Chapter 4

Of language

Speech is not natural to man saving for his only ability to speak, and that he is by kind° apt to utter all his conceits° with sounds and voices[1] diversified many manner of ways, by means of the many and fit instruments he hath by nature to that purpose: as a broad and voluble° tongue; thin and movable lips; teeth even and not shagged,[2] thick-ranged;[3] a round-vaulted palate; and a long throat; besides an excellent capacity of wit° that maketh him more disciplinable° and imitative than any other creature. Then as to the form and action of his speech, it cometh to him by art and teaching, and by use or exercise.[4] But after a speech is fully fashioned to the common understanding and accepted by consent of a whole country and nation, it is called a language, and receiveth none allowed alteration but by extraordinary occasions, by little and little, as it were, insensibly bringing in of many corruptions that creep along with the time; of all which matters we have more largely° spoken in our books of the originals and pedigree of the English tongue.[5] Then, when I say language, I mean the speech wherein the poet or maker writeth, be it Greek or Latin, or, as our case is, the vulgar° English; and when it is peculiar unto a country it is called the mother speech of that people—the Greeks term it *idioma*[6]—so is ours at this day the Norman English. Before the conquest of the Normans it was the Anglo-Saxon, and before that the British, which, as some will, is at this day the Welsh, or, as others affirm, the Cornish.[7] I for my part think neither of both as they be now spoken and pronounced.

This part in our maker or poet must be heedily[8] looked unto, that it be natural, pure, and the most usual of all his country;[9] and for the same purpose rather that which is spoken in the king's court or in the good towns and cities within the land, than in the marches[10] and fron-

1. **voices** utterances.
2. **shagged** rough, jagged.
3. **thick-ranged** densely arranged.
4. In these opening sentences, what the author seems to be saying is that although we have all the right equipment, such as teeth and lips, to produce speech, that does not mean speech is natural to us in the same way that those bodily parts are, but rather that speech requires art and training for us actually to make it.
5. A lost work.
6. ***idioma*** (Gk.) specific property, style, idiom; by extension, the language peculiar to a people, region, or class.
7. Welsh and Cornish constitute, with Breton, the so-called Brythonic branch of the "insular Celtic" language group, distinguished by modern linguistic historians from the Goidelic branch (Irish, Manx, and Scottish Gaelic). It is now thought that British separated out into Cornish and Welsh after 600 CE. Puttenham's use of the term "Anglo-Saxon" appears to be its first post–Old English vernacular use, though Camden's Latin *Britannia* uses it in 1586.
8. **heedily** heedfully.
9. Puttenham's concern with proper English here develops from prescriptions concerning correct Latinity in Cicero (*De oratore* 3.10.37–39) and Quintilian (8.1–2).
10. **marches** borders.

tiers, or in port towns, where strangers° haunt[11] for traffic's° sake; or yet in universities, where scholars° use much peevish[12] affectation of words out of the primitive languages;[13] or finally, in any uplandish[14] village or corner of a realm, where is no resort but of poor, rustical, or uncivil people. Neither shall he follow the speech of a craftsman or carter° or other of the inferior sort, though he be inhabitant or bred in the best town and city in this realm, for such persons do abuse° good speeches by strange° accents or ill-shaped sounds and false orthography.[15] But he shall follow generally the better-brought-up sort, such as the Greeks call *charientes*[16]: men civil and graciously behaviored and bred.

Our maker therefore at these days shall not follow *Piers Plowman* nor Gower nor Lydgate nor yet Chaucer, for their language is now out of use with us; neither shall he take the terms of northern men such as they use in daily talk—whether they be noblemen or gentlemen or of their best clerks,° all is a matter[17]—nor in effect any speech used beyond the river of Trent: though no man can deny but that theirs is the purer English Saxon at this day, yet it is not so courtly nor so current° as our southern English is; no more is the far western man's speech. Ye shall therefore take the usual speech of the court and that of London and the shires lying about London within sixty miles, and not much above. I say not this but that in every shire of England there be gentlemen and others that speak, but especially write, as good southern as we of Middlesex or Surrey do, but not the common people of every shire, to whom the gentlemen and also their learned clerks° do for the most part condescend;[18] but herein we are already ruled by the English dictionaries and other books written by learned men, and therefore it needeth none other direction in that behalf.[19]

