mean something different.
- If you are repeating another character's word, pick a paraphrase for yourself, but when we read the paraphrases to each other, use the other actor's choice (unless your character is changing the meaning of the word, of course).
- Extra points if you can retain rhyme in your paraphrase. This is especially important if you have a final rhyming couplet.

Paraphrasing is not just about knowing what your lines mean. It is about owning every word and understanding the shades of meaning and the word play that Shakespeare employs. Feel free to have fun with the exercise: you can use colloquialisms or modern phrases, but watch out for being too loose with the way you paraphrase.

BEATRICE: Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy: for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet: I would he had boarded me.

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

Paraphrase: Why, he is the prince's clown: a quite tedious idiot; his single skill is in forming outrageous libels: none but rakes thrill in him; and their recommendation is not of his intellect, but of his malice: for he both delights people and infuriates them, and then they snicker at him and whip him. I am positive he is in the group: I wish he had tackled me.

It is impossible to paraphrase perfectly: the example loses the nautical link of "fleet" and "boarded," but I think "tackled" gets both other meanings of "boarded," as in engaged in witty battle and also includes a sexual connotation.

STEP TWO: SCANSION

VERSE OR PROSE?

Identify which sections of your text are in verse and which are in prose. If each line of your speech begins with a capital letter, the speech is in verse. Prose runs to the margins and the next line does not begin with a capital letter.

Does your character only speak verse? Does your character only speak prose? Do they switch depending on whom they are talking to? Does a scene switch between verse and prose? If so, why? It's often said that lower class characters speak in prose while upper class characters speak in verse, but this is an oversimplification. For example, *Much Ado About Nothing* is almost entirely in prose, regardless of the characters' statuses. The play contains two sections of verse: 1, the wedding scene, presumably giving an air of formality to the proceeding; and 2, Beatrice's only soliloquy. In the latter case, a possible acting choice is that verse represents the only time Beatrice lets her heart speak. In all other cases, her head and wit are ruling her voice.

Due to the conditions of early modern printing, sometimes editors are unsure whether a section is in verse or prose. Sometimes one version of the play from the era prints a section in prose, while another prints it in verse. If it is a section that could be either, the director/dramaturg/text coach may have already picked and set the text as such in the script, or they may be planning to look at it in tablework. The verse/prose distinction particularly gets muddy later in Shakespeare's writing and in the Jacobean era. Because the iambic rhythm is natural to English, prose sections can often feel iambic. As always, ask yourself why your character speaks in verse, why they speak in prose, and why they might speak in something that is in between the two.

IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Most of early modern English drama is written in *blank verse*. Blank verse is also known as unrhymed *iambic pentameter*. Iambic pentameter is a specific form of poetry.

one unit of rhythm = foot
pentameter = a line of verse made up of five feet
iamb = a unit of rhythm with two beats: a weak stress followed by a strong stress
noted as: de dum or - / or x / or u /

a perfect line iambic pentameter has ten syllables, alternating unstressed and stressed:
- / - / - / - / - /
If **mu**sic **be** the **food** of **love** play **on**

Including the foot dividers this line would be written
If **mu** | sic **be** | the **food** | of **love** | play **on**
(But that can get hard to read so the rest of this packet does not include foot dividers.)

WHY WRITE IN IAMBIC PENTAMETER?

Several reasons are generally given for why iambic pentameter became the preferred verse form of the early modern stage:

1. It's the verse form that most closely approximates English speech. We often speak iambically without even realizing it. This is also why there are prose sections that seem like verse.
2. It imitates the sound of the human heartbeat, so feels very organic, very rooted in our bodies. (*Though some point out that the heartbeat is more trochaic, going dum de, instead of de dum.*) Just like the heartbeat is subject to irregularities due to physical and emotional stress, iambic pentameter becomes irregular when the speaker is emotional or under stress.
3. It's dramatic: the final strong stress of the iamb lifts and propels the verse forward.

WHY DO SCANSION AND VERSE MATTER?

We scan text for a specific reason - because knowing what the stresses are tells us what the important information of the line is. For the actor, scansion tells us about the character and the situation. Shakespeare and the other playwrights of the era stretched the form in order to emphasize an emotional outbreak, create a sense of spontaneity, or a dramatic tension. Irregularities in verse help create a sense of alertness in the audience. Scansion also leads the ear of the audience to the important information. ** *Pronouns, conjunctions, and negatives are **rarely** stressed, even though American actors tend to want to stress them. Avoid it unless the verse is clearly telling you or you have a compelling reason.*

\- / - / - / - / - / - -
To **be** or **not** to **be;** that **is** the **quest**ion.
— *Hamlet*

"Be not be is quest." The stressed beats of the most famous line sum up the entire play.

\- / - / - / - / - / - -
To**mor**row **and** To**mor**row **and** To**mor**row
— *Macbeth*

Stressed syllables: "mar and mar and mar" or "more and more and more" — critical meaning
Unstressed syllables: "to oh to oh to oh" — no meaning, just sounds

Yes, this example breaks the "don't stress conjunctions" rule, but it does so for a very powerful reason. The entire point of this line is the "and." Macbeth is lamenting the unceasing movement of time. Both of these lines have 11 syllables, ending on an amphibrach. More on that below (page 21).

Verse is discussed in greater detail in the next section (page 19).

STEP THREE: DIVIDE INTO THOUGHTS

or beats, or moments, or units of sense or whatever you want to call them.

The sentence "Oh well yes" could be

- one thought: “Oh well yes.”
- two thoughts: “Oh, well yes.”
- or three thoughts: “Oh. Well. Yes”

Punctuation can be a clue to thoughts, but be careful, some punctuation is only there for grammatical reasons, not for acting reasons (beware of commas). Also, every editor will punctuate a text differently. Some theatre practitioners swear by the First Folio punctuation, but even that was edited.

VOLUMNIA: for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound?

— *Coriolanus*

The thought breaks pretty much go with the punctuation in this passage, except it is probably better to ignore the comma after “alas” and play “Alas how can we for our country pray” as one thought unit.

STEP FOUR: OPERATIVE WORDS

Some actors may object to scanning lines because they claim it makes the performance sing-songy. Verse is only sing-songy if you stress every strong stress the same amount. Every stressed syllable is not given equal weight and every unstressed syllable is not given equal weight. Technically speaking, syllables are stressed and unstressed only in comparison to the other syllable in the same foot. Therefore, an unstressed syllable in one foot could be given more stress than a stressed syllable in a different foot. Some practitioners recommend that the stressed syllable in the final foot of the line must always be given either the most or second most emphasis in that line. Thinking about this will help you keep the iambic rhythm going and will help combat a natural tendency to drop the ends of lines.

To prevent sing-songyness and make the story of the text clear, you must pick one word in each thought unit that is the most important. This word **must always** fall in a stressed position. The operative word gets the primary stress in each thought through the use of pitch, duration, volume, etc. Operative words help the audience understand the meaning of the text.

PARTS OF SPEECH IN ORDER OF OPERATIVE WORD LIKELIHOOD

1. Verbs – always consider the verb **first**
2. Nouns
3. Adverbs
4. Adjectives
5. Prepositions
6. Conjunctions
7. Pronouns
8. Interjections
9. Negatives

In modern speech we tend to stress pronouns and negatives. **It is very rare in iambic pentameter for these parts of speech to be the operative words, or even stressed at all.** Please resist. Also notice that the verb and noun is more important than the adverb and adjective. This seems counterintuitive, but in most cases the adverb and adjective do their own work, as it were, and it's the noun that is more important for audience comprehension. To find the operative word: *say the thought out loud*. Test each operative word possibility. How does each one change the sound of the thought? How does each one change how your character is feeling? Some thoughts may have multiple possibilities. Mark them and play with them in rehearsal. The operative word you use may change during the rehearsal process.

STEP FIVE: ANALYZE RHETORIC

Rhetoric is figures of speech, or patterns of language, employed to persuade an audience. These patterns will give you clues for performance. Rhetoric is important for verse speaking, but essential for prose speaking. Verse comes with its own rhythm. Rhetoric provides the rhythm for prose. Don't think of rhetorical devices as coming from Shakespeare, think of them as coming from the character. The character *chooses* the rhetorical device. The more complex the rhetoric, the smarter the character. Rhetoric is discussed more below (page 31).

STEP SIX: AUDIENCE CONTACT

The early modern theatre employed universal lighting, which means that the audience was illuminated, instead of sitting in the darkness as we do today. The plays of this era of full of moments where you can directly speak to a member of the audience. Soliloquies are never internal reflection—the audience is your scene partner for the working out of a problem. Audience contact will be discussed more below (pg. 43).

STEP SEVEN: OTHER TEXTUAL ELEMENTS

MODES OF ADDRESS

THEE VS. YOU

thee / thou / thine	informal, intimate, insulting, parents to children, superiors to inferiors, lovers
you / your	formal, public, respectful, children to parents, subjects to rulers, strangers

Notice which your character uses, whether it changes based on to whom they are speaking. Also notice if you use both forms and switch—why is the switch happening? Did the other person upset you? Are you pulling rank? Has your relationship become more intimate? Notice that the intimate form can be used for opposite reasons—it can be loving, or it can be insulting.

LADY MACBETH: Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er **your** rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among **your** guests to-night.
MACBETH: So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be **you**:
Let **your** remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:

Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH: **You** must leave this.

MACBETH: O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH: But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH: There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be *thou* jocund: ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH: What's to be done?

MACBETH: Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till *thou* applaud the deed.

— *Macbeth*

At the beginning of this conversation, Macbeth and Lady use **you**. In the middle, Macbeth switches to *thou*. This switch clearly marks an emotional shift of some sort. One option might be that in the earlier section, they are masking their true emotions, building themselves up to act the part of King and Queen in front of the guests. But at "O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!" the pretense is broken through and true fear and true thoughts are shared.

INSULTS

Some of the most fun language in Shakespeare comes in the form of insults. Relish this language. If the insult seems weird or absurd, it probably is. Use that. Some insults are common; some insults are the character being inventive. Most insults directed to women, sadly and predictably, either have to do with them being shrewish or unchaste.

KENT: A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

— *King Lear*

STATUS

Look at the way your character addresses others: do they use a title or a low form of address? Do they command or make a polite request? Does your character bother with a form of address, or are they too much in a hurry?

sirrah, sir, majesty, highness, lady, etc.
Please note: sirrah is pronounced SI-ruh.

Brakenbury's is very different from Richard's

"I **beseech** your **graces** both to pardon me."

"**Boy**!"

