SHAKESPEARE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters

Shakespeare and Social Dialogue opens up a new approach to Shakespeare's language and the rhetoric of Elizabethan letters. Moving beyond claims about the language of individual Shakespearean characters, Magnusson develops a rhetoric of social exchange to analyze dialogue, conversation, sonnets, and particularly letters of the period, which are normally read as historical documents. The verbal negotiation of social and power relations such as service or friendship is explored in texts as diverse as Sidney family letters and Shakespeare's sonnets, merchant correspondence and *Timon of Athens*, Burghley's state letters and *Henry IV Part 1*.

The book draws on ideas from discourse analysis and linguistic pragmatics, especially "politeness theory," relating these to key ideas in epistolary handbooks of the period, including those by Erasmus and Angel Day. Chapters on *Henry VIII*, *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Othello* demonstrate that Shakespeare's dialogic art is deeply rooted in the everyday language of Elizabethan culture. Magnusson creates a way of reading both literary texts and historical documents which bridges the gap between the methods of new historicism and linguistic criticism.

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LYNNE MAGNUSSON

To my mother, Gudlaug Magnusson,
and to the memory of my father,
Agnar Rae Magnusson

Contents

Acknowledgments

In a book that treats the social shaping of early modern texts, it is a special pleasure to acknowledge the persons and communities that have helped to make this text. The book has taken shape, above all, as a rejoinder within the diverse and fractured conversation in Shakespearean and early modern studies between language critics and historicist scholars. In my text and notes I mention specific positions taken by many of the participants in this social dialogue, but here I wish to acknowledge how much I value the diversity and range of scholarship in this field, how much it has stimulated and taught me.

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PART I

The rhetoric of politeness

Politeness and dramatic character in Henry VIII

In *Henry VIII*, when the class-conscious Duke of Buckingham, conversing with the Duke of Norfolk and the Lord Abergavenny, becomes increasingly heated in his criticisms of the upstart Cardinal Wolsey, Norfolk offers this advice:

> I advise you
> (And take it from a heart that wishes towards you
> Honor and plenteous safety) that you read
> The cardinal's malice and his potency
> Together; to consider further, that
> What his high hatred would effect wants not
> A minister in his power. (1.1.102–08)[1]

In the construction of Norfolk's speech, two features of the language may be said to serve reparative functions, undoing deficiencies of the utterance-in-the-making. One such feature is restatement: the final *that* clause restates the preceding *that* clause, compensating with redundancy for the "high communication loss" associated with oral delivery in a theatre setting.[2] The second instance of repair work, which occurs in the parenthesis, is motivated not by a desire for clarification but for social maintenance. A recent account of the social logic of civil conversation, developed by anthropologists Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, can help to characterize the work of social maintenance accomplished here.[3] Brown and Levinson argue that the most commonplace speech acts negotiated in everyday conversation – advising, promising, inviting, requesting, ordering, criticizing, even complimenting – carry an element of risk, for they threaten potential damage to the persona of either hearer or speaker (or to those of both). *Politeness*, in the special sense that Brown and Levinson define it, consists of the complex remedial strategies that serve to minimize the risks to "face," or self-

esteem, of conversational participants.[4] Coming between Norfolk's specification of his speech act as advice and the advice he offers, the parenthetical reassurance redresses the trespass constituted by advice-giving. While advice is not as openly intrusive as criticism, to advise a social equal is clearly to trespass on the other's sense of self, for it implies that the person advised would not take a sound course of action without the intervention of the advisor. Brown and Levinson's model of politeness does not merely account for the occurrence of social-maintenance practices where speech actions create risk. Rather, as they argue, the specific configuration of the social relation between speakers, including relative power and social distance, directs the particular verbal strategy employed to accomplish the repair work of politeness. In other words, the rhetorical strategy Norfolk employs is not an expression of his individual personality but is instead determined by the immediate social context of his utterance, or his social positioning.

One can, of course, assert that Norfolk's rhetorical strategy is determined by Shakespeare's verbal artistry. But Shakespeare's artistry is itself affected by this social poetic of maintenance and repair, the social rhetoric of politeness. Brown and Levinson's politeness model can permit us to examine complex features of normal social discourse, usually neglected in the study of Shakespeare's style, which are embedded in all of his plays just as they are embedded in such other written texts of his culture as letters, even though their main showplace is face-to-face conversation. While these politeness strategies commonly operate apart from the controlling artistry of speakers and writers, they can also be deliberately manipulated. In Shakespeare's plays they can be placed in the foreground of our attention, and so treated as theme. This occurs in particular when Shakespeare represents breakdowns in the effective practice of verbal maintenance, as at the beginning of *King Lear* or *The Winter's Tale*. Indeed, in everyday conversation it is also in such circumstances of breakdown that these social strategies become visible; in more normal circumstances the strategies are generally exchanged among people without attention being turned to them. In *Henry VIII*, while politeness strategies contribute significantly to the discourse of the characters, I shall not argue that they are foregrounded as theme. Instead I shall illustrate how Brown and Levinson's model is predictive of the social language of characters in the play, and I shall demonstrate in very specific ways how gender and class are caught up in the social positioning that affects speech patterns. I shall also argue that an analysis of politeness forms, specifically in the speeches of Katherine and