Albeit peradventure° some small admonition be not impertinent,° for we find in our English writers many words and speeches amendable,°

11. **haunt** resort to frequently.
12. **peevish** silly, perverse, capricious, querulous, or vexing.
13. **primitive languages** i.e., Latin and Greek.
14. **uplandish** inland, remote.
15. **orthography** usually a term for spelling. Puttenham's references to "strange accents" and "ill-shaped sounds," however, suggest that the mispronunciations of the carters may sound to him like someone speaking *as if* from false spelling. For the requirements that the poet's speech be natural, pure, and usual, see, among others, Cicero, *De oratore* 3.10.37–39; Quintilian 1.5 and 8.1–2; and Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.2.1–2 (1404b).
16. ***charientes*** (Gk.) graceful, elegant, or witty ones; wealthy citizens, gentlemen. Plato uses it for those who make witty and sarcastic remarks (*Republic* 5.452b), while Aristotle uses it for the wealthy members of the state (*Politics* 4.10.1297b10). At 3.18.276 Puttenham defines the trope he calls *charientismus* as the "privy nip, or a mild and appeasing mockery"; this word means "wit" in Greek and defines the essential quality possessed by those labeled *charientes*.
17. **all is a matter** it is all the same.
18. **condescend** lower oneself graciously (to speak with in their language); contempt is not implied.
19. There were at least six quasi-lexicographical works dealing with English to which Puttenham might be referring (printed before 1589): (1) John Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse*

and ye shall see in some many inkhorn[20] terms so ill-affected,[21] brought in by men of learning, as preachers and schoolmasters, and many strange° terms of other languages by secretaries and merchants and travelers, and many dark° words and not usual nor well-sounding, though they be daily spoken in court.[22] Wherefore great heed must be taken by our maker in this point, that his choice be good.

And peradventure° the writer hereof be in that behalf[23] no less faulty than any other, using many strange° and unaccustomed words and borrowed from other languages, and in that respect himself no meet magistrate to reform the same errors in any other person; but since he is not unwilling to acknowledge his own fault and can the better tell how to amend° it, he may seem a more excusable corrector of other men's; he intendeth° therefore, for an indifferent° way and universal benefit, to tax himself first and before any others.

These be words used by the author in this present treatise.[24] *Scientific*,° but with some reason, for it answereth the word *mechanical*,[25] which no other word could have done so properly, for when he spake of all artificers which rest either in science° or in handicraft, it followed necessarily that *scientific* should be coupled with *mechanical*, or else neither of both to have been allowed but in their places: a man of science liberal[26] and a handicraftsman, which had not been so cleanly° a speech as the other.[27] *Majordomo*: in truth this word is borrowed of the Spaniard and Italian, and therefore new and not usual but to them that are acquainted with the affairs of court, and so for his jolly[28] magnificence (as this case is) may be accepted among courtiers, for whom this is especially written. A man might have said, instead of *majordomo*, the French word *maistre d'hostell*, but ill-favoredly, or the right English

(an English-French dictionary, 1530); (2) William Thomas's *Principal Rules of the Italian Grammar* (an Italian-English dictionary, 1550); (3) Thomas Thomas's *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (a Latin-English dictionary, 1587); (4) Bartholomew Traheron's translation of Vigon, *The most excellent workes of Chirurgerye* (1543); (5) William Turner's *The Nature of herbes in Greke, Latin, Englishe, Duche & Frenche* (1548); and (6) Richard Mulcaster's full English word list in *The first part of the Elementarie* (1582). For further information about this complex subject, consult the Early Modern English Dictionaries Database.

20. **inkhorn** a portable container for ink that became a symbol of ostentatious learning and pedantry.