ENGLISH HIERARCHY

The relationships and situations in many early modern plays, especially the Histories, rely on what one character's status is compared to another. This list will give you a reference as to who is more important than whom. This hierarchy is patriarchal and many of these positions could only be held by men during Shakespeare's time. Women's status, prior to marriage, would be determined by the Rank (but not Office) of their father. By marriage, women share the dignities and precedence of their husbands. This list can be found in more detail here: http://www.edwardianpromenade.com/resources/titles-and-orders-of-precedence

1. The Sovereign
2. The Prince of Wales (the first born son of the Sovereign)
3. The Younger sons of the Sovereign
4. The Grandsons of the Sovereign
5. The Brothers of the Sovereign
6. The Uncles
7. The Nephews
8. The Archbishop of Canterbury
9. The Lord Chancellor
10. The Archbishop of York
11. The Lord Privy Seal
12. The High Constable
13. The Earl Marshal
14. Dukes ("Your Grace")
15. Marquesses
16. Earls
17. Viscounts
18. Bishops of (a) London, (b) Durham, and (c) Winchester
19. Other Bishops
20. Barons
21. Knights of the Garter
22. Privy Councilors
23. The Lord Chief Justice
24. Baronets
25. County Court Judges
26. Gentlemen

SOUNDS

Look for repeated sounds among consonants (alliteration) and vowels (assonance). Play the sound in your attempt to win your objective. What do the sounds feel like? Let the sound guide your acting tactic. The Duchess of Gloucester's line, "Wha**t**? Is i**t** **t**oo shor**t**?" from *2 Henry VI* shouldn't be played caressingly.

ALLITERATION

DON JOHN: **S**o will you **s**ay when you have **s**een the **s**equel.
— *Much Ado About Nothing*

MARGARET: For **q**ueen, a very **c**aitiff, **c**rowned with **c**are.
— *Richard III*

ASSONANCE

MERCUTIO: Come, come, thou art as hot a jack in thy m**oo**d as any in Italy, and as s**oo**n m**o**ved to be m**oo**dy, and as s**oo**n m**oo**dy t**o** be m**o**ved.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

OBERON: B**e** as thou wast wont to b**e**;
S**ee** as thou wast wont to s**ee**.
— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

RHYME

Rhyme is often used for ritualistic or choral effects and for highly lyrical or sententious passages that give advice or point to a moral. Rhyme is used for songs, in examples of bad verse, in Prologues, Epilogues, and Choruses, in masques, and in plays-within-plays, where it distinguishes these imaginary performances from the "real world" of the play. It is also used for many manifestations of the supernatural (e.g. the witches in *Macbeth*; the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Ariel in *The Tempest*), but not for ghosts (e.g. Hamlet's father), who retain the human use of blank verse.

Rhymes are never accidents. The character always chooses the rhyme. Lift the first word of the rhyming pair, not the second. Look especially for rhyming couplets. They are often used to signal the end of a scene, or call attention to a character's exit. If your character has a rhyming couplet, and yet remains on stage, why? Did they try to leave and something pulled them back? If your character does get to end the scene with a rhyming couplet, this can denote some level of power. (The King, or the highest ranking character, often ends scenes with rhyming couplets.)

SINGLE RHYMING COUPLET MARKING THE END OF A SCENE

HENRY V: Therefore let every man now task his **thought**,
That this fair action may on foot be **brought**.
— *Henry V*

SINGLE RHYMING COUPLET MARKING THE END OF A PLAY

PRINCE: For never was a story of more **woe**,
Than this of Juliet and her **Romeo**.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

MULTIPLE RHYMING COUPLETS AT THE END

If there is a rhyming couplet, but the scene goes on, ask yourself why. Did another character steal the thunder? Did the character's attempt to create resolution fail? If there are multiple rhyming couplets at the end, it could mean several things. One, your character decided they couldn't get their point across

with the first and needs to try a second. Also, another character could steal the power by denying the first character the final word. Does the rhyming couplet imply a false exit?

LADY MACBETH: This night's great business into my dispatch
Which shall to all our nights and days to **come**
Give solely sovereign sway and **masterdom**.
MACBETH: We will speak further.
LADY MACBETH: Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.
— *Macbeth*

The rhyming couplets give these two actors a lot to play with: does Lady Macbeth start to exit on the first one and then is interrupted by Macbeth? What is her attitude and tone when she has to make a second rhyming couplet to end the scene? How does Macbeth respond? What does he do so that Lady Macbeth has to still add "Leave all the rest to me."

RICHARD III: Go, gentleman, every man unto his charge
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-**mell**
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to **hell**.
What shall I say more than I have inferr'd? ...
— *Richard III*

Before the battle of Bosworth, Richard III tries to rouse his soldiers with a quick speech. The rhyming couplets afford some interesting opportunities. Does he try and leave after the first one? Does he try and leave again after the second and they still aren't following? What is his attitude when he then has to give a much longer oration? As always, what character opportunities are in these textual elements?

SHARED RHYMING COUPLET

If two characters share a rhyme, it tells us something about their relationship. They may be extremely close, like the father-son pair in the example; they may be lovers; they may be in a battle of wits.

TALBOT: Shall all thy mother's hope lie in one **tomb**?
JOHN: Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's **womb**.
— *1 Henry VI*

SUPERNATURAL CHARACTERS

Shakespeare often uses rhyme to mark a character's supernatural status.

FIRST WITCH: When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
SECOND WITCH: When the hurlyburly's **done**,
When the battle's lost and **won**.
THIRD WITCH: That will be ere the set of **sun**.
FIRST WITCH: Where the place?
SECOND WITCH: Upon the heath.
THIRD WITCH: There to meet with Macbeth.
— *Macbeth*

PUCK: Through the forest have I gone.
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might **approve**
This flower's force in stirring **love**.
— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

SONG

AMIENS: Under the greenwood **tree**,
Who loves to lie with **me**,
And turn his merry **note**
Unto the sweet bird's **throat**,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he **see**
No **enemy**
But winter and rough weather.
— *As You Like It*

BAD RHYME

Rhyme can also be employed for comic effect.

BOTTOM: But stay, O **spite**!
But mark, poor **knight**,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you **see**?
How can it **be**?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle **good**,
What, stain'd with **blood**!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, **come**,
Cut thread and **thrum**;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!
— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

WORD CHOICE

OATHS

Does your character use oaths? Are they mild, common, contrived, rare, shocking? In *1 Henry IV*, Hotspur makes fun of his wife, telling her she swears "like a comfet-maker's wife" with light oaths such as "in good sooth" and "as sure as day" and "as God shall mend me."

- By heaven
- 'Zounds (= "God's wounds")
- by Saint Paul
- by my troth (Please note: "troth" rhymes with "oath")
- 'Sblood (= "God's blood")

BAWDY JOKES

Shakespeare was a dirty, dirty man. Enjoy it. But see if you can color the language vocally before resorting to pelvic thrusting. We're not against lewd gestures in of themselves, but we've found that they often detract from the scene, rather than illuminate it.

A character may be making a sexual reference purposefully, or inadvertently.

MERCUTIO: By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

PISTOL: Pistol's cock is up,
And flashing fire will follow.
— *Henry V*

CLOTEN: Come on, tune: if you can penetrate her with your fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too.
— *Cymbeline*

INARTICULATE SPEECH

Play these—do not run over them. They are an opportunity to express emotion, desire, humor, indignation, etc. Especially "O." O is a very large, very long vowel.

RICHARD III: What? I, that killed her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!
Ha!
— *Richard III*

CLEOPATRA: **O** happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
— *Antony and Cleopatra*

EDMUND: **Fut**! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.
— *King Lear*

STRANGE OR ARCHAIC LANGUAGE

Note any strange or archaic language. (Language that would have been archaic to Shakespeare's audience, as opposed to us). Why did the character chose to speak that way?

OTHER TEXTUAL CLUES

MONOSYLLABIC LINES

Monosyllabic lines are a sign to slow down. It takes longer to say these lines because there are more words. Try to say them fast and it's likely your tongue will trip. Explore what playing with pace gets you—do you speed up the lines leading into it in order to create a bigger juxtaposition?

ELIZABETH: Oh, he is young and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,
A man that loves not me, nor none of you.
— *Richard III*

HENRY IV: The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.
— *Henry IV*

EMBEDDED STAGE DIRECTIONS

Does the text instruct some sort of movement? Kneeling, kissing, stopping movement, sitting, standing? What happens if the character purposely ignores the instruction?

VOLUMNIA: Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint
I **kneel** before thee.
— *Coriolanus*

LYSANDER: Now **she holds me not**;
Now **follow**, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.
DEMETRIUS: Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, **cheek by jowl**.
— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

CORNWALL I have received a hurt: **follow me, lady.**
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely comes this hurt: **give me your arm**.
— *King Lear*

In the example from *Dream*, Hermia must let go of Lysander before he says this line. But in *King Lear*, what happens to the scene if Regan takes his arm as he requests and what happens to the scene if Regan walks off without helping him?

PUNCTUATION

Use punctuation when it is helpful; ignore it when it is not. Punctuation is a tricky topic because we have no way to know how Shakespeare punctuated his scripts, despite some practitioners' insistence on the supremacy of the First Folio. (To be fair, however, First Folio punctuation is closer to Shakespeare in that it shows how punctuation was used and language was structured at the time he was writing, even if we can't say that every comma is authorial.) Modern editors add, delete, and change punctuation without warning. (Early modern editors did too!) Punctuation, however, can be useful as a guide to the logic of your character's argument. It can help structure long sentences, in both verse and prose. At the very least, it is very helpful to notice where your full stops are—periods, question marks, and exclamation marks.

ENJAMBED LINES VS. END-STOPPED LINES

Does the thought end at the end of the verse line (end-stopped), or does it continue into the next line (enjambed)? End-stopped is more controlled. If lines are enjambed, the character's thoughts are pouring out. Enjambment is not, however, an invitation to ignore the end of the verse line. Often playing these

verse line endings can reveal interesting choices and can make the thoughts sound more realistic. What do you get if the character finds what they are saying next right at that line ending? Earlier plays tend to be more end-stopped, whereas later plays tend to be more enjambed.

PROTEUS: He after honour hunts, I after love**:**
He leaves his friends to dignify them more**,**
I leave myself, my friends and all, for love**.**
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me**,**
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time**,**
War with good counsel, set the world at nought;
Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought**.**

— *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (early play, end-stopped)

MACBETH: If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here**,**
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time**,**
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips.

— *Macbeth* (late play, enjambed)

In an enjambed passage, it can be important to lift the final lines of each line. If you play only the sentence structure, you lose the feeling of the verse and it can actually be harder for the audience to understand.

A NOTE ON BREATHING

Different practitioners use different rules or guidelines for breathing. In rhetorical breathing, an actor breathes according to the punctuation: quick breaths at commas, next size breaths at semi-colons and colons, and large breaths at full stops. In contrast, iambic fundamentalists like to see the breath happen at the end of verse lines, regardless of whether there is a punctuation mark there or not. I've even heard schools of thought where the only place an actor should breathe is at a full stop that occurs at the end of the line. There is no right answer - once again, it's about making the discoveries that are useful to you and the production. Different directors may want to explore different techniques at different times. I personally have found rhetorical breathing immensely illuminating in the past, though recently I find myself more drawn to exploring the use of line-endings, particularly in enjambed text.

