11. *Erye* in the *MED* under the verb *eren*: "to plow or cultivate (land), esp. in preparation for sowing."
12. Reading *meuable* rather than *menable* is supported within ms. O.5.26 itself in the Middle English translation of Alcabutius, *Liber introductoris,* ff. 1–27v. This text states: "þei beþ seide soþly meuable for whan Sol entreþ eny of þese þe tyme is meued i.e. chaungide."
13. For *ympes*, see *MED* under *impe*; for *ympinge* (last line of text), see *MED* under *impinge*: "(a) A plant, shoot, esp. one newly set out or transplanted; (b) a twig or shoot ready to be grafted on another plant."
14. *Letted* in the *MED* from the verb *letten:* "to hinder, impede, delay."
15. *Combust*: an adjective, in the *MED* means (when regarding planets) "'burned up,' i.e. obscured for being too near the sun; hence, lacking influence."
16. *Retrograde* in the *MED* meaning "appearing to move in a direction contrary to the order of the zodiacal signs."

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The Ambivalent Blush: Figural and Structural Metonymy, Modesty, and *Much Ado About Nothing*

The crucial moment of rejection that opens the fourth act of *Much Ado About Nothing* turns on Claudio's malicious denunciation of his betrothed

Hero. Fulfilling his promise to shame her "in the congregation" if Don John provides evidence of her infidelity, Claudio tersely manages the doomed nuptial ceremony to intensify the humiliation of "every man's Hero" (3.2.113 and 95–96). The tension rises after Claudio's sardonic responses at the ceremony's outset, until at last he sarcastically interrupts the Friar to ask Leonato how to repay him for the gift of "this maid, your daughter" (4.1.24). Taking his cue from Don Pedro to refuse the match, he slanders Hero to her father and the assembled guests in an impassioned, highly figurative declamation:

> There, Leonato, take her back again.
> Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
> She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
> Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
> O, what authority and show of truth
> Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
> Comes not that blood as modest evidence
> To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
> All you that see her, that she were a maid,
> By these exterior shows? But she is none:
> She knows the heat of a luxurious bed:
> Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty. (4.1.30–41)

This dense speech, so important to the final action of the play, pays close attention to the many rhetorical figures at work. Especially significant is Claudio's use of metonymy, whose complex function in specific lines here resonates with a crucial structural analog in the play's plot. Both the figure and the plot proceed from faulty conclusions about Hero, based on associations rather than certainties. Despite the torrent of slander in these few lines, the accumulation of accusations is ultimately figurative and has an impact only when an audience (particularly Leonato and others in the on-stage audience) mistakenly supplies the belief that these figures require.

Claudio's highly figural denunciation punctures the joy of the wedding scene, which had been marked by the giddiness Leonato assumes would predominate when he jokes with the Friar about who will marry Hero and who will "be married to her" (4.1.6). The defamation begins with Claudio's metaphor, in which he calls Hero a "rotten orange" and therefore an inappropriate gift to be exchanged between friends. Claudio's first accusation against Hero, couched in this metaphor, activates a charge that had been leveled against him in the first of his misunderstandings regarding the woman he seems to love. Earlier, assuming that Hero had chosen Don Pedro rather than him, Claudio reluctantly and curtly responded to his friend's questions and prompted Beatrice to remark that he was "neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil Count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion" (2.1.275–77). Once again misled by his insecurities into jealous doubts about Hero, Claudio's reference to a "rotten orange" in this later scene picks up on a resonance of the earlier

episode, ironically reinforcing the off-stage audience's knowledge of the maiden's innocence and Claudio's propensity for jealousy. The denunciation continues with a number of other figures, including prosopopoeia and synecdoche, but the most important figure at work in this speech is metonymy, which Claudio uses twice.[1]

The great Elizabethan cataloguer of rhetorical tropes George Puttenham defines the above figures and many others in *The Arte of English Poesie*. There, he places *metonymia* among a group of figures used for "wrong naming, or otherwise naming of them then is due" (150).[2] Within this category is to be found metonymy, "or misnamer," a figure "where ye take the name of the Author for the thing it selfe; or the thing conteining, for that which is contained, & in many other cases do as it were wrong name the person or the thing" (151).[3] This figure of calling one thing by the name of something associated with it but not coextensive with it is notoriously slippery and, unlike synecdoche (with which so many students confuse it), can more easily give rise to ambiguous signifieds. When a thing is associated with more than one other thing, the multivalent possibilities create an especially insecure meaning. In Claudio's denunciation, there are two damning instances of metonymy—one near the middle of the speech and one near the end—which culminate in Claudio's ultimate accusation: "Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty."