21. **ill-affected** affected.

22. Cf. Thomas Wilson's parodic letter of supplication (189). See 3.22.338–39 for a related discussion of John Southern's use of inkhorn terms.

23. **behalf** regard.

24. Of the neologisms that follow, most appear in the first five chapters of Book 1. *Idiom*, however, as well as the last seven terms Puttenham supplies (from *dimension* to *combatible*), appear only here (although he uses *attempt* at 1.30.147). Puttenham seems to have coined *scientific*, *majordomo*, *politician*, *placation*, *numerosity*, and *assubtiling*.

25. **mechanical** arts that involve work with the hands, as opposed to more purely intellectual arts, referred to as "scientific" (cf. 1.1.93).

26. **of science liberal** i.e., trained in the knowledge of the liberal arts.

27. Compare Puttenham's defense of foreign borrowings with Wilson's similar defense of borrowings from Greek and Latin (191.6–27).

28. **jolly** brilliant, admirable.

word *Lord Steward*. But methinks for my own opinion this word *majordomo*, though he be borrowed, is more acceptable than any of the rest; other men may judge otherwise.[29] *Politician*°: this word also is received from the Frenchmen, but at this day usual in court and with all good secretaries, and cannot find an English word to match him, for to have said a man politic had not been so well, because in truth that had been no more than to have said a civil person. *Politician*° is rather a surveyor of civility than civil, and a public minister or counselor in the state.[30] Ye have also this word *conduict*,[31] a French word, but well allowed of us, and long since usual; it sounds somewhat more[32] than this word "leading," for it is applied only to the leading of a captain, and not as a little boy should lead a blind man, therefore more proper to the case when he said, *conduict* of whole armies. Ye find also this word *idiom*, taken from the Greeks yet serving aptly when a man wanteth° to express so much unless it be in[33] two words,[34] which surplusage° to avoid, we are allowed to draw in other words single and as much significative.[35] This word *significative* is borrowed of the Latin and French, but to us brought in first by some nobleman's secretary, as I think, yet doth so well serve the turn, as it could not now be spared. And many more like usurped[36] Latin and French words, as: *method, methodical, placation*,[37] *function, assubtiling*,[38] *refining, compendious, prolix, figurative, inveigle*.° A term borrowed of our common

29. *Majordomo* derives from medieval Latin *major domus*, "the chief of the house," and although it originally meant the chief official of the royal household under the Merovingian kings of France, it came to mean the head servant in any wealthy household. In English it was applied to a steward or butler, and Puttenham's use of the word in this sense seems to be the first recorded. "Maistre d'hostell" (or *maître d'hôtel* in modern French) refers to the chief steward running a nobleman's house (his *hôtel*).

30. **surveyor . . . state** public or official supervisor concerned with social life and behavior ("civility") and a public minister or state counselor rather than (just) a citizen or, perhaps, civilized person ("civil"). Cf. Puttenham's notion that the poets were the first lawmakers and politicians at 1.3.97.

31. **conduict** Original spelling is retained to preserve the link with the French. Puttenham's stress on the primarily military meaning of this word may seem slightly eccentric. According to Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tonges* (1611), the term had the more general meaning of "conducting" or "leading." The French word, however, derives from the Latin *conductus*, which had both the general meaning of "conducting" and the more specific ones of "leading a military troop" and the "contractual payment" one received for that activity. In Italian the comparable term is *condotta*, which has both of those meanings and from which is derived *condottiere*, or "mercenary captain."

32. **sounds somewhat more** is both more specialized and more elevated.

33. **unless it be in** without using.

34. Puttenham seems to be saying that the word *idiom* deserves to be naturalized in English because what it means can be expressed only by using a circumlocution involving two words or perhaps more; it is unclear which two words he is thinking of here.

35. **significative** meaningful.

36. **usurped** taken, seized. In order to describe the borrowing of terms from foreign languages Puttenham uses a word that had a distinctly political meaning in the period and that underscored the illegitimacy of the seizure involved. His choice of this word seems consistent with his general theory of figures as being "abuses, or rather trespasses, in speech" (3.7.238).