VERSE

INTRODUCTION TO VERSE

TYPES OF FEET IN POETRY

1.	iamb	=	2 syllables	unstressed, stressed	- /
2.	trochee	=	2 syllables	stressed, unstressed	/ -
3.	pyrrhic	=	2 syllables	unstressed, unstressed	- -
4.	spondee	=	2 syllables	stressed, stressed	/ /
5.	anapest	=	3 syllables	unstressed, unstressed, stressed	- - /
6.	amphibrach	=	3 syllables	unstressed, stressed, unstressed	- / -
7.	dactyl	=	3 syllables	stressed, stressed, unstressed	/ / -

TYPES OF METER IN POETRY

1.	Monometer	=	One Foot
2.	Dimeter	=	Two Feet
3.	Trimeter	=	Three Feet
4.	*Tetrameter	=	Four Feet
5.	*Pentameter	=	Five Feet
6.	*Hexameter	=	Six Feet
7.	Heptameter	=	Seven Feet
8.	Octameter	=	Eight Feet

* These are the three meters most commonly employed in early modern English drama. Very early works, such as *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, also employed heptameter, or 14-syllable lines, also called fourteeners.

TETRAMETER

Tetrameter is poetry with verse lines containing four feet. Shakespeare often uses rhyming trochaic tetrameter for supernatural characters, such as the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the witches in *Macbeth*. (Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* is the most famous poem in perfect trochaic tetrameter.)

PUCK: / - / - / - /
Captain **of** our **fai**ry **band**
/ - / - / - /
Hele**na** is **here** at **hand**
/ - / - / - /
And the **youth** mis**took** by **me**
/ - / - / - /
Pleading **for** a **lov**er's **fee**.

— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

FIRST WITCH: / - / - / - /
When shall **we** three **meet** a**gain**
- / - / - / - /
In **thun**der, **light**ning, **or** in **rain**?

— *Macbeth*

You'll notice these lines are missing the final unstressed syllable. Shakespeare is writing in what's technically called catalectic trochaic tetrameter, but you don't need to know that.

HEXAMETER

Hexameter, or 12-syllable lines, are also known as *alexandrines*. This is the most common mode of verse in French literature, particularly the plays of Corneille and Racine. The form was common in English morality plays and earlier heroic drama. Some scholars argue that Shakespeare never uses hexameter and there's always a way to make the line into pentameter, but others find hexameter in his plays occasionally, particularly in the early ones.

DUKE OF YORK - / - / - / - / - / - /
The **nob**les **they** are **dead**, the **com**mons **they** are **cold**.

— *Richard II*

- Unlike iambic pentameter, a line of hexameter can be divided equally in half. This can result in a heightening of emotional content.
- There is a sense of cramming too much (meaning? emotion?) into a limited space ("12 into 10"). After WWII when the House of Commons was being rebuilt, Sir Winston Churchill had it done so that it would be too small to seat every member. He wrote that part of the reason he supported this building plan was that it would give "great occasions a sense of crowd and urgency." An actor may need to speak fast or in a higher emotional state using these lines.
- Hexameter lines can end with amphibrachs resulting in a 13-syllable line. (More on amphibrachs on page 21.)

DOGGEREL

Doggerel is a loose verse form, irregular in rhythm and in rhyme. It is often used for comic effect and spoken by servants or lower class characters. With these passages, you have to go with your best guess of how the scansion should work.

SPEED: - / - / - / - / - / - /
O **jest** un**seen**, in**scru**ta**ble**, in**visi**ble,
- - / - - / / - - / - / - - / -
As a **nose** on a **man's face**, or a **wea**ther**cock** on a **stee**ple!

- / - / - / - / - / - / -
My **mas**ter **sues** to **her**, and **she** hath **taught** her **sui**tor,
- / - / - / - / - / -
He **being** her **pu**pil, **to** be**come** her **tu**tor.
- / - / - / / - / - / - / -
O **ex**cel**lent** de**vice**! **was** there **ev**er **heard** a **bet**ter,
/ - / - / - / / - / - / - / -
That my **mas**ter, **be**ing **scribe**, **to** him**self** should **write** the **let**ter?

— *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

VARIATIONS IN IAMBIC PENTAMETER

FEET VARIATIONS

AMPHIBRACH

The most common variation to a line of iambic pentameter is for the line to contain 11 syllables, and for that extra syllable to come at the end of the line and be unstressed. (*This is commonly taught as a feminine ending because it ends with a "weak" stress, but there's no reason for us to continue the use of sexist terms when the academic one will do just fine.*)

- / - / - / - / - / (-)
To **be** or **not** to **be** that **is** the **ques***tion*

Of course you could also throw a trochee in this line:
- / - / - / / - - / (-)
To **be** or **not** to **be** **that** is the **ques***tion*

An amphibrach at the line ending can mean the character is uncertain, nervous, or rambling. This irregularity keeps the thought moving forward because the unstressed syllable more easily slides into the beginning of the next line. The unstressed syllable can give the sense of a character ending the line a little off balance, instead of with a solid stressed syllable.

The "To be or not to be" speech has many amphibrach endings—Hamlet is unsure of what to do next, unsure whether he's actually seen the ghost of his father, unsure whether suicide is the best choice, unsure whether revenge is the best choice.

TROCHEE

The second most common foot variation from the iamb is the trochee. A trochaic foot will most often appear in one of two places in the line: a. at the beginning of the foot, or b. after a caesura (discussed below on page 24). A trochee is almost always followed by an iamb in order to return the line to normal rhythm.

A trochaic beginning launches the line—the character could be in a hurry, angry, making a point, interrupting, demanding. The trochee creates a break in rhythm like a skipped heartbeat or a bump in the road. It can slow the line thus giving more emphasis to the word in the trochee. A trochee often signifies a new thought, a resurgence within a thought, or conflict. The stressed-unstressed-unstressed-stressed pattern of a regular iamb following a trochee can also create a galloping rhythm.

JULIET / - - / - / - / - /
Gallop a**pace** you **fie**ry **foot**ed **steeds**
— *Romeo and Juliet*

Why does this line have a trochaic beginning? Because Juliet is excited! Romeo's coming! (And she will be soon too—ba-da-bing!) Her fervor is further indicated by the fricative sounds in the line: **f**iery **f**ooted.

PYRRHIC SPONDEE

These two variations from the iamb often occur in conjunction. You speed up over the two weak stresses and slow for the two strong stresses. The pyrrhic is often two small unimportant words. The spondee section sometimes highlights antithesis, as shown in the example below.

JULIET: - / - / - / - - / /
And **not** im**pute** this **yield***ing to* ***light love***
- - / / - / - / - /
Which the ***dark night*** hath **so** dis**cov**er**ed**.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

These two lines contain antithesis between "light love and dark night." ("Dis-cov-er-ed" is an example of expansion; see page 24.)

ANAPEST

Anapests are also known as "crowded feet" because they contain an extra third syllable, instead of just two. Often you slide quickly over that extra unstressed syllable in order to cram it into the same amount of time.

CORNELIUS By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to
O'ercome you with her show, and in time,
- / - / - - / - / - /
When **she** had **fit**ted you **with** her **craft**, to **work**
Her son into the adoption of the crown
— *Cymbeline*

GLOUCESTER - / - - / - / - / - /
You **made** in a **day**, my **lord**, whole **towns** to **fly**.
— *2 Henry VI*

HEADLESS LINES

Sometimes you will come across an 9- or 11-syllable line, where the meter seems regular at the end; i.e. the line ends with a stressed syllable—there is no final amphibrach to explain the eleventh syllable, and there is no opportunity to expand a word in order to make up an extra syllable. These lines might be headless—meaning they are missing the initial unstressed syllable. Frequently they start with a stressed syllable and then the meter continues normally. In later plays, however, headless lines can include other variations. What's going on with the character to prevent them from having normal meter? Starting off with the stressed syllable can imply a feeling of abruptness.

MARSHAL: (-) / - / - / - / - /
Stay! The **King** has **thrown** his **war**der **down**.
— *Richard II*

LADY MACBETH: Thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
(-) / - / - / - / - /
That which **cries**, "Thus **thou** must **do**," if **thou** have **it**;
— *Macbeth*

This example could be a headless Alexandrine. But you could also elide hav'it and make a case for a headless pentameter line with an amphibrach. You could also play a trochee on the "thus thou" instead of an iamb.

On one of my passes through this packet, I changed my mind on how I would scan the above example. But I'm leaving it in to demonstrate the fact that different options are possible. Now to me it just seems to clearly be a fairly regular line with an amphibrach.

- / - / - / - / - /
That **which** cries, "**Thus** thou **must** do," **if** thou **have** it;

This provides two entirely different set of stressed words. Test them out and see how the meaning/emotion changes. Also note, this is a monosyllabic line.

OTHER VERSE ELEMENTS

SHARED LINES

Sometimes a line of pentameter is shared between two characters. Traditional actor training teaches that the second speaker jumps right in. Shared lines could be used to demonstrate comfortable friendship, romance, characters in sync, high energy, impatience, answering back, or a sense of humor. Recently scholars have been debating the performance of shared lines and short lines, arguing that early modern actors, due to cue scripts (actors only received copies of their own lines with maybe three to six words of the preceding speech, not a full text), would not have known to jump right in in order to complete someone else's line. What do we think? We think the new argument has merit historically, but if something helps you find a specific choice about a character or relationship, it's valid in performance. Certainly even in a cue script situation, multiple short lines in a row would have resulted in a noticeable rhythm difference, as the actors kept hearing their next cues quickly upon their last.

- / - / - / - / - /
ROMEO: I **dreamt** a **dream** to**night**. (6)
MERCUTIO: And **so** did **I**. (4)
- / - / - / - / - /
ROMEO: Well **what** was **yours**? (4)
MERCUTIO: That **dream**ers **of**ten **lie**. (6)
— *Romeo and Juliet*

SHORT LINES

Sometimes a line contains less than five feet, and there isn't another character speaking to fill the gap. The missing feet may be supplied through stage business or dramatic action.

- / - / - / - / - /
LADY MACBETH: As **you** have **done** to **this**.
LORD MACBETH: If **we** should **fail**?
- /
LADY MACBETH We **fail**? (2 syllables – 8 syllables of space, often filled with a kiss)

- / - / - / - / - /
But **screw** your **cour**age **to** the **stick**ing **place**
And we'll not fail.