Claudio's more straightforward, if misguided, deployment of metonymy comes in the speech's penultimate line: "She knows the heat of a luxurious bed." It is here that he comes closest to accusing Hero of having a lover, though in this figure he eschews an explicit condemnation.[4] As Nova Myhill observes, this accusation "seem[s] to have little to do with what he saw"—especially as he is mistaken about whom he saw and probably saw only some of what she did at the window—and it reveals instead Claudio's own propensity to suspiciously assume the worst about Hero throughout the play (305).[5] The "heat of a luxurious bed" implies that Hero has been unchaste but does not explicitly level the charge of infidelity. Claudio accuses Hero, not of the thing itself, but of a thing associated with the thing itself, a crucial remove between an action and a perception. Here and in subsequent speeches, Claudio instead takes a number of steps forward in his accusation but leaves those around him at the altar on stage to take the damning final step. Thus, a few lines later, he refuses to answer Hero's plea, "Who can blot that name / With any just reproach?" (4.1.80–81), instead relying on a sort of structural metonymy, associating Hero's window and the man who talked to a woman there with the sexual act: "What man was he talk'd with you yesternight, / Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?" (4.1.83–84). It is thematically appropriate that Claudio's accusation of Hero's knowing a "luxurious bed" should rely, not on a literal linking of infidelity with Hero, but on the figurative association through which metonymy operates.

Claudio is not alone in leaping to such a conclusion. In a culture uneasy about women's virtue, the move from public behavior to assumptions about private actions is an easy one to make. As Juan Luis Vives cautions earlier in the century, "there is nothing more fragile or more vulnerable than the reputation and good name of women; it may well seem to hang by a cobweb" (125). Although to be observed in private conversation with a man may not prove sexual indiscretions beyond a doubt, a culture suspicious of women's virtue justifies itself in drawing such conclusions. As Vives continues: "I did not see you plying the trade of prostitution either. But do you wish to exempt yourself from the criterion we use in all of nature, that we judge the interior from the exterior?" (131) His discussion of the process by which men will conclude that a woman is unchaste bears a striking resemblance to Puttenham's discussion of the cognitive process of metonymy (calling something by its container), when he asks rhetorically "Do you want me to believe that a cask contains water when I see wine flowing out of it?" (131). In such a culture, it might seem reasonable to conclude that witnessing a woman speaking with a man through her window is evidence that something more incriminating might subsequently happen within the room behind the lady's window. The other witness, Don Pedro, joins Claudio in this conclusion.

The metonymy that ends Claudio's initial denunciation proceeds from a more complex and more fully developed instance of metonymy that builds around the significance of Hero's blush. Ironically, Claudio's rhetorical question, (4.1 36–37) "Comes not that blood as modest evidence / To witness simple virtue?" should receive an answer in the affirmative. But, again, because he has mistakenly assumed that the lovers he witnessed in Hero's window are evidence of Hero's lasciviousness, Claudio continues to defame his fiancée and concludes his rhetorical questions about her virtue in the negative. This important instance of metonymy points to the complex operation of interpreting the evidence of the senses and illustrates a concern central to Elizabethan culture generally and Shakespeare's comedy specifically: the multivalence of the blush, which can signify either guilt or its inverted absence, innocence. For instance, early in Henry Porter's contemporary comedy *The Two Angry Women of Abington* (1599), Moll Barnes modestly responds to her father's inquiries about her interest in marriage: "I am a maide, and when yee aske me thus, / I like a maide must blushe" (635–36), only to admit to the gentleman Sir Ralph Smith that "if you my blush might see, / You then would say I am ashamed to be / Found like a wandring stray by such a knight / So farre from home at such a time of night" (2629–32). Moreover, although one character might blush for modest, maiden innocence at one point in a comedy and for guilty shame somewhat later, the possibility of one blush signalling guilt and innocence simultaneously is certainly possible. The blush is an especially complex sign to decode, as it can signify in both directions, often at the same time.