37. **placation** propitiation.

38. **assubtiling** subtilizing, refining, making fine or thin.

lawyers—*impression*—also a new term, but well expressing the matter, and more than our English word. These words, *numerous*,° *numerosity*,° *metrical*, *harmonical*, but they cannot be refused, especially in this place for description of the art. Also ye find these words, *penetrate*, *penetrable*, *indignity*, which I cannot see how we may spare them, whatsoever fault we find with inkhorn[39] terms: for our speech wanteth° words to such sense so well to be used. Yet instead of *indignity*, ye have *unworthiness*; and for *penetrate*, we may say *pierce*, and that a French term also, or *broach*, or *enter into with violence*, but not so well-sounding as *penetrate*. Item, *savage*, for *wild*; *obscure*, for *dark*.° Item, these words, *declination*, *delineation*, *dimension*, are scholastical° terms indeed, and yet very proper. But peradventure° (and I could bring a reason for it) many other like words borrowed out of the Latin and French were not so well to be allowed by us, as these words: *audacious*, for *bold*; *facundity*, for *eloquence*; *egregious*, for *great* or *notable*; *implete*,[40] for *replenished*; *attemptat*,[41] for *attempt*; *compatible*,[42] for *agreeable in nature*, and many more. But herein the noble poet Horace hath said enough to satisfy us all in these few verses:

Multa renascentur quae iam cecidere cadentque
Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula si volet usus
Quem penes arbitrium est et vis et norma loquendi.[43]

Which I have thus Englished, but nothing with so good grace, nor so briefly as the poet wrote:

Many a word yfall'n shall eft[44] *arise*
And such as now been held in highest prise[45]
Will fall as fast, when use and custom will,
Only umpires of speech, for force and skill.[46]

39. **inkhorn** ostentatiously learned, pedantic.

40. **implete** full (from Lat. *implere*, "to fill up").

41. **attemptat** from Lat. *attemptare* (or *attentare*), "to strive for, to attempt."

42. **compatible** from Lat. *compati*, "to suffer together or mutually," hence "congruent or agreeable with."

43. Horace, *Ars poetica* 70–72; the last two lines are also cited at 2.15.210. Modern editions of Horace's poem have *ius* for *vis*.

44. **yfallen, eft** archaisms for "fallen" and "again." Such locutions were sometimes used (as frequently in Spenser) to convey the feel of ancient dignity.

45. **prise** both price and prize, both of which mean "worth or value."

46. **when . . . skill** whenever use and custom wish to do so, they being the only umpires of speech (i.e., they alone will decide whether words will survive) because of their (i.e., use and custom's) force and power.

CHAPTER 5

Of style

Style is a constant and continual phrase[1] or tenor of speaking and writing, extending to the whole tale or process of the poem or history, and not properly to any piece or member of a tale, but is of words, speeches, and sentences[2] together a certain contrived form and quality, many times natural to the writer, many times his peculiar[3] by election and art, and such as either he keepeth by skill° or holdeth on by ignorance, and will not or peradventure° cannot easily alter into any other. So we say that Cicero's style and Sallust's were not one, nor Caesar's and Livy's, nor Homer's and Hesiod's, nor Herodotus' and Thucydides', nor Euripides' and Aristophanes', nor Erasmus's and Budaeus's styles. And because this continual course and manner of writing or speech showeth the matter and disposition of the writer's mind more than one or few words or sentences can show, therefore there be[4] that have called style the image of man (*mentis character*),[5] for man is but his mind, and as his mind is tempered° and qualified,[6] so are his speeches and language at large,° and his inward conceits° be the mettle[7] of his mind, and his manner of utterance the very warp and woof of his conceits,° more plain, or busy° and intricate, or otherwise affected after the rate.°[8] Most men say that not any one point in all physiognomy is so certain as to judge a man's manners° by his eye, but more assuredly, in mine opinion, by his daily manner of speech and ordinary writing. For if the man be grave, his speech and style is grave; if light-headed, his style and language also light; if the mind be haughty and hot, the speech and style is also vehement and stirring;° if it be cold and temperate,° the style is also very modest; if it be humble or base and meek, so is also the language and style.