— *Macbeth*

EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION

If the line seems to have more or less than ten syllables, look for opportunities to expand or contract words, changing the number of syllables in the line. Many names are variable in the number of syllables with which they can be pronounced.

- e'er or e-ver
- e'en or e-ven
- inn'cent or in-no-cent
- charm'd or charm-ed
- I am or I'm
- Rom-e-o or Rome-yo
- dam-na-tion or dam-nay-shee-un

For some people, the expansion of the -ion ending hits their ears funny and possibly distances the audience in an unhelpful way. Your director may have a specific preference on whether to use these expansions or not.

As always, can you find a reason for expansion or contraction? An expanded word often gets more juice or weight. A character might be stalling, reveling in something, trying to show off (successfully or not), etc. In the case of contracting, they may be in a hurry, or their ideas are coming out too fast to fit the verse.

CAESURAS

A caesura (‖) is a break in rhythm, thought, or syntax that falls midline and helps shape meaning and allows an audience to catch up with you. It helps to balance the parts of the line against each other. They are usually found after the second or third stress. Caesuras can be easily found after commas and semi-colons acting as ever-so-brief moments of air. Sometimes, though, a caesura falls without these points of punctuation: falling before an important verb, before a *parenthetical idea,* or an *imposed question* or *rhetorical device*. Don't think of playing the caesura by pausing, think instead of giving a slight extra lift to the word before the caesura. Some people believe that every single line has a caesura. Some people do not.

A caesura is often accompanied by one of three variations in meter:

1. A trochaic foot following the caesura.

ADAM: - / - / - / ‖ / - - /
Be **com**fort **to** my **age**! ‖ **Here** is the **gold**.

— *As You Like It*

2. The Epic Caesura: an amphibrach preceding the caesura.

EDMUND: / - - / - ‖ - / - / - /
Lag of a **bro**ther? ‖ Why **bas**tard? **Where**fore **base**?
(trochee amphibrach ‖ iamb iamb iamb)
— *King Lear*

3. Sometimes a micro-pause takes the place of the unstressed syllable of the first foot after the caesura. This is also known as a broken-back line.

AUFIDIUS - / - / - / ‖ - / - /
To **fright** them, **ere** des**troy**. ‖ (*pause*) **But** come **in**
— *Coriolanus*

More examples, including sense caesuras (caesuras that are about the balance of the line and are not necessarily marked by punctuation):

ANTIGONUS: - / - / - / - / - /
It **is** for **you** we **speak**, ‖ not **for** our**selves**:
- / - / - / - / - /
You **are** a**bused** ‖ and **by** some **put**ter-**on**
- / - / - / - / - / -
That **will** be **damn'd** for't; ‖ **would** I **knew** the **vill**ain.
— *The Winter's Tale*

PROLOGUE: - / - / - / - ‖ / - /
Have **to** the **port** of **A**thens ‖ **sent** their **ships**
(Could also have a trochaic beginning, stressing have)
— *Troilus and Cressida*

PROLOGUE: - / - / - / - ‖ / - /
To **what** may **be** di**ges**ted ‖ **in** a **play**.
— *Troilus and Cressida*

OTHER VARIATIONS

Remember that every stressed syllable is not created equal; same with unstressed syllables. Sometimes an unstressed syllable will want to jump up to meet the stressed syllable next to it. Kristin Linklater refers to this as a "sprung rhythm" and marks it with a *. George T. Wright calls it a medial stress and marks it with a \ (instead of a /). Linklater says this happens when "the stress of the verse is challenged by the emphasis of sense."

- / * / - / - / * /
Or **what** *strong* **hand** can **hold** his **swift** *foot* **back**?
— Sonnet 65

"Strong hand" is antithetical to "swift foot."

PROSE

Prose too often gets the short end of the stick when it comes to text analysis. Casually dismissed (inaccurately) as what lower-class characters speak, the richness and structure of prose is frequently ignored. Prose can be spoken by lower-class characters without much intelligence, but prose can also be smartly formed and full of persuasive devices. While verse takes its structure from meter, prose gets its structure from rhetoric (see page 31).

Typical uses for prose: in serious letters, in proclamations, in the speeches of characters actually or pretending to be mad, for cynical commentary (e.g. Jacques and Touchstone in *As You Like It*; Edmund in *King Lear*). It is used for simple exposition, transitions, or contrast. It is used for scenes of everyday life; for low comedy and for bantering, relaxed, or unbuttoned conversation.

Prose is not limited to lower-class characters, just as verse is not limited to upper-class characters Rosalind and Celia speak prose to one another in *As You Like It*, as do King Henry and Katherine of France in *Henry V*. Hamlet tends to use prose both when he is being very rational and when he is very irrational. Similarly, when the lower classes figure in serious or romantic situations, they may speak verse (e.g. Silvius and Phebe in *As You Like It*; the gardeners in *Richard II*).

Peter Hall on prose: "The meaning needs unpicking and telling with the rational care of a lawyer making his case." and "There is always a formality about Shakespeare's prose ... it is about high seriousness, and it is often comic as a consequence."

George Wright: "The shift to verse usually heralds a higher emotional temperature ... prose asserts the rational."

Cicely Berry: "What we have to recognize is that there is a pleasure in being articulate."

Matt Davies: "The more you have to make someone understand your argument, the better the prose will be." (Thanks to Dr. Matt Davies for the following information on and categorization of prose.)

USES OF PROSE

FORMAL PROSE SPEECH

HAMLET

Speak the **sp**eech, I **p**ray you, as I **p**ronounced it to you, *t*ri**pp**ingly on the *t*ongue: but if you mouth i*t*, as many of your **p**layers do, I had as lief the *t*own-crier spoke my lines.

— *Hamlet*

FORMAL RHETORIC

BRUTUS: (Q) **Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?** (1a) *As Caesar loved me*, I WEEP FOR HIM; (2a) *as he was fortunate,* I REJOICE AT IT; (3a) *as he was valiant*, I HONOUR HIM: (4a) but, *as he was ambitious*, I SLEW HIM. (1b) There is ***tears*** for his ***love***; (2b) ***joy*** for his ***fortune***; (3b) ***honour*** for his ***valour***; (4b) and ***death*** for his ***ambition***. (Q1) **Who is here so base that would be a bondman?** (A1) If any, speak; for him have I offended. (Q2) **Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman?** (A2) If any, speak; for him have I offended. (Q3) **Who is here so vile that will not love his country?** (A3) If any, speak; for him have I offended.

— *Julius Caesar*

INFORMAL RHETORIC

TRINCULO: (Q1) **What have we here?** (Q2) **a man or a fish?** (Q3) **dead or alive?** (A) (1) A fish: (2) he smells like a fish; (3) a very ancient and fish-like smell; (4) a kind of not of the newest Poor-John. (A) (5) A strange fish!

— *The Tempest*

EUPHUISTIC SPEECH

Euphuistic speeches contain an elaborate, affected style, characterized by excessive use of balance, antithesis, and alliteration and by frequent use of similes drawn from mythology and nature. Playwright John Lyly is well-known for this type of writing.

BENEDICK: (1) O, she misused me past the endurance of a block! (2) an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; (3) my very visor began to assume life and scold with her.
She told me, not thinking I had been myself, (1) that I was the prince's jester, (2) that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood *like a man at a mark*, with a whole army shooting at me.
She *speaks poniards*, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her: you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel.

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

PERFORMING PROSE

POINTING AND OVERSTRESSING

Prose should be treated as a character choice and not just as an unintelligent character's only option for speaking. When performing prose, highlight the rhetoric through pointing and stressing, build emphasis through a list, and use punctuation and phrases to structure long sentences. Be alert to syntax, thought cadence, inflection, the lifting phrase within each clause. Variation in pitch is essential in order to engage the audience. In large speeches also look for crescendo and increased tempo as the movement gathers pace.

"Where the verse trips along and is depending on a sense of line, the prose demands specific pointing." (Peter Hall)

In order to point prose, use turns of pitch and tempo changes.

/ = a turn of pitch
// = a breath

BENEDICK: I do much wonder that one man, / seeing how much another man is a *fool* when he dedicates his behaviors to love, / will, / after he hath laughed at such shallow *follies* in others, / become the argument of his own scorn by *falling* in love: //
and such a man is Claudio. //
I have known when there was no music with him but the **drum and the fife**; /
and now had he rather hear the **tabour and the pipe**: //
I have known when he would have **walked ten mile a-foot** *to see a good armour*;
/ and now will he **lie ten nights awake**, *carving the fashion of a new doublet*. //
He was wont to **speak plain and to the purpose**, / like an honest man and a soldier; / and now is he turned **orthography**; / his words are a very fantastical banquet, / just so many strange dishes. //
May I be so converted and see with these eyes? //
I cannot tell; //
I think not: //
I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; / but I'll take my oath on it, / till he have made an oyster of me, / he shall never make me such a *fool*. //
One woman is FAIR, / **yet I am well**; //
another is WISE, / **yet I am well**; //
another VIRTUOUS, **yet I am well**; //
but till all GRACES be in one woman, / one woman shall not come in my GRACE. //
Rich she shall be, / that's certain; //
wise, / or I'll none; / *virtuous*, / or I'll never cheapen her; / *fair*, / or I'll never look on her; //
mild, /or come not near me; / *noble*, or not I for an angel; //
of good discourse, / **an excellent musician**, / **and her hair shall be of what colour it please God**.

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

PROSE AND VERSE INTERCHANGES

When a dialogue moves between verse and prose, ask why. What causes the changes? Why would one character speak in prose and another in verse? Does one character get the other to switch over to their mode of speaking? What are the power dynamics?

VIOLA: [P] Good madam, let me see your face.
OLIVIA: [P] Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text: but we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. Look you, sir, such a one I was this present: is't not well done?
VIOLA: [P] Excellently done, if God did all.
OLIVIA: [P] 'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.
VIOLA: [V] 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on:
Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive,
If you will lead these graces to the grave
And leave the world no copy.
OLIVIA [P] O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; I will give out divers schedules of my beauty: it shall be inventoried, and every particle and utensil labelled to my will: as, item, two lips, indifferent red; item, two grey eyes, with lids to them; item, one neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?

VIOLA [V] I see you what you are, you are too proud;
But, if you were the devil, you are fair.
My lord and master loves you: O, such love
Could be but recompensed, though you were crown'd
The nonpareil of beauty!
OLIVIA: [V] How does he love me?
VIOLA: [V] With adorations, fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.
OLIVIA: [V] Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him:
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulged, free, learn'd and valiant;
And in dimension and the shape of nature
A gracious person: but yet I cannot love him;
He might have took his answer long ago.