Wolsey, can help to articulate a new understanding of the social construction in language of dramatic character.

In the introduction I suggested that our current resources for analyzing social discourse are uncoordinated – that we do not have at our command the practical procedures for testing in close reading the richly suggestive observations of discourse theoreticians like Bakhtin and Vološinov. In this chapter, I am less concerned to provide an overall interpretation of *Henry VIII* or even a comprehensive overview of its language techniques than to show how Brown and Levinson's politeness model can provide Shakespeare scholars with a practical inventory of distinctions that will permit analysis of characters' concrete utterances as products of social intercourse. The politeness model can open up a way to analyze and test, for example, Vološinov's claims that an utterance is "the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee" and that the "immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine . . . the structure of an utterance."[5] To do so is to take a first step toward closing the gap between cultural poetics and close verbal analysis. I turn now to a summary of the politeness model before testing its application on *Henry VIII*.

POLITENESS THEORY

As I noted above, Brown and Levinson make the striking claim that most of the commonplace actions that people negotiate in words carry a considerable element of risk: these include not only speech acts usually considered threatening or damaging, such as insults, criticisms, admissions of guilt, commands, curses, or dares, but also speech acts generally regarded as positive, such as offers, compliments, thanksgiving, and invitations. One piece of compelling evidence that such verbal negotiations are fraught with risk is the existence in all known languages of a complex and extensive repertory of verbal strategies apparently directed towards minimizing damage and managing risk. In the early 1970s, as speech acts theorists worked to classify the kinds of illocutionary acts performed in speaking and to understand the relation between the speech acts performed and their linguistic realizations, they began to call attention to the apparent overabundance of ways of, for example, making a request or issuing a "directive."[6] "Come with me" seems to deliver a simple, clear, and serviceable message. Why then do we say

instead "Would you like to come with me, dear?" or "Let's go together" or "You wouldn't like to come with me, would you?" or "Your mother can manage on her own for a few minutes"? According to Brown and Levinson, "the abundance of syntactic and lexical apparatus in a grammar seems undermotivated by either systemic or cognitive distinctions and psychological processing factors"; they argue that the motivation is "social, and includes . . . face-risk minimization."[7] In defining what is at risk in conversation, they adapt Erving Goffman's concept of "face," or publicly projected self-image.[8] They propose that the overabundance of linguistic apparatus for speech acts begins to make sense if participants in speech exchanges are conceived as having a reciprocal or mutual interest in maintaining face. Furthermore, they distinguish positive and negative face: positive face is the "positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants"; negative face is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition." Some acts (these include both verbal and non-verbal acts associated with social interaction) intrinsically threaten either a participant's "want to be approved" or "want to be unimpeded." Brown and Levinson call these "face-threatening acts."[9] The role of politeness strategies is to minimize these threats to face.

It has usually been assumed that, where social motives enter conversation, all logic is abandoned. Indeed, J. L. Styan's first principle for understanding dramatic dialogue – "Dramatic Dialogue is More than Conversation" – assumed, without making any serious study of conversation, that conversation itself is virtually devoid of logical or systematic progression, built up instead of irrelevant clutter.[10] H. Paul Grice's influential article, "Logic and Conversation" (1975), which established how indirect messages in conversation are logically organized and decoded by interactants, did much to make such dismissive treatment of conversational organization untenable.[11] Brown and Levinson go still further, for they refuse to treat the social dimension of conversation as haphazard. They argue that a logic informs the deployment of "politeness" strategies, a logic whereby the face-saving strategy adopted in any instance correlates to the assessed seriousness or weight of the face-threatening act. Three factors added together make up this weighting: Distance – the social distance between speaker and hearer; Power – the relative power of speaker and hearer; and Ranking – the culture-specific ranking of impositions.[12] If potential face threats are very slight, speakers

perform acts without redressive action ("on-record"); if threats to face are very great, speakers tend to avoid them or perform them only indirectly ("off-record"). Between these extremes, Brown and Levinson position their two main politeness "super-strategies" – "positive" strategies for lesser face threats and "negative" strategies for greater ones. The positive strategies address the hearer's wish for approval, and the negative his or her wish for noninterference.[13]

What is perhaps most impressive about Brown and Levinson's account is also what resists summary: their enormously detailed and suggestive classification of specific politeness strategies and their linguistic realizations, and their abundant examples drawn from modern English, Tamil, and Tzeltal languages. Brown and Levinson do not call their richly delineated inventory of strategies for performing face-threatening acts with minimized risk a "rhetoric," but if we recognize that they have indeed gone a long way toward developing a rhetoric of social interaction, the potential applications and importance of their work become clearer.