And yet peradventure° not altogether so, but that every man's style is for the most part according to the matter and subject of the writer, or so

1. **phrase** manner of speech.

2. **words . . . sentences** i.e., individual words, phrases or clauses, and syntactic units (but also sayings: Lat. *sententiae*).

3. **peculiar** special or exclusive characteristic.

4. **there be** i.e., there are (those).

5. ***mentis character*** mark of the mind.

6. **tempered and qualified** composed and endowed with certain qualities.

7. **mettle** Elizabethans did not distinguish by spelling, as we do, the words for the material substance of *metal* and *mettle* as a quality of disposition or temperament. The *Art* spells this term "metall" here. In addition to the clear sense of "disposition," Puttenham may have meant to build a secondary metaphoric chain linked with how the mind is "tempered" (earlier in the sentence).

8. Both *style* and *character* have the same literal meaning at their origins: a pointed stake or stick, which later came to indicate the object used to write or engrave letters. Their meanings were then extended metaphorically to the letters themselves, and eventually to the particular mode of writing (*style*) of an individual or the type or nature (*character*) of a thing or a person. *Style* (Lat. *stilus*) only acquired this last meaning in the post-Augustan period in writers such as Sallust and Tacitus. *Character* (Gk. *kharacter*) was used to refer to the nature of a language or a person by the fifth century BCE. On this topic, see Scaliger 4.1.

ought to be, and conformable thereunto. Then again may it be said as well that men do choose their subjects according to the mettle of their minds, and therefore a high-minded man chooseth him high and lofty matter to write of; the base courage,° matter base and low; the mean° and modest mind, mean° and moderate matters after the rate.° Howsoever it be, we find that under these three principal complexions[9] (if I may with leave so term them), high, mean,° and base style, there be contained many other humors[10] or qualities of style, as the plain and obscure, the rough and smooth, the facile[11] and hard, the plentiful and barren, the rude° and eloquent, the strong and feeble, the vehement and cold styles, all which in their evil are to be reformed, and the good to be kept and used. But generally to have the style decent° and comely, it behooveth the maker or poet to follow the nature of his subject; that is, if his matter be high and lofty, that the style be so too; if mean,° the style also to be mean;° if base, the style humble and base accordingly. And they that do otherwise use it, applying to mean° matter high and lofty style, and to high matters style either mean° or base, and to the base matters the mean° or high style, do utterly disgrace° their poesy and show themselves nothing skillful° in their art, nor having regard to the decency,° which is the chief praise[12] of any writer.

Therefore, to rid all lovers of learning from that error, I will, as near as I can, set down which matters be high and lofty, which be but mean,° and which be low and base, to the intent the styles may be fashioned to the matters, and keep their decorum[13] and good proportion° in every respect. I am not ignorant that many good clerks° be contrary to mine opinion, and say that the lofty style may be decently° used in a mean° and base subject and contrariwise, which I do in part acknowledge, but with a reasonable qualification. For Homer hath so used it in his trifling work of *Batrachomyomachia*, that is, in his treatise of the war betwixt the frogs and the mice;[14] Vergil also in his *Bucolics* and in his *Georgics*, whereof the one is counted mean,° the other base, that is, the husbandman's discourses and the shepherd's.[15] But hereunto serveth a reason,

9. **complexions** combinations of qualities (originally, humors) defining a being.

10. **humors** characters, modes.

11. **facile** easy.

12. **praise** praiseworthy quality.

13. See Puttenham's discussion of decorum in 3.23.

14. The *Batrachomyomachia* is an anonymous burlesque of Homer thought authentic in Puttenham's time. It was attributed in antiquity to the semi-legendary Homeric parodist Pigres the Carian (ca. 480 BCE); modern scholarship, however, has argued that since it imitates Callimachus (d. ca. 260 BCE), and is mentioned by Plutarch, Martial, and Statius, all late first century CE, it was probably composed sometime between 250 BCE and 50 CE.