—*Twelfth Night*

The conversation starts in prose. Viola switches to verse when, as Cesario, she is praising Olivia. Are these lines the memorized message? Or is Viola moved to speak verse because she wants the man she loves to get what he wants? Olivia initially remains in prose, dismissing the lines with wit. Viola remains in verse, despite Olivia speaking in prose and the fact that this second set of lines is clearly not from Orsino's message. Olivia then switches to verse and responds more earnestly and less flippantly. Has she been moved by Viola's (Cesario's) speech? Does this flip into verse indicate the moment Olivia falls in love with Cesario? Whatever the choice, the emotional quality of Olivia's previous prose speech and her verse speech are different—use the verse/prose switches as an actor to effect a change in the character.

RHETORIC

Rhetorical devices are always chosen by the character in an effort to win their objective. Let your character use the rhetoric. The more complicated the rhetorical device, the more intelligent the character. (Special thanks to Cass Morris and the Education Department at the American Shakespeare Center for their development of these over-arching categories.) You can find many more examples of these rhetorical devices in Scott Kaiser's book, *Shakespeare's Wordcraft*. There are hundreds of rhetorical devices; I've included the ones I think are most important for character and textual analysis.

REPETITION

Repetition of words or phrases is often used when a character wants to drive home a point or illuminate a theme.

MACBETH: If it were **done** when 'tis **done**, then 'twere well
It were **done** quickly.
— *Macbeth*

EDMUND: Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the **legitimate**: fine word,—**legitimate**!
Well, my **legitimate**, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the **legitimate**.
— *King Lear*

If one character repeats the word or phrase of another character, it is often to one-up them, to win a point, or to twist the meaning. If there are several repetitions back and forth, think of it as a tennis match between the two characters—each is trying to score on the other. It is a game of wits.

LEAR: I **gave** you all.
REGAN: And in good time you **gave** it.
— *King Lear*

PORTIA: Then **must** the Jew be merciful.
SHYLOCK: On what compulsion **must** I? Tell me that.
— *The Merchant of Venice*

IMMEDIATELY, OR, EPIZEUXIS

When a single word or phrase is repeated immediately in one character's line, they are often trying to express deep emotions, articulate big realizations, or amplify strong actions. I learned this Greek term by always saying, "Epizeuxis, epizeuxis, epizeuxis!" instead of just "epizeuxis."

ANNE: **Blush**, **blush** thou lump of foul deformity.
— *Richard III*

ISABELLA **Seeming**, **seeming**!
I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't.
— *Measure for Measure*

LEAR: Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never.
— *King Lear*

OF BEGINNINGS, OR, ANAPHORA

Repeating beginnings are incredibly obvious wordplay, and their apparentness causes each successive repetition to grow in importance.

ANNE: **Cursed** be the hand that made these fatal holes.
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it.
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence.
— *Richard III*

RICHARD II: **With mine own** tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths
— *Richard II*

OF ENDS, OR, EPISTROPHE

Scott Kaiser notes that final repetitions "work like a linguistic whip, where each successive phrase ends with the same resounding crack." In Greek, strophe means "to turn." I remember this term by thinking of catastrophe; they share the same suffix. Catastrophe can refer to the final event; epistrophe is the repetition of the final words.

ANNE: It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that killed my **husband**.
RICHARD: He that bereft thee, lady, of thy **husband**, Did
it to help thee to a better **husband**.
— *Richard III*

SHYLOCK: I will buy **with you**, sell **with you**, talk **with you**, walk **with you**, and so following; but I will not eat **with you**, drink **with you**, nor pray **with you**.
— *The Merchant of Venice*

OF THE BEGINNING AT THE END, OR, EPANALEPSIS

RICHMOND: **Kings** it makes gods, and meaner creatures **Kings**.
— *Richard III*

HENRY V: **Once more** unto the breach, dear friends, **once more**.
— *Henry V*

OF THE END AT THE NEXT BEGINNING, OR, ANADIPLOSIS

BOLINGBROKE: As **I was banished**, **I was banished** Hereford,
But as **I come**, **I come** for Lancaster.

— *Richard II*

OCTAVIA: Husband **win**, **win** brother,
Prays and destroys the prayer; no midway
'Twixt these extremes at all.

— *Antony and Cleopatra*

A STRING OF ANADIPLOSIS, OR, GRADATIO

This is a progression where the word or phrase at the end of each sequence is repeated at the beginning of the next. These sequences build one phase on top of another.

DROMIO: She is so hot because **the meat is cold**.
The meat is cold because *you come not home*.
You come not home because **you have no stomach**.
You have no stomach, having broken your fast.

— *The Comedy of Errors*

HENRY VI: How many makes the **hour** full complete,
How many **hours** brings about the *day*,
How many *days* will finish up the **year**,
How many **years** a mortal man may live.

— *3 Henry VI*
(with bonus anaphora)

OF THE SAME WORD IN DIFFERENT FORMS, OR, POLYPTOTON

Polyptoton is a pretty smart rhetorical device (It also happens to be my personal favorite!)

ANNE: Thou **bloodless** remnant of that royal **blood**!
— *Richard III*

DUCHESS OF YORK: A **beggar begs** that never **begged** before.
— *Richard II*

KATHERINE: **Moved**? In good time! Let him that **moved** you hither
Remove you hence. I knew you at the first
You were a **moveable**.

— *The Taming of the Shrew*

OF THE SAME WORD IN DIFFERENT SENSES, OR, ANTANACLASIS

This is a more sophisticated rhetorical device and requires a higher degree of intelligence.

HENRY V: Shall this his **mock, mock** out of their dear husbands
(first noun, second verb)

— *Henry V*

ISABELLA: I am a woeful suitor to **your honor**,
Please but **your honor** hear me.
(the first time is a idea noun, the second is his title)

— *Measure for Measure*

GAUNT: Old **Gaunt** indeed, and **gaunt** in being old.
(the first is his name, the second is an adjective.)

— *Richard II*

OF GRAMMATICAL FORMS, OR, ISOCOLON

MARGARET: *Earth* gapes, *hell* burns, *fields* roar, *saints* pray
(*noun* verb, *noun* verb, *noun* verb, *noun*, verb)

— *Richard III*
(this example also has asyndeton)

MERCUTIO: *He* **heareth** *not*, *he* **stirreth** *not*, *he* **moveth** *not*.
(*he* **verbeth** *not, he* **verbeth** *not, he* **verbeth** *not*)

— *Romeo and Juliet*

BRUTUS: There is **tears** for his *love*; **joy** for his *fortune*; **honor** for his *valor*; and **death** for his *ambition*. (**noun** for his *noun*)

— *Julius Caesar*

IN DIFFERENT WORDS, OR, ACCUMULATIO

Why would a character need to say the same thing in multiple ways?

VOLUMNIA: Should we **be silent** and **not speak**
(*being silent and not speaking mean the same thing*)

— *Coriolanus*

OF A PHRASE OR QUESTION, IN ORDER TO DWELL ON A POINT, OR, EPIMONE

MARC ANTONY Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, **he is an honourable man**.

— *Julius Caesar*

IAGO: I have professed me thy friend and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. **Put money in thy purse**; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, **put money in thy purse**. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,— **put money in thy purse**,—nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration:—**put but money in thy purse**. These Moors are changeable in their wills: *fill thy purse with money*:—the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must: therefore **put money in thy purse**. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. *Make all the money thou canst*: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; *therefore make money*.

— *Othello*

OF IDEAS IN INVERTED ORDER, OR, CHIASMUS

Chiasmus is a criss-cross structure; the rhetoric forms an X, and the word's origin in Greek means "crossing" or "to shape like the letter X."

RICHARD III: Since every **Jack** became a *gentleman*,
A B
There's many a *gentle person* made a **Jack**.
B A

— *Richard III*

WITCHES: **Fair** is *foul* and *foul* is **fair**.
A B B A

— *Macbeth*

DUKE SENIOR: What would you have? Your **gentleness** shall *force*,
A B
More than your *force* move us to **gentleness**.
B A

— *As You Like It*

OF WORDS OR IDEAS IN CONTRASTING JUXTAPOSITION, OR ANTITHESIS

Antithesis is the most important and the most frequent rhetorical device. Be on the looks out for it and always play it! Antithesis creates a sense of balance; multiple antitheses can feel like a pendulum swinging back and forth.

RIVERS: **Drown** desperate *sorrow* in dead Edward's GRAVE
And **plant** your *joys* in living Edward's THRONE.

— *Richard III*

GAUNT: Things **sweet** to taste prove in digestion **sour**.

— *Richard II*

PORTIA: So is the will of a *living* **daughter** curbed by the will of a *dead* **father**.

— *The Merchant of Venice*

POSTHUMUS: The stone's too **hard** to come by.
IACHIMO: Not a whit,
Your lady being so **easy**.
— *Cymbeline*

GERTRUDE: **Come, come,** you *answer* with an idle tongue.
HAMLET: **Go, go,** you *question* with a wicked tongue.
(also epizeuxis and isocolon)
— *Hamlet*

OF WORDS THAT SOUND ALIKE, BUT DIFFER IN SPELLING OR MEANING, OR, PARONOMASIA, OR, A PUN

WINCHESTER: **Rome** shall remedy this.
GLOUCESTER: **Roam** thither then.
— *1 Henry VI*

POLONIUS: I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' **Capitol**. *Brutus* killed me.
HAMLET: It was a *brute* part of him to kill so **capital** a calf there.
— *Hamlet*

MERCUTIO: Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a **grave** man.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

SUBSTITUTION

OF ONE PART OF SPEECH FOR ANOTHER, OR, ANTHIMERIA

NOUNS USED AS VERBS

LUCIO: It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the state, and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo **dukes** it well in his absence; he puts transgression to 't.
— *Measure for Measure*

CLEOPATRA: He **words** me girls, he **words** me.
— *Antony and Cleopatra*

ADJECTIVES USED AS VERBS

CAPULET: Thank me no thankings, nor **proud** me no prouds.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

VERBS USED AS NOUNS

GLOUCESTER: And dogged York, that reached as the moon,
Whose overweening arm I have plucked back,
By false **accuse** doth level at my life.
— *2 Henry VI*

NOUNS USED AS ADJECTIVES

HOTSPUR: Why, what a **candy** deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
— *1 Henry IV*

OF AN INAPPROPRIATE WORD, CREATES AN IMPLIED METAPHOR, OR, CATACHRESIS

HAMLET: I will speak **daggers** to her, but use none.
— *Hamlet*

ROMEO: If I profane with my unworthiest hand
This **holy shrine**, the gentler sin is this:
My lips, two **blushing pilgrims**, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a holy kiss.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

OF AN ELEMENT OR PART FOR THE WHOLE, OR, SYNECDOCHE

MACBETH: Take thy **face** hence.
(face for self)
— *Macbeth*

HAMLET: I'll lugs the **guts** into the neighbor room.
(guts for Polonius's body)
— *Hamlet*

OF AN INCORRECT WORD FOR A CORRECT ONE, OR, MALAPROPISM

DOGBERRY: Dost thou not **suspect** my place? Dost thou not **suspect** my years?
(suspect for respect)
— *Much Ado About Nothing*

ELBOW: My wife, sire, whom I **detest** before heaven and your honor—
(detest for protest)
— *Measure for Measure*

OMISSION

OF WORDS

The general term for omission is ellipsis. Omission could happen when the character doesn't have time to bother with the missing words, or also when a character purposely leaves them out to make the audience fill in the blanks. Villains frequently do this—they use omission to force the audience to occupy the same head space—if you are able to fill in the missing words, then you understand the brain of the villain and are linked to them.