POSITIVE POLITENESS

This rhetoric of social interaction can help us toward an analysis of how the characters use directives in *Henry VIII*, permitting us not only to describe and categorize the politeness strategies deployed to manage risk but also to predict which politeness super-strategies would normally occur based on distance between speakers, their relative power, and the speech action involved.[14] With lower-risk threats one expects positive politeness: it works upon an interactant's desire for approval, especially through strategies for claiming common ground between speaker and hearer and through strategies for conveying that the speaker and hearer are cooperators. With higher-risk threats one expects negative politeness, redressive action addressed to the interactant's desire to be unimpeded. While positive politeness asserts or suggests identification between participants, negative politeness puts distance between participants through strategies conveying the speaker's effort to avoid assumptions about the hearer's condition or volition, to avoid coercion, to communicate the wish not to impinge, or to impersonalize the threat. Positive politeness is basically a rhetoric of identification.[15] Negative politeness is basically a rhetoric of dissociation.

Let us return to the advice Norfolk offers Buckingham, to see whether the specific reparative strategies correspond to these patterns. It is useful

to recall the context of the advice-giving. After Norfolk describes the extravagant display of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the conversation turns to an account of the ruinous expense incurred for lavish wardrobe and other travel costs by the nobility whose attendance was required by Cardinal Wolsey. All three of the speakers voice their intense resentment of the cardinal. Their antipathy toward Wolsey is repeatedly accounted for as class resentment, resentment that "A beggar's book / Outworths a noble's blood" (1.1.122–23). Norfolk's advice-giving to Buckingham is interrupted by the passage of the cardinal and his train across the stage, with such disdainful looks exchanged between Wolsey and Buckingham as confirm for the audience the legitimacy of Norfolk's warnings. Observing Buckingham's anger at Wolsey's disdain, Norfolk reiterates his warnings, so that his advice-giving is itself a main action of the scene and one that anticipates the climax of Buckingham's arrest. I have marked the repair features in Norfolk's speeches with symbols that I will link to their specific functions; as the Brown and Levinson model predicts, positive politeness predominates.

>   . . . Like it[a] your grace,[b]
> The state takes notice of the private difference
> Betwixt you and the cardinal. I advise you
> (And take it from a heart that wishes towards you
> Honor and plenteous safety)[c] that you read
> The cardinal's malice and his potency
> Together; to consider further, that
> What his high hatred would effect wants not
> A minister in his power. You know his nature,[d]
> That he's revengeful; and I know[e] his sword
> Hath a sharp edge . . .   (1.1.100–10)

>   Stay, my lord,[b]
> And let your reason with your choler question[f]
> What 'tis you go about. To climb steep hills
> Requires slow pace at first.[g] Anger is like
> A full hot horse, who being allowed his way,
> Self-mettle tires him.[g] Not a man in England
> Can advise me like you.[h] Be to yourself
> As you would to your friend.[h]   (1.1.129–36)

The parenthetical assurance of good will we have already noted (*c*) expresses most blatantly the orientation of Norfolk's speeches toward positive politeness: it attends directly to the advisee's need for approval.

Norfolk reinforces the claim to common ground with Buckingham, first by attributing knowledge to the advisee – specifically, knowledge of Wolsey's nature (*d*) – and second by acknowledging shared and approved values – specifically, the belief that reason can and should guide action (*f*). Norfolk's speeches also illustrate Brown and Levinson's other main category of positive politeness: the implication that the speaker and the hearer are cooperators. In alluding to Buckingham's own sound advice-giving (*h*), Norfolk claims reciprocity by recontextualizing the one-way speech action of advice-giving to place it within a larger speech continuum between them of reciprocal counsel. The pronominal shift in the "you know-I know" formulation (*e*) also assumes reciprocity between them. These positive politeness strategies, while greatly multiplied in the risky context of advice-giving, nonetheless also extend an "in-group" language already established in the conversation. Perhaps its most explicit previous assertion is Norfolk's announcement of his shared class membership with Buckingham: "As I belong to worship and affect / In honor honesty" (39–40). Furthermore, an in-group rhetoric of identification recurs predictably in the regularly occurring scenes of gossiping gentlemen or peers which are peculiar to this play.[16]