This difficulty arises in George Sandys's translation of Ovid's *Pygmalion.* When the sculptor kisses his statue as it comes to life, "The blushing Virgin now his kisses felt; / And fearfully erecting her faire eyes, / Together with the light, her Louer spies."[6] Returning subsequently to his translation to anchor the meaning of the blush, Sandys's moralizing gloss glides subtly from one meaning to its opposite:

> Blushing is a resort of the blood to the face, in the passion of *shame*, labours most in that part, and is seen in the brest as it ascendeth: but most apparent in those that are young; in regard of their greater heat, and tender complexions. Which proceeds not from infirmity of the mind, but the novelty of the thing; nor can bee neither put on or restrained. The ensigne of natiue Modesty, & the colour of *virtue*. (*Mythologized* 361; emphasis added)

Sandys reveals the ambivalence of the blush in this culture and the unease surrounding its decoding; the blush can simultaneously signify shame and virtue, slipping silently between two opposing categories. This complex sign, which leads Claudio astray in his denunciation, has its analog in the plot. Both instances rely on a negative extrapolation from an ambiguous event: a blush, or a conversation at a window.

Where Claudio, in his hurt feelings during the first mistake he made about Hero, had claimed that he must see for himself and trust no one else—in the pun on eye/I of "Let every eye negotiate for itself, / And trust no agent" (2.1.166–67)—this second mistake demonstrates that even being an eyewitness requires an act of interpretation. To those tricked by Don John and Borachio, the sight of a man and a woman talking through Hero's window, leads to the conclusion that the lady is not chaste.[7] But Claudio's faulty conclusion relies on the same action as metonymy—on calling one thing (the couple, Margaret and Borachio) by the name of something associated with it (the window is Hero's). Hero's blush at being accused in this way—the result of injured modesty at being publicly and falsely slandered—confirms her guilt to Claudio and Don Pedro, who make a different association between the blush and the thing associated with it: that she has been guilty of the act. Claudio's forceful conclusion, "Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty," elides the middle step, that the blush *stands for* something, and instead asserts a definitive reading that the blush "is" guiltiness.

Because metonymy relies on the implied association rather than the intrinsic connection of one thing with another related thing, however, it is inherently open to multiple meanings. Claudio interprets Hero's blushes in such a compelling way that even her father temporarily disowns her. But the audience, of course, knows that Hero is innocent, having been privy both to the scene in which Borachio hatched the plot with Don John of displaying "such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty" (2.2.48) and to Borachio's boasting of the deed, "my villany," to Conrade (3.3.153). And although Beatrice's absence serves as further circumstantial evidence, she believes "as sure as I have a thought, or a soul" (4.1.329) in her cousin's innocence. In addition, if the

audience needs any persuading, as Leonato does, they can take comfort in the Friar's careful reinterpretation of Hero's reaction. Having read, marked, and noted Hero's behavior, the Friar makes the correct metonymic conclusion that the "thousand blushing apparitions" whose "angel whiteness beat away those blushes" are evidence, rather, that Hero stands "guiltless here / Under some biting error" (4.1.159, 169–70).[8] The Friar has faith that Hero's blushes signify innocence rather than guilt and proceeds to develop a plan to redeem her honor. His ability to read Hero's blushes accurately, vindicated by the audience's knowledge of her innocence, not only begins to reverse Claudio's faulty reading, but also points to the instability of metonymic language specifically and to misogynist assumptions like Vives's generally. Claudio's particular failing is eventually corrected, but the instability of the blush remains.

Metonymy crops up in many unexpected arenas in early modern England. Perhaps one of the most surprising contexts for the deployment of the figure is in the religious polemic of the period. Strangely enough, in numerous Elizabethan tracts, churchmen resort to metonymy. In a text written by the radical reformer, John Foxe, in fact, metonymy receives a gloss that could easily be found in Puttenham or Fraunce. In the margin of *The Pope Confvted* (1580), Foxe provides his English readers with a marginal gloss: "Metonymy, a figure whereby one thing beareth the name of another" (80).[9] Metonymy figures importantly for Foxe, who argues against the Roman Church's teachings on transubstantiation, on whether bread and wine are figuratively or literally the Savior's body and blood. Having demolished the Roman position, Foxe exults, "What answere will *Lombarde* make here? hee will crowde vnder his trope and Grammer figure Metonymia. Wherewith it lyketh him well to sport himselfe in his owne forged fourmes" (80). If metonymy can function at the heart of religious controversy in the period, its place on the Shakespearean stage is not to be doubted. Like faith, the evidence of things unseen, metonymy works in important ways in Shakespeare's great comedy.[10] At a crucial moment at the heart of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the slipperiness of this figure contributes to the slandering of an innocent young woman. But its effects are not localized to twelve lines at the beginning of the fourth act. Rather, the workings of metonymy, of drawing conclusions based on associating one thing with another, function on a structural level throughout the play's plot as Claudio and others give or withhold faith in Hero's trustworthiness based on their unstable interpretations of ambiguous signs. Ultimately, Claudio learns to trust in Hero and in their love, despite the possibility of reading the negative implications of such signs. In the end, such multivalent figures and actions require charitable readings as Shakespeare's great comedy reaches its artificially festive ending.