MARGARET: I called thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I called thee then poor shadow, painted queen,
(I called thee then) The presentation of but what I was,
(I called thee then) The flattering index of a direful pageant
— *Richard III*

ANTONY: Not Caesar's valor
Hath o'erthrown Antony, but Antony's (*valor*)
Hath triumphed on itself.
— *Antony and Cleopatra*

OF A VERB FROM PARALLEL CLAUSES, OR, ZEUGMA

MARGARET: A husband and a son thou **owest** to me;
And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance.
(*And thou owest me a kingdom; all of you owe me allegiance*)
— *Richard III*

AUMERLE: No, good my lord, let's fight with gentle words,
Till time **lend** friends, and friends their helpful swords.
(*and friends lend their helpful swords*)
— *Richard II*

OF CONJUNCTIONS FROM CLAUSES, OR, ASYNDETON

Often asyndeton happens in conjunction with a list. So what's going on with the character? Did the list get out of control and they didn't know when the end was? Are they just in a rush can doesn't have time to include a conjunction? I remember this term thanks to a friend in graduate school who thought that asyndeton sounding like a type of dinosaur and drew a picture of a dinosaur eating conjunctions.

MARGARET: Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven
That **Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,**
Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment, (*and my woeful banishment*)
Could all but answer for that peevish brat?
— *Richard III*

VALENTINE: If I be not by her fair influence
Fostered, illumined, cherished, kept alive. (*and kept alive*)
— *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

ADDITION

BY CORRECTION, OR, EPANORTHOSIS

Epanorthosis is a useful acting tool that can be applied to rhetorical devices asyndeton, polysyndeton, and auxesis. You play each new phrase or word as though correcting the previous word or phrase, as though it is a better option than the one before.

PHOEBE: It is a pretty youth, not very pretty.
— *As You Like It*

OF CONJUNCTIONS AND PREPOSITIONS, OR, POLYSYNDETON

RICHARD III: When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?
Or thee? **or** thee? **or** any of your faction?
— *Richard III*

HAMLET: Since I have cause, **and** will, **and** strength, **and** means to do it.
— *Hamlet*

There are two main ways to play polysyndeton:

1. as God, knowing before hand everything you are going to say
2. coming up with each one on the spot, not knowing when the list will end

OF A POP UP IDEA, OR PARENTHESIS

Explore what you get by playing parenthesis exactly as described: as a pop-up idea that occurs to the character in the middle of speaking their original thought. They didn't plan to say that parenthesis all along—it occurs to them in the moment. Why does this new thought occur, and why does it occur at the exact moment it does?

CLARENCE: O, I have passed a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,
That, **(as I am a Christian faithful man)**,
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days."
— *Richard III*

HAMLET: Why she, even she —
Oh God! A beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer — married with mine uncle,
My father's brother.
— *Hamlet*

PORTIA: There's something tells me **(but it is not love)**
I would not lose you.
— *The Merchant of Venice*

OTHER RHETORICAL DEVICES

LISTS, OR, AUXESIS

Is the list in ascending importance, descending importance, or a mix? Early modern drama is full of lists. Does the character known the entire list when they begins speaking? Are items on the list thought up in the moment? Why does each item on the list have to be said? What does each item cover that the other items don't?

ELIZABETH: I had rather be a country servant-maid
Than a great queen, with this condition,
To be thus **taunted**, **scorned**, and **baited at**.
1 2 3

— *Richard III*

ASKING A QUESTION TO AFFIRM OR DENY A POINT, OR, EROTEMA

TO THE AUDIENCE

Are you expecting an answer? Do you leave room for an answer? Can you get an answer from the audience?

RICHARD III: Was ever woman in this humor wooed?
Was ever woman in this humor won?

— *Richard III*

RHETORICAL QUESTION

Outside of soliloquy, when one isn't talking to an audience, erotema can also be the device of asking a question or question when you don't expect or allow for an answer, otherwise known as a rhetorical question. Still, you can play with whether you want an answer from the other character and don't get it, or whether you refuse to give them time to answer.

LADY MACBETH: Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely?

— *Macbeth*

RICHARD III: Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?
Is the King dead? The empire unpossessed?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?

— *Richard III*

PROVIDING YOUR OWN ANSWER

HENRY V: **Show men dutiful?**
Why, so didst thou. **Seem they grave and learned?**
Why, so didst thou. **Come they of noble family?**
Why, so didst thou. **Seem they religious?**
Why, so didst thou.

— *Henry V*

SHYLOCK: *If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility?* **Revenge**. *If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example?* **Why, revenge.**

— *The Merchant of Venice*

DEPARTURE OF NORMAL WORD ORDER FOR AN EFFECT, OR, HYPERBATON

Is your character departing from normal word order to be obtuse? Are they trying to hide meaning?

DUCHESS OF YORK: Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.
— *Richard III*
Normal order: Thou art bloody; thy end will be bloody.

ISABELLA: More than our brother is our chastity.
— *Measure for Measure*
Normal order: Our chastity is more than our brother.

CLAUDIUS: Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves;
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along.
— *Hamlet*

"Our sometime sister have we taken to wife." Normal order: "We have taken our sister to wife." You can understand why Claudius is obscuring this information through not only abnormal word order, but by separating the noun from the verb with five lines—stuffing in a bunch of extra information.

AUDIENCE CONTACT

The theatre of Shakespeare's era was lit either via the sun, if it was performed outdoors, or via candles, if it was indoors. Though the companies had ways of creating lighting effects, their use of lighting design was considerably different from modern theatre. Significantly, the audience would have been more or less in the same amount of light as the actors. Unlike today's proscenium stage, where audience members sit in complete darkness and cannot be seen, audience members in the early modern theatre can be seen, and thus interacted with, by the actors. Moments that seem specifically designed for audience interaction are prevalent throughout early modern English drama. This technique is part of the fabric of how these plays work, so we encourage you to find moments to talk directly with the audience and to experiment with how you can involve them in the world of the play. (Special thanks to the Education Department at the American Shakespeare Center and the Shakespeare and Performance program at Mary Baldwin University for some of these ways of categorizing Audience Contact and to Jessica Lefkow for helping further develop this information.)

When using audience contact, make sure you are **serving the scene**. Don't sidebar--this cuts *out* the person onstage. Instead you want to bring *in* the member of the audience. Instead of sidebaring with the audience, treat audience contact as giving every member of the audience a guest pass to the scene.

TYPES OF CONTACT MOMENTS

ASIDES

An aside is a line of text that a character delivers only to a single audience member. Though the entire audience hears it, the other characters on stage do not. Again, the defining feature of an aside is that it **excludes other characters on stage**. The information in the line is secret or would change the narrative if other characters knew it. Do beware however: the majority of marked "aside" moments in a script are editorial. That stage direction is usually added in a modern text, not written by the original author. So test the assumption—does that line actually have to be a secret to the audience? What happens if you deliver it to another character?

INCLUSIONS

The majority of audience contact moments fall under the category of inclusions. This simply means that the information delivered to the audience **can be heard by the other characters on stage**.

SOLILOQUIES

A soliloquy is a speech delivered by one character when there are **no other characters on stage**. Often in soliloquies, a character is working through an issue, trying to solve a problem, letting the audience

know what they are thinking or planning, or letting the audience in on a secret. During these moments, a character is *not* talking to themselves; they are talking to the audience. Use soliloquies as an opportunity to engage with the audience, to ask them questions (and possibly receive answers), and to bring them into the story generally.

HOW TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE AUDIENCE

WAYS TO MAKE AUDIENCE CONTACT

1. The Wash: having your eyes sweep over a large portion of the audience.
2. The Gaze: direct sustained eye contact.
3. The Single Out: direct sustained eye contact plus a gesture.
4. The Touch: actor invites some sort of physical contact, like a hand shake or a high five.
5. The Join Us: actor gets audience member up and into the scene. Use sparingly and remember that many audience members do not want to be asked to perform. Audience participation is different from audience contact and the idea of audience participation makes some audience members very nervous.

WAYS TO USE AUDIENCE CONTACT

CASTING THE AUDIENCE

Making the audience members into characters who have an implied involvement in the scene or in the greater world of the play but who do not actually appear on stage. They may be named or unnamed, but must be specific identities. Audience members can be cast as a group, such as during an oration to an army, or cast individually, such as during a conversation about a particular person. Typically, the rest of the audience has a huge amount of fun reacting to these moments.

- Casting the audience as a group

FALSTAFF Tut, never fear me: I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.
PRINCE HENRY I think, to steal cream indeed, for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, **whose fellows** are these that come after?
FALSTAFF Mine, Hal, mine.
PRINCE HENRY I did never see **such pitiful rascals**.
FALSTAFF Tut, tut; good enough to toss; **food for powder, food for powder**; **they'll** fill a pit as well as better: tush, man, **mortal men, mortal men**.
WESTMORELAND Ay, but, Sir John, methinks **they** are exceeding **poor and bare, too beggarly**.
FALSTAFF 'Faith, for **their** poverty, I know not where **they** had that; and for **their** bareness, I am sure they never learned that of me.

— *2 Henry IV*

- Casting the audience as an individual person

NERISSA But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?
PORTIA I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

NERISSA First, there is **the Neapolitan prince**.
PORTIA Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith.
NERISSA Then there is **the County Palatine**.
PORTIA He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from **these two**!
NERISSA How say you by **the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon**?
PORTIA God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.
— *The Merchant of Venice*

There is lots of fun to be had whether the audience member matches the description or whether they don't. Take for instance the County Palatine, who Portia says, "doth nothing but frown." Audience enjoyment occurs if Nerissa finds someone who doesn't look particularly engaged, or if she finds someone who can't stop laughing.

ALLYING WITH THE AUDIENCE

Making audience members colleagues or co-conspirators, looking to the audience for support or affirmation.

- Sharing schemes or ideas with the audience

IAGO: I hate the Moor:
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery—How, how? Let's see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
— *Othello*

- Making a joke with the audience (often at another character's expense)

VALENTINE: Last night she enjoined me to write some lines to one she loves.
SPEED: And have you?
VALENTINE: I have.
SPEED: Are they not lamely writ?
VALENTINE: No, boy, but as well as I can do them. Peace! here she comes.
SPEED: **O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet!**
Now will he interpret to her.
— *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

SEEKING INFORMATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Questions that can be taken to the audience instead of, in addition to, or in the absence of other characters on stage. Really attempt to get the audience member to answer you. Where does it lead the speech?