While it is clear that positive-politeness strategies predominate in Norfolk's usage above, strategies that Brown and Levinson classify as negative politeness do occur, including distancing devices and respect forms. In developing his comparison of anger to a horse (*g*), Norfolk employs generalizing *sententiae* to amplify the content of his advice-giving. He thus distances and impersonalizes his criticism of Buckingham's gathering anger against Wolsey, using the general precepts to dissociate himself from the role of fault-finder and his hearer from the role of fault-maker. Finally, the opening "Like it your grace" (*a* and *b*) exemplifies highly conventional forms of the respect behavior I will discuss in the next section, behavior which minimizes the risk of imposing by implying that the power or status of the hearer exempts him or her from such risk.[17]

Where does this analysis of Norfolk's advice-giving take us? The analysis accounts for a surprisingly large number of stylistic features in Norfolk's speeches. If this kind of analysis, oriented toward social situation (social situation conceived not as static social organization but as dynamic interaction) explains much, then it should lead us to call into question other standard ways of accounting for the same stylistic features. For example, it should lead us to question the assumption that "The style is the man" – that is, that stylistic phenomena correlate to

individual personalities in Shakespeare's plays. The modification Bakhtin proposes – "Style is at least two persons" – may be more adequate to the preceding analysis, for Norfolk's language constantly anticipates and attends to Buckingham's face wants and so – to use again Bakhtin's locution – is oriented toward a "future answer-word."[18] What we get is not Norfolk's individualistic style but the style of a person giving advice (Ranking of the imposition) to a high-ranking social equal (Power) with whom he has more than a passing acquaintance (Distance). Such a style is predictably marked by positive politeness.

NEGATIVE POLITENESS

King Henry VIII yields many examples of negative politeness because so many of its speech situations involve address to King Henry, whose power relative to all other persons in the play is very great. Imperatives, with their assumption of the right to impose on others, are an obvious prerogative of power. Henry claims as another defining prerogative of his power the right to non-imposition. This is made explicit when the approach of the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk to Henry's presence draws this rebuke: "Who's there, I say? How dare you thrust yourselves / Into my private meditations? / Who am I? ha?" (2.2.63–65). Clearly, speaking to the powerful gives rise to a dilemma, for speech interaction cannot be sustained without the need arising on both sides for directives and other face-threatening acts – that is, the need to impose. Indeed, a large power difference multiplies the number of potential face-threatening acts, so making their performance still less avoidable; for power brings into the realm of risk such acts as small involuntary body movements or the very fact of entering into speech, even to answer questions. Speakers addressing directives to the powerful must negotiate glaring clashes. These extreme situations are interesting not only in themselves but also for the light they shed on the contradictions always inherent in performing face-threatening acts. Negative politeness displays these inherent contradictions more directly in its strategic rhetorical products than does positive politeness. This is so because positive politeness is "free-ranging" compensation, defusing risk by the general practices of expressing interest in and approval of the other, while "negative politeness is specific and focused . . . minimizing the particular imposition that the [face-threatening act] unavoidably effects."[19] Hence negative politeness often puts on display the simultaneous effort to do and to undo the imposition.

Performing directives involves making assumptions about the hearer's willingness and ability to comply; furthermore, directives are coercive. Hence negative politeness works to repair or undo assumptions about the hearer's wants and to undo coercion. We can see that these motives inform the most conventional politeness formula displayed in the play, one that explicitly retracts any assumption about the hearer's willingness:

> KATHERINE [to Henry]
> > . . . *Please you*, sir,
> > The king your father was reputed for
> > A prince most prudent . . .
> > > (2.4.42–44; emphasis added)

> WOLSEY [to Katherine]
> > *May it please you*, noble madam, to withdraw
> > Into your private chamber . . .
> > > (3.1.27–28; emphasis added)

At one point in the play, when Henry's anger is stirred by the Council's affront to Archbishop Cranmer, he asserts his power by denying the efficacy of this repair strategy:

> SURREY   May it please your grace –
> KING   No, sir, it does not please me.   (5.3.134)

We get a further variation in Katherine's trial scene when she makes her request for Spanish counsel. She undoes the coercive force of her directive by using a post-posed "If not" clause to make fully explicit Henry's option not to act:

> > . . . Wherefore I humbly
> > Beseech you, sir, to spare me till I may
> > Be by my friends in Spain advised, whose counsel
> > I will implore. *If not*, i'th' name of God,
> > *Your pleasure be fulfilled!*   (2.4.51–55; emphasis added)

Whereas positive politeness associates the speaker with the hearer, the negative politeness of deference behavior – either the raising of the other or the lowering of oneself – dissociates the speaker from the hearer. By making explicit the magnitude of a power difference obtaining, a speaker can signal the hearer's immunity from imposition. Respectful titles of address and humbling self-representations like Wol-

sey's "me (poor undeserver)" (3.2.175) work this way. Verb choices such
as "beseech" can also mark the power difference between speaker and
hearer. Directives in English, in Shakespeare's time as in ours, are so
lexicalized as to provide gradations of illocutionary force. Hence when
Lear wavers in determining the level of his speech force ("The King
would speak with Cornwall. The dear father / Would with his daughter
speak, commands, tends service" [2.4.96–97]), these alterations bespeak
his altered power. In *Henry VIII* we find a range of negatively polite verb
forms that register directives of weak force:

> MESSENGER [to Katherine]
>   I humbly do *entreat* your highness' pardon.
>   (4.2.104; emphasis added)

> KATHERINE [to Capuchius]
>   Sir, I most humbly *pray* you to deliver
>   This to my lord the king.
>   (4.2.129–30; emphasis added)

When Katherine sues Henry in 1.2 to remove unfair taxations im-
posed on the people by Wolsey, a bold speech action interrupting
Wolsey's own agenda of undoing Buckingham, her style illustrates some
more complicated but characteristic practices of negative politeness:

> KATHERINE
>   Thank your majesty.[a]
>   That you would[b] love yourself, and in that love
>   Not unconsidered[c] leave your honor nor
>   The dignity of your office, is the point
>   Of my petition.[d]
> KING   Lady mine, proceed.
> KATHERINE
>   I am solicited, not by a few,
>   And those of true condition,[e] that your subjects
>   Are in great grievance . . .
>   . . . yet the king our master,[f]
>   Whose honor heaven shield from soil! – even he escapes not
>   Language unmannerly[c]; yea such which breaks
>   The sides of loyalty[g] and almost[h] appears
>   In loud rebellion.   (4.2.13–29)

> KATHERINE
>   I am much too venturous
>   In tempting of your patience, but am bold'ned
>   Under your promised pardon.[i]   (4.2.54–56)

Katherine begins here by thanking Henry for his courteous offer that she arise, "take place by us," and assume "half our power." Whatever response Katherine might render through her bodily demeanor to Henry's invitation,[20] her words work to repair the risk of her suit by asserting a power difference between them. Thanking him as "your majesty" (*a*), she positions him above her. Transparent indirection is a characteristic strategy of negative politeness. The indirection of posing a criticism as an injunction to self-love (*d*) is reinforced at the level of the syntax by the double negatives (*c*) and by the conditional force of the "would" (*b*). Similarly, with the qualifying "almost" (*h*), we get an obvious undercutting of the force of the complaint. As already noted, negative politeness works by dissociation. At *e*, Katherine dissociates herself as speaker from the direct reporting of the subjects' grievances; at *f*, by addressing Henry in the third person, Katherine dissociates Henry as hearer from the criticism. Furthermore, what Brown and Levinson call "point-of-view distancing"[21] comes into play to redirect the harm-giving from Henry's subjects to the depersonalized "sides of loyalty" (*g*). And finally, we get at *i* one of the most easily recognizable strategies of negative politeness: perform the face-threatening act and apologize for the face-threatening act, or – as another Renaissance heroine is urged in a very different context – "Be bold. Be not too bold."

SPEECH POSITION AND CHARACTER

I have been considering these discursive practices as effects, caused not by the control and decision-making of the individual speaker but by the motive of politeness and the socially defined site of the subject. Now let us consider the possibility of regarding the discursive forms themselves as causes, as partial determiners of personality, including inner experience in real persons and the illusion of its effect in the artificial persons of drama. For even if we take as our starting point Vološinov's principle that the "organizing center of any utterance . . . is not within but outside – in the social milieu surrounding the individual being," a cumulative effect of such utterances will be to shape subjectivity in the speakers. Indeed, by his account (which I consider helpful but too extreme), "the personality of the speaker" is "wholly a product of social interrelations."[22] By this logic the external forms of politeness may help to organize the psychology of real persons[23] and its illusion in the presentation of dramatic characters. If we examine the disjunctive speech behavior of Katherine in the scene where the Cardinals Wolsey and Campeius

visit her in her private chamber, and consider how her words at the end of the scene relate to her character, we may get a glimpse at how politeness can pattern personality.