ANDREW FLECK
San Jose State University

NOTES

1. As Melinda J. Gough observes, Claudio's multiplication of figures in this denunciation works against his impulse to uncover and display Hero's misdeeds (57).

2. Here and elsewhere, I have retained Puttenham's spelling but have silently expanded his abbreviations.

3. Abraham Fraunce defines the trope similarly, noting that metonymy "vseth the name of one thing for the name of another that agreeth with it, as when the cause is turned to signifie the thing caused." *The Arcadian Rhetorike* [. . .], A3 recto. For Fraunce, metonymy is a foundational trope for many other figures.

4. Neely suggests that Claudio is squeamish about sexuality (44). Marilyn Williamson is especially critical of Claudio's "virulent misogyny" in this episode (34) as is Karen Newman (112–13).

5. On Claudio's susceptibility to doubt, see Carol Cook (192).

6. Sandys translates Ovid without glossing the text in 1626 as *Ovid's* Metamorphosis *Englished by G. S.* The story of Pygmalion occurs at 203.

7. In pointing to staging as creating a visual counterpart to a rhetorical figure, I am emboldened by Frances Teague's reading of the staged synecdoche of taking brides literally by the hand as an embodiment of the synecdoche of taking a bride's hand in marriage (219). In fact, since it is unlikely that the boy actor could blush on cue, this scene at the altar might be said to rely on performing metonymy, as staging practices and conventions would be necessary in order to suggest the blush to the audience.

8. On the Friar's faith in Hero, see Joseph Westlund (53). I am grateful to Beth Charlebois for reminding me that the Friar's correct conclusions are based on "reading" Hero, suggesting how important the rhetorical tropes are in actually vindicating her.

9. It is interesting that in the original Latin version, Foxe does not gloss metonymy.

10. For the role of belief in the resolution of this comedy and others, see J. Dennis Huston (130–31).

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David Mallet and Thomas Percy

The National Library of Scotland holds a manuscript letter from David Mallet to Thomas Percy, the eminent antiquary, collector, translator, bishop of Dromore, and editor of *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765). This letter (National Library of Scotland, ms. 3648, ff. 56–57)[1] is written in response to an inquiry that Percy must have previously sent to Mallet. Frederick Dinsdale, the author of a nineteenth-century critical memoir of Mallet, does not appear to have been aware of any correspondence between Mallet and Percy. Mallet, in his reply to Percy, refers to a letter from the Duke of Buckingham to the Bishop of Rochester. George Villiers, the second duke of Buckingham (1628–87) was a "politician and wit" (*ODNB*) and author of *The Rehearsal*, which was supposedly cowritten with Spratt. Percy, in 1806, published a two-volume edition of Buckingham's works. Thomas Spratt (bap. 1635–1713) was indeed the bishop of Rochester and had been Buckingham's chaplain from the early 1660s, serving as "one of three trustees for part" (*ODNB*) of Buckingham's estate from 1678.

When Percy was inquiring about this letter, he was engaged in work on his patron's family. The fruits of this research were published in 1768 as *The Regulations and Establishment of the Household of Henry Algernon Percy, the fifth earl of Northumberland . . . begun anno domini MDXII.* A transcript of the letter follows:

> Sir,
>
> I received the favor of your letter yesterday, and take this first opportunity of answering it. There is such a letter as you mention, written by Lord Arran who attended the Duke of Buckingham in his last illness: and it contains several particulars of his unaccountable behaviour in those his last moments. The letter is addressed to Sprat, Bishop of Rochester; who, I believe had been the