FALSTAFF 'Tis not due yet; I would be loath to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? how then? **Can honour set to a leg?** no: **or an arm?** no: **or take away the grief of a wound?** no. **Honour hath no skill in surgery, then?** no. What is honour? a word. What is in that word honour? what is that honour? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday. **Doth he feel it?** no. **Doth he hear it?** no. **'Tis insensible, then?** Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon: and so ends my catechism.

— *1 Henry IV*

If Falstaff asks all these questions to different audience members, feeding them the "no" answer over and over, he can build an expectation. When he asks, "'Tis insensible, then?" the audience may automatically answer "no," which allows the actors to correct them with the actual text: "Yea."

POLONIUS: Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And I believe, it is a fetch of wit:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence;
'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.
REYNALDO: Very good, my lord.
POLONIUS: And then, sir, does he this—he does—**what was I about to say?** By the mass, I was about to say something: **where did I leave?**
REYNALDO At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,' and 'gentleman.'

— *Hamlet*

The actors paying Polonius could ask an audience member these questions. If they don't have any clue how to respond, Reynaldo has the appropriate text to help out. But a savvy audience member might just know where Polonius left off.

MAKING THE AUDIENCE MEMBER THE OBJECT OF THE LINE

This is not casting the audience member as an unstaged character, but applying descriptive text to a particular audience member. They are not a member of the world of the play, but more of a helpful illustration. Often this involves making them the butt of a joke. There are many instances in the plays of a character talking about a bald man or a man with or without a beard.

BENEDICK: **One woman is fair**, yet I am well; **another is wise**, yet I am well; **another virtuous**, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace.

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

USING THE AUDIENCE MEMBER AS A PROP

This is sort of a catch-all category that covers any way of making an audience member or their belongings part of a bit. Examples could include:

- giving the audience member something to hold
- taking the audience member's program and looking at it
- taking the audience member's chair
- digging through their purse
- sitting on them
- hiding with the audience

OTHER TIPS

FINDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUDIENCE CONTACT

- Find the lines that **must** be delivered to the other character; find the lines that **must** remain unheard; everything else is up for play.
- Look for commas - often supporting material can be given to the audience.
- Usually the first section of a sentence is in scene, and the second phrase is the opportunity for contact.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF AUDIENCE CONTACT

1. Have a reason.
2. Choose a single person.
3. Make eye contact, but then talk. Beware of intense eye contact feeling like an attack.
4. Use an entire phrase, not just a couple of words.
5. Have a reason to go to next person.
6. Have a reason to return to the stage world.
7. Be careful who you deliver insulting text to: will they take it good-naturedly, or could you upset or hurt them?
8. Don't forget your scene partners and your objectives toward them.
9. If you are seeking information from the audience, genuinely seek it, and be prepared to get it.

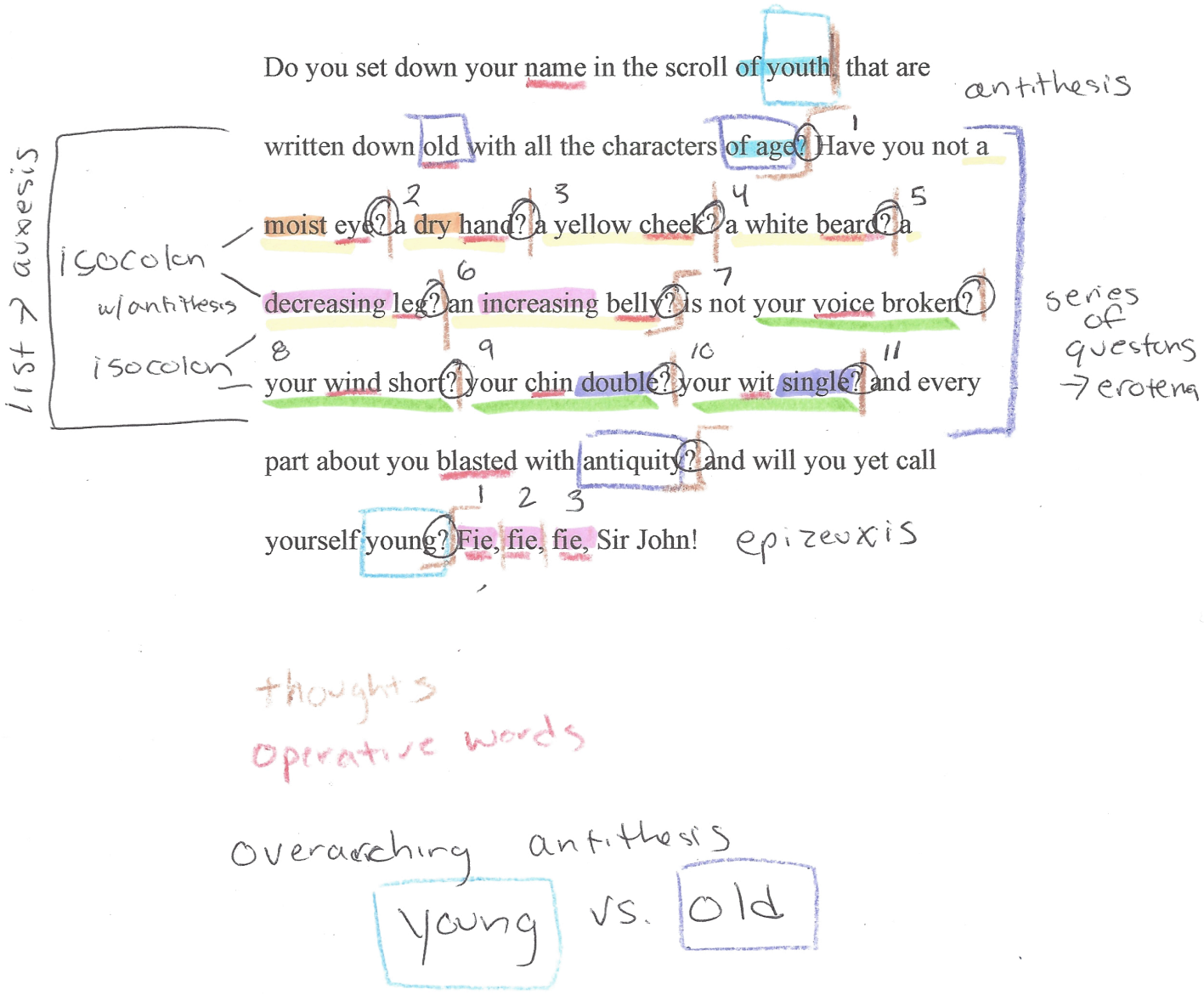
SIGNS OF A GOOD MARK FOR AUDIENCE CONTACT

1. Paying attention
2. Smiling
3. Nodding
4. Returning audience member

EXAMPLES OF SPEECH ANALYSIS

PROSE: LORD CHIEF JUSTICE FROM HENRY IV, PART TWO

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE



2 Henry IV 1.2.177-185: LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

A1 Do you set down your name in the scroll of **youth**,
A2 that are written down old with all the characters of **age**?
B1a Have you not a *moist* eye?
B1b a *dry* hand?
B2a a **yellow** cheek?
B2b a **white** beard?
B3a a *decreasing* leg?
B3b an *increasing* belly?
C1a is not your voice **broken**?
C1b your wind **short**?
C2a your chin *double*?
C2b your wit *single*?
D and every part about you blasted with antiquity?
E and will you yet call yourself young?
F Fie, fie, fie, Sir John!

R = rhetorical device, V = vocabulary, P = person, E = embedded stage direction

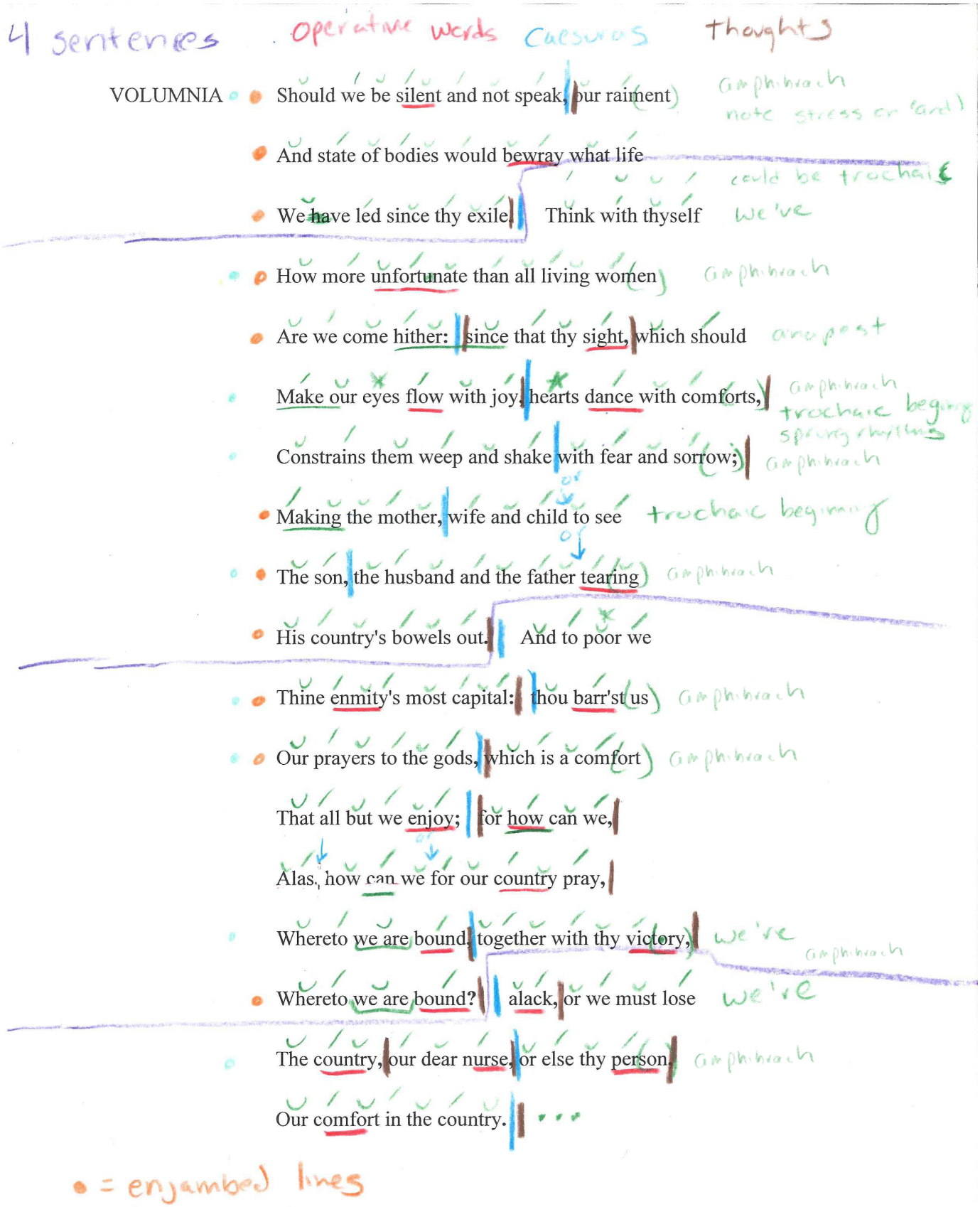
A1-2: [R] antithesis // [V] scroll, written, character
B1-B3: [R] isocolon "a adjective noun" // [R] ellipses "have you not"...
B1: [R] antithesis B3: [R] antithesis
C1-2: [R] isocolon "your noun adjective" (the isocolon reverses in B what it was doing in A)
C2: [R] antithesis F: [F] epizeuxis

In a prose speech such as this, you can imagine it as a mathematical equation in how you deliver it.
A1A2: {[(B1a+B1b+B2a+B2b+B3a+B3b) + (C1a+C1b+C2a+C2b)] + D} + E = F
B, C, D are the list of characteristics of age, mentioned in A2; E is in a way a restating of A1; F is the summation.