15. Servius, the early and extremely influential commentator on Vergil, suggested that his *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* epitomized the base or simple, the middle, and the grand styles, a formulation that reappears throughout Renaissance discussions of poetic style and the poet's progress toward maturity (as in the beginning of *The Faerie Queene*). This triple distinction lies behind Puttenham's discussion here. For extended treatment of the career trope, see the essays in Cheney and de Armas. The Latin rhetorical tradition also imagined styles as base, intermediary, and grand; see Cicero, *Orator* 75–99, and Quintilian 12.10.58–72.

in my simple° conceit.° For first, to that trifling poem of Homer: though the frog and the mouse be but little and ridiculous beasts, yet to treat of war is a high subject, and a thing in every respect terrible and dangerous to them that it alights on, and therefore of learned duty asketh martial grandiloquence, if it be set forth in his kind° and nature of war, even betwixt the basest creatures that can be imagined. So also is the ant or pismire,[16] and they be but little creeping things, not perfect° beasts, but *insects*,[17] or worms; yet in describing their nature and instinct, and their manner of life approaching to the form of a commonwealth, and their properties not unlike to the virtues° of most excellent governors and captains, it asketh a more majesty of speech than would the description of any other beast's life or nature, and perchance of many matters pertaining unto the baser sort of men, because it resembleth the history of a civil regiment,[18] and of them all the chief and most principal, which is monarchy.

So also in his *Bucolics*, which are but pastoral speeches and the basest of any other poem in their own proper nature, Vergil used a somewhat swelling style when he came to insinuate the birth of Marcellus, heir apparent to the Emperor Augustus, as child to his sister, aspiring by hope and greatness of the house to the succession of the empire and establishment thereof in that family.[19] Whereupon Vergil could do no less than to use such manner of style, whatsoever condition the poem were of, and this was decent,° and no fault or blemish, to confound[20] the tenors of the styles for that cause. But now when I remember me again that this eclogue (for I have read it somewhere)[21] was conceived by Octavian the Emperor to be written to the honor of Pollio, a citizen of Rome and of no great nobility—the same was misliked again as an implicative nothing decent° nor proportionable° to Pollio's fortunes and calling[22]—in which respect I might say likewise the style was not to be such as if it had been for the emperor's own honor and

16. **pismire** ant.

17. Puttenham appears to be the first to have used "insect" in its modern sense in English. Although the *OED* cites this passage to exemplify the adjectival meaning of "insect" as "having the body divided into segments" (the term derives from the Latin *insectus*, meaning "segmented"), Puttenham's word here is a noun, and that noun appears in no other treatise earlier than 1601.

18. **regiment** system of government.

19. As nephew and heir apparent of Augustus, Marcellus was celebrated by many writers, especially by Vergil in a famous passage in the *Aeneid* (6.855–86). He was frequently identified with the wondrous newborn boy whose birth Vergil's *Fourth Eclogue* celebrates, though so too was the infant son of Gaius Asinius Pollio, to whom the poet addresses the poem. Modern classical scholarship rejects the Marcellus identification.

20. **confound** confuse.

21. The author's uncertainly remembered story of Augustus' dislike does not seem to appear in a classical source. In an analogous case Horace warns a young nobleman to be wary of accepting praise fit only for Augustus (*Epistles* 1.16.25–40).

22. **implicative . . . calling** i.e., as an inaccurate and indecorous implied classification. Pollio was rich, powerful, and distinguished, but he was also provincial, and the first of his family to be raised to the patriciate. Such "new blood" was not entitled to quasi-imperial praise.

those of the blood imperial, than which subject there could not be among the Roman writers a higher nor graver to treat upon, so can I not be removed from mine opinion, but still methinks that in all decency° the style ought to conform with the nature of the subject.