Katherine's words are apologetic and self-deprecating:

> Do what ye will, my lords; and pray forgive me;
> If I have used myself unmannerly,
> You know I am a woman, lacking wit
> To make a seemly answer to such persons.
> Pray do my service to his majesty,
> He has my heart yet, and shall have my prayers
> While I shall have my life. Come, reverend fathers,
> Bestow your counsels on me. She now begs
> That little thought, when she set footing here,
> She should have bought her dignities so dear. (3.1.175–84)

This speech stands in apparent sharp contrast with the bold defiance of her behavior toward Cardinal Wolsey earlier in the play. Further, to a modern audience these words, with their demeaning account of womanhood, their self-humiliation, their apology – and spoken by a character who to this point in the play we have been able to admire for her strength – may seem an embarrassment. There are a number of things we can do about this source of embarrassment. As a first alternative we can blame the words on Fletcher, who has never seemed so much our contemporary as Shakespeare.[24] Second, we can cut these words in performance, even if it is not our current practice to cut such bad words in our written texts of the Bard. Third – and this comes easiest to a generation of readers trained in reconciling apparent contradictions to produce texts and characters that are autonomous and coherent wholes – we can understand Katherine's words here as sarcasms, so that they register her continuing strength of character, defiance, and rhetorical self-possesion. Of course, if our reading of Katherine's words and their relation to her character were not conditioned by assumptions about Shakespeare's own exemplary rhetorical control, we might be less inclined to read ironic reversal. It may therefore be useful to recall that the speech is drawn from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, where it appears as follows: "And my lords, I am a poore woman, lacking wit, to answer to anie such noble persons of wisedome as you be, in so weightie a matter, therefore I praie you be good to me poore woman, destitute of freends here in a forren region, and your counsell also I will be glad to heare."[25] It is a fourth alternative that I want to take seriously: that is, to recognize in the discontinuity between

Katherine's boldness and her self-deferential apologizing the expected discourse of "the socially defined site from which it is uttered," to use here Pierre Bourdieu's words.[26] Katherine's disjunctive language, juxtaposing bold speech and apology, is entirely consistent with the Janus-faced negative politeness that a hierarchically arranged culture makes it her part to use in most of the speech positions she habitually occupies. Her "character" then is, at least in part, an effect of negative politeness.

Just as unsettling, I think, to some present-day feminist readers of the play as Katherine's self-humiliating deprecation of her sex is the meek discourse of religious humility, patience, and obedience she adopts as she awaits her death. To this point, I have tended to write about the language of *Henry VIII almost* as if it provided direct transcriptions of real social scenes. Much of the language is, in fact, taken over from Holinshed's *Chronicles* and from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, works that claim to record direct quotations of their speakers, making my blurring of the real and the poetic perhaps less problematic than would be the case for *Hamlet* or *King Lear*. Still, it is obvious that the shifted context of the borrowed speeches alters their significance, that there can be no direct transcriptions of real social scenes into Shakespeare's plays, and that we are looking at at least slightly different "textual" Katherines in *Henry VIII*, in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and indeed in a letter purportedly written by the historical Katherine to which I will refer later. Such differences will obtain no matter what the intention or "private craftsmanship" the dramatist strives to effect. Nonetheless, in *Henry VIII* we are made privy to at least one of Shakespeare's purported intentions. We are told in the Epilogue that we have been shown a "merciful construction of good women" (10). In other words, alterations have been made to the historical representations aimed at giving us a favorable view of Queen Katherine and of Queen Anne.

In Anne's case it would seem that the main linguistic means to construct her goodness is to keep her silent.[27] Presumably a construction of her goodness could not be sustained by assertive language such as the historical Anne is reputed to have used.[28] The jokes in *Henry VIII*, 2.3, one of only two scenes where Anne Bullen does speak, salaciously concern whether or not Anne's "back will bear a duchess" (99) or a queen. In this play the "good" woman learns to "bear" – on her back a king's weight, and in her labor a future queen. In other words, the play does in a very objectionable way show how Anne shifts her position to fit her new role, but it does not show the historical Anne's shift from the speech position of a "blushing handmaid" (72) to the speech position of a queen.