Here's another way of visualizing this relationship:

A1 Do you set down your name in the scroll of **youth**,
A2 that are written down old with all the characters of **age**?
B1a Have you not a *moist* eye?
B1b a *dry* hand?
B2a a **yellow** cheek?
B2b a **white** beard?
B3a a *decreasing* leg?
B3b an *increasing* belly?
C1a is not your voice **broken**?
C1b your wind **short**?
C2a your chin *double*?
C2b your wit *single*?
D and every part about you blasted with antiquity?
E and will you yet call yourself young?
F Fie, fie, fie, Sir John!

VERSE: VOLUMNIA FROM CORIOLANUS



thy / thou - intimate, parent to child

VOLUMNIA Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment accumulatio

And state of bodies would bewray what life bewray - archaic language

We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself

How more unfortunate than all living women hyperbaton "how more unfortunt are we come hither than all living women"

Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which should

Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts, isocolon

highly intelligent construction (can't make ur) ellipses

Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow; antithesis flow - weep joy - sorrow dance - shake comforts - fear

Making the mother, wife and child to see

auxesis - two antithetical lists

The son, the husband and the father tearing

His country's bowels out. And to poor we hyperbaton "And thine enmity to poor we is most capital"

Thine enmity's most capital: thou barr'st us

Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort parenthesis

polyptoton prayers / pray That all but we enjoy; for how can we, repitition

Alas, how can we for our country pray, hyperbaton "how can we pray for our country"

Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory, antithesis country - victory

anaphora Whereto we are bound? alack, or we must lose

hysteron proteron The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person, antithesis country - person nurse - comfort

Our comfort in the country.

Coriolanus 5.3.95-112: VOLUMNIA

1 Should we *be silent and not speak* [R][M], ‖ our rai**ment** [E] ENJ
2 And state of bodies ‖ would bewray [V] what life ENJ
3 We have [M1] led since thy [P] exile. [M2] ‖ Think with [M3] thyself ENJ
4 *How more unfortunate* [M] ‖ *than all living wo**men*** ENJ
5 *Are we come hither* [R][E][M], ‖ since that thy sight, which should ENJ
6 *Make* [M1] *our eyes* [M2] *flow with joy,* [R1][R2] ‖ *hearts* [M3] *dance with com**forts*** [R3],
7 Constrains them *weep and shake* ‖ *with fear and sor**row*** [R],
8 Making [M] the *mother, wife, and child* [R] to see ENJ
9 The *son,* ‖ *the husband, and the father* [R1][R2]tear**ing** ENJ
10 His country's bowels out; ‖ and *to poor we* ENJ
11 *Thine enmity's most capital.* [R] ‖ Thou barr'st **us** ENJ
12 Our prayers to the gods, ‖ *which is a com**fort*** ENJ
13 *That all but we enjoy.* [R] ‖ For *how can we*,
14 *Alas, how can we* [M] [R1] *for our country pray* [R2],
15 *Whereto we are* [M] *bound*, ‖ together with thy *vict**ory*** [R],
16 *Whereto we are* [M] *bound?* [R1] [R2] ‖ Alack, or we must lose ENJ
17 The *country*, *our dear nurse*, ‖ *or else* [R] *thy per**son***,
18 Our *comfort in the country*. [R1][R2]

R = rhetorical device, M = meter, V = vocabulary, P = person, E = embedded stage direction

Line 1. R: accumulatio // M: possible pyrrhic spondee, performance mileage can be gained either from *AND not SPEAK* or *and NOT SPEAK* // E: indicate clothing
Line 2. V: archaic language
Line 3. M1: elide // P-familiar // M2: regular scansion, but note: exILE // M3: trochee (after the caesura)
Line 4. M: unfortunate is three syllables, not four
Line 5. R: hyperbaton "how more unfortunate are we come hither than all living women" // E: indicate group of women // M: amphibrach (Epic Caesura)
Line 6. M1: trochee // M2: medial stress // R1: asyndeton // R2: ellipses "(and) make our" // M3: medial stress // R3: isocolon
Line 7. R: complex antithesis (flow/weep, dance/shake, joy/sorrow, comforts/fear)
Line 8. M: trochee // R: auxesis
Line 9. R1: auxesis // R2: antithesis (mother/son, wife/husband, child/father)
Line 11. R: hyperbaton "thine enmity to poor we is most capital"
Line 13. R: parenthesis
Line 14. M: regular scansion, but note how phrase changes on repetition: HOW can WE / aLAS, how CAN we // R1: diacope // R2: hyperbaton "pray for our country"
Line 15. M: elide // R: antithesis (country/victory)
Line 16. M: elide // R1: anaphora // R2: erotema
Line 17. R1: zeugma "lose"
Line 18. R1: antithesis (country, our dear nurse/thy person, our comfort in the country) // R2: repetition (country...country)

What does all this analysis tell us about Volumnia? The enjambment suggests these thoughts are pouring out of her, and the amphibrach endings could mean that she is unsteady, unsure. But the passage contains several rhetorical devices, demonstrating the intelligence of Volumnia. Volumnia is a highly accomplished speaker. She is speaking as a mother to a son, as shown by the use of "thy." The actor can use the meter and rhetorical devices to guide when Volumnia is in control, when she is not in control, and when she may be playing at being out of control in order to persuade Coriolanus not to destroy Rome. The accumulatio in line one and the use of "bewray" in line two suggests a formality to the beginning of this speech. The accumulatio is why I prefer to keep the line metrically regular: should WE be SIL-ent AND not SPEAK, as opposed to using a pyrrhic spondee: should WE be SIL-ent and NOT SPEAK. Stressing the "and" makes the rhetorical device clearer. Lines six and seven contain a highly complex antithesis where the order of elements is flipped. To accomplish this, Volumnia must be very smart, and on top of the argument she is making.

Of course, this is not the "right" way to analyze or play this speech. It is merely one interpretation.

OTHER TEXT FOR PRACTICE

SCANSION IN THE MAID'S TRAGEDY, 5.1

In this climatic scene from Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, Evadne, having been the King's lover, plans to kill him in revenge for her honor. There are a number of spots where different options for scansion exist. What different tactics or meanings do these different options provide? How does it change the characters and their relationship? Also note how many times the King and Evadne share lines. Track the changes between "you" and "thee." Look for repetition, titles of address, embedded stage directions, and parenthesis.

KING — What pretty new device is this Evadne?
What do you tie me to you by my love?
This is a quaint one: Come my dear and kiss me;
I'll be thy Mars. To bed my Queen of Love:
Let us be caught together, that the Gods may see,
And envy our embraces.

EVADNE — Stay sir, stay.
You are too hot, and I have brought you physic
To temper your high veins.

KING — Prithee to bed then; let me take it warm,
There you shall know the state of my body better.

EVADNE — I know you have a surfeited foul body,
And you must bleed.

KING — Bleed!

EVADNE — Ay, you shall bleed: lie still, and if the Devil,
Your lust, will give you leave, repent: this steel
Comes to redeem the honor that you stole,
King, my fair name, which nothing but thy death
Can answer to the world.

KING — How's this, Evadne?

EVADNE — I am not she, nor bear I in this breast
So much cold spirit to be call'd a woman:
I am a tiger: I am any thing
That knows not pity. Stir not, if thou dost,

I'll take thee unprepar'd, thy fears upon thee,
That make thy sins look double, and so send thee
(By my revenge I will) to look those torments
Prepar'd for such black souls.

KING Thou dost not mean this: 'tis impossible:
Thou art too sweet and gentle.

EVADNE No, I am not:
I am as foul as thou art, and can number
As many such hells here: I was once fair,
Once I was lovely, not a blowing rose
More chastely sweet, till thou, thou, thou, foul canker,
(Stir not) didst poison me. I was a world of virtue,
Till your curst court and you (hell bless you for't)
With your temptations on temptations
Made me give up mine honor; for which (King)
I am come to kill thee.

KING No.

EVADNE I am.

KING Thou art not.

RHETORIC IN LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST, 4.3

There is no better play for studying rhetoric than *Love's Labor's Lost*. The word play is constant and contagious. Look at this speech from Berowne where he uses his wit to give him and his friends excuses to break their oaths and pursue the women they love. Check out his list-making, repetition, structures that are built upon, polysyndeton, and asyndeton.

BEROWNE

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world:
Else none at all in ought proves excellent.
Then fools you were these women to forswear,
Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,
Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,
Or for men's sake, the authors of these women,
Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,
Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.

FURTHER READING

ON VERSE AND SCANSION

The Actor and the Text by Cicely Berry

Freeing Shakespeare's Voice by Kristin Linklater

Speaking Shakespeare by Patsy Rodenburg

Playing Shakespeare by John Barton

Shakespeare's Advice to the Players by Peter Hall

Shakespeare's Metrical Art by George T. Wright

ON RHETORIC

Shakespeare's Wordcraft by Scott Kaiser

ON LANGUAGE

Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David and Ben Crystal

"Think on My Words": Exploring Shakespeare's Language by David Crystal

Shakespeare's Lexicon by Alexander Schmidt

All the Words on Stage: A Complete Pronunciation Dictionary for the Plays of William Shakespeare by Louis Scheeder and Shane Ann Younts

ON PERFORMANCE

Mastering Shakespeare by Scott Kaiser