While the situation with Katherine is more complicated, it seems to me that Shakespeare's "merciful construction" of her religious piety also performs the ideological work of patriarchy by idealizing nonassertive speech. The dramatist invents a symbolic Patience to be her hand-maiden, and he delivers as her new voice a religious discourse of humility, meekness, passivity. Her heavenly coronation – with garlands she says she feels "not worthy yet to wear" (4.2.92) – comes to her not through her own exertions but after she has wished Patience to "set [her] lower" (76). Therefore, while Katherine's "goodness," unlike Anne's, is constructed in language, it is significant that the particular discourse Shakespeare permits her is a discourse of religious piety. In one very interesting way this verbal situation does accurately reflect the situation in Shakespeare's culture, where a main discursive space open to women was indeed religious discourse. Renaissance Englishwomen were permit-ted access as readers and as writers to this discourse when many other kinds of discourse were kept closed to them, and it is to a large measure true that Renaissance women would have been "silent but for the Word."[29] We can choose, if we wish, to represent this discursive situation as wholly negative and repressive for women, a putting of them – like Katherine in *Henry VIII* – into their quiet places. But this is not the whole truth. Religious discourse at the time was not just a safe and quiet space permitted by the allowance of others to women. The fact that women managed copious performances within this discursive space shows that it was also a space of opportunity for them – a space in which at least some of them found it comfortable to speak and write.[30] Furthermore – and here is where I would suggest that the play's idealizing construction of Katherine as a "good" woman mutes and misrepresents the female discourse of religious piety – it could be a very bold speech. While it would be wrong to represent the discourse of religious piety as univocal, we can nonetheless say that in sixteenth-century England such discourse was very often marked by the speech actions of exhortation and admoni-tion. Religion, in other words, gave women access to the imperative – that is, to the speech action of the powerful. I imagine that this access (though perhaps on an unconscious level) was at times as attractive as was (on a conscious level) the promised access to heaven. And for a woman like the historical Katherine, religious discourse, with its characteristic disjunctions between boldness and humility, was entirely continuous with the Janus-faced speech modes of her secular behavior, molded, as I have argued, on negative-politeness strategies. At any rate, in a letter of religious counsel which the historical Katherine purportedly sent in 1535

to Dr. John Fisher, who was to be beheaded for refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy, we can discern not the insipid speech of the play's passive ''good'' woman but the by-now familiar alternating accents of apology and boldness which mark this strong woman's language elsewhere:

My revered father,
Since you have ever been wont in dubious cases to give good counsel to others, you will necessarily know all the better what is needed for yourself, being called to combat for the love of Christ and the truth of the Catholic faith. If you will bear up under these few and short pains of your torments which are prepared for you, you will receive, as you well know, the eternal reward . . . But perhaps I have spoken [of her own longing to die] as a foolish woman. Therefore, since it appears that God has thus ordained, go you, my father, first with joy and fortitude, and by your prayers plead with Jesus Christ for me, that I may speedily and intrepidly follow you through the same wearisome and difficult journey; and, meanwhile, that I may be able to share in your holy labours, your torments, punishments and struggles . . . As to the rest, I think it would be an extravagant thing in me to exhort you to desire above all other things that immortal reward . . . you being of such noble birth, gifted with such excellent knowledge of divine things, and (what I ought to mention first) brought up from youth in a religion so holy, and in the profession of the most glorious father St. Francis . . .[31]

SPEECH POSITION AND CLASS TRAJECTORY

We have now looked at one kind of relation that can obtain between standard practices of politeness and character. Our look at Katherine has suggested that the politeness practices to which a person is habituated by virtue of the speech positions he or she most frequently occupies will help to structure that person's makeup. However, a look at Cardinal Wolsey's practice with directives must introduce some new elements into the discussion. The first has to do with Wolsey's reputation as a self-made man, and a man who made himself partly through his mastery of eloquence. It is easier to imagine the speech production of sixteenth-century women being largely determined by social discourses working apart from their control than it is to imagine this of Wolsey. In Shakespeare's representation of Wolsey, we expect to find the ''private craftsmanship'' in language more pronounced. If a rhetoric of social interaction plays a part in the ''honey of his language'' (3.2.22), we might expect it to be a rhetoric he has mastered, that he has made his tool and works to his advantage. In the light of such expectations, it is interesting to find that Shakespeare emphasizes politeness phenomena in Wolsey's speech

and that a deviation from standard forms of politeness particularizes his speech behavior.

Queen Katherine characterizes Wolsey's speech, equating his "cunning" in language and his deployment of "negative politeness":

> My lord, my lord,
> I am a simple woman, much too weak
> T'oppose your cunning. Y'are meek and humble-mouthed;
> You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,
> With meekness and humility; but your heart
> Is crammed with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.
> You have, by fortune and his highness' favors,
> Gone slightly o'er low steps, and now are mounted
> Where pow'rs are your retainers, and your words
> (Domestics to you) serve your will as't please
> Yourself pronounce their office.   (2.4.103–13)

What Katherine says is complicated, but the gist of it is a rebuke aimed against the hypocrisy of Wolsey's reverential verbal manner. She exposes his negative politeness as a posture at odds not only with his high inward self-estimation but also with the enormous power his words wield. It is easy enough to see how Wolsey's humble words jar with his place and power. The conventional forms of negative politeness are often on his lips, as in the instance which draws Katherine's rebuke – his "I do beseech / You, gracious madam, to unthink your speaking . . ." (101–02). But the interest of Wolsey's language does not reside merely in this contradiction between its forms and his power. Instead, contradictions are on display within the idiosyncratic constructions of his speech acts. Consider, for example, how the main orientation of his speech toward "humble-mouthed" negative politeness is twisted askew when he asks Henry to clear him of malice in bringing the divorce suit against Queen Katherine:

> Most gracious sir,
> In humblest manner I require your highness
> That it shall please you[a] to declare in hearing
> Of all these ears (for where I am robbed and bound,
> There must[b] I be unloosed, although not there
> At once and fully satisfied)[c] whether ever I
> Did broach this business to your highness, or
> Laid any scruple in your way . . .   (2.4.141–48)

Here we get a strongly marked disjunction between the unctuous and the imperious: the noncoercive "If it please you" or "May it please you"

is strangely altered to the commanding "it shall please you" (*a*), the attenuated "would" of negative politeness replaced by the uncompromising "must" (*b*), and the parenthetical turn away from the direct progress of the utterance occupied with the prerogatives of the self rather than the face requirements of the other (*c*). Shakespeare may have caught a hint of this accent in Holinshed and then exaggerated both the deferential and the arrogant tones: "With that quoth Wolseie the cardinall: Sir, I most humblie require your highnesse, to declare before all this audience, whether I haue beene the cheefe and first moouer of this matter vnto your maiestie or no, for I am greatlie suspected heerein."[32] The speech quoted is no isolated example.[33] The curious hybrid of deference and self-aggrandizement is Wolsey's oral signature in the play.

What are we to make of Shakespeare's accent on Wolsey's distorted courtesy? It does not appear to celebrate the self-made man, nor to emphasize how Wolsey fashions with the craft of eloquence his own image. Indeed, Shakespeare brings out in Wolsey's language not the evidence of Wolsey's mastery but that of his subjection – the anomaly of Wolsey's socially situated speech position, the mark of the butcher's son pronouncing to kings and queens. That is not to say that Wolsey is unable to use the distinctiveness of his speech behavior to charm and to manipulate. But by giving Wolsey a speech that exposes his anomalous social situation, Shakespeare emphasizes the way in which the forms and resources people have available for manipulation are those speech forms that they habitually live within.

It may be only fanciful to hear in the complaints of the aristocrats against Wolsey's "witchcraft / Over the king in's tongue" (3.2.18–19) –

> Which of the peers
> Have uncontemned gone by him, or at least
> Strangely neglected? When did he regard
> The stamp of nobleness in any person
> Out of himself?   (9–13)

– a parallel to the complaint of Robert Greene, who signed himself "M.A. and Gent.," against "an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie."[34] Even if we can derive some small part of Wolsey's style in *Henry VIII* from the cardinal's social place and origin, we will never

manage to derive Shakespeare's linguistic productions from provincial-glover's-son-turned-player, however much Shakespeare may himself have felt the constraints of his social position upon his writing, as he seems to express in sonnet 76:[35]

> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> *Showing their birth and where they did proceed*?
>
> (5–8; emphasis added)

Shakespeare is nonetheless a writer acutely sensitive to the social situation of people's language. For that reason alone we must have at our command a working inventory of the tropes of social interaction before we can give a richly articulated account of his language and style. The analysis in this chapter of the various styles for doing directives in one play should at least suggest how the Brown and Levinson model of politeness can help us toward such an inventory.

I have been arguing that the conversational logic of politeness helps to determine linguistic interaction among the play's characters. If the ordinary (and yet eloquent) forms of social politeness direct characters' speeches to such a large extent, then we must question the usual assumptions that stylistic features express either a character's individual "personality" or Shakespeare's personal style. It would nonetheless be premature to conclude that style is simply reflective of the immediate contingencies of particular social interactions. It is still possible to conceptualize a connection between style and character, if we reach towards a dialogics of the speaking subject and a pragmatic reading of dramatic character. Subsequent chapters will explore this possibility further, but we have seen in this chapter how character "effects" can be shaped by the speech patterns of the speakers' relative social positions, both as given in the present moment of the verbal interaction and as gathering up the cumulative trajectory of accustomed speech positions.