Otherwise, if a writer will seem to observe no decorum at all, nor pass[23] how he fashion his tale[24] to his matter, who doubteth but he may in the lightest cause speak like a pope, and in the gravest matters prate like a parrot, and find words and phrases enough to serve both turns, and neither of them commendably? For neither is all that may be written of kings and princes such as ought to keep a high style, nor all that may be written upon a shepherd to keep the low, but according to the matter reported, if that be of high or base nature. For every petty pleasure and vain delight of a king are not to be accounted high matter for the height of his estate,° but mean° and perchance very base and vile;[25] nor so a poet or historiographer could decently° with a high style report the vanities of Nero, the ribaldries of Caligula, the idleness° of Domitian, and the riots of Heliogabalus. But well the magnanimity and honorable ambition of Caesar, the prosperities of Augustus, the gravity of Tiberius,[26] the bounty of Trajan, the wisdom of Aurelius, and generally all that which concerned the highest honors of emperors, their birth, alliances, government, exploits in war and peace, and other public affairs: for they be matter stately and high, and require a style to be lifted up and advanced by choice of words, phrases, sentences,° and figures, high, lofty, eloquent and magnific[27] in proportion.° So be the mean° matters to be carried with all words and speeches of smoothness and pleasant moderation; and finally the base things to be holden within their tether by a low, mild, and simple° manner of utterance, creeping rather than climbing, and marching rather than mounting upwards with the wings of the stately subjects and style.

23. **pass** care.
24. **tale** narration.
25. **vile** morally debased, as often with such rulers as Nero or Caligula.
26. The evil Renaissance reputation of Tiberius visible in Jonson's *Sejanus* is rejected by modern scholars, who regard the scandals of debauchery as later inventions, but the positive view was available to Puttenham: the emperor's Roman *gravitas* is not absent in Suetonius, and is clear in Tacitus, who thought him a good prince and an old-fashioned Roman until he retired to Capri and Sejanus took over. It should be noted, however, that Puttenham did at least a partial translation of Suetonius' *Life* of Tiberius, of which a single page survives (PRO, SP 12/126/67), and that page, which corresponds to chapters 58–61 (with omissions) of Suetonius' work, stresses Tiberius' wanton cruelty, not his *gravitas*.
27. **magnific** glorious, splendid.

Chapter 6

Of the high, low, and mean° subject

The matters therefore that concern the gods and divine things are highest of all other to be couched in writing; next to them the noble gests° and great fortunes of princes and the notable accidents° of time, as the greatest affairs of war and peace. These be all high subjects, and therefore are delivered over to the poets hymnic and historical who be occupied either in divine lauds° or in heroical reports. The mean° matters be those that concern mean° men—their life and business, as lawyers, gentlemen, and merchants, good householders and honest citizens—and which sound neither to[1] matters of state nor of war, nor leagues, nor great alliances, but smatch[2] all the common conversation,° as of the civiler and better sort of men. The base and low matters be the doings of the common artificer, servingman, yeoman, groom, husbandman,[3] day-laborer, sailor, shepherd, swineherd, and such like of homely calling, degree,° and bringing up.

So that in every of the said three degrees° not the selfsame virtues be equally to be praised, nor the same vices equally to be dispraised, nor their loves, marriages, quarrels, contracts, and other behaviors be like high nor do require to be set forth with the like style, but every one in his degree° and decency°: which made that[4] all hymns and histories and tragedies were written in the high style; all comedies and interludes° and other common poesies of loves and such like in the mean° style; all eclogues and pastoral poems in the low and base style. Otherwise, they had been utterly disproportioned.° Likewise, for the same cause, some phrases and figures be only peculiar to the high style, some to the base or mean,° some common to all three, as shall be declared more at large° hereafter when we come to speak of figure and phrase. Also some words and speeches and sentences° do become the high style that do not become the other two, and contrariwise, as shall be said when we talk of words and sentence.° Finally, some kind of measure° and concord° do not beseem the high style that well become the mean° and low, as we have said speaking of concord° and measure.°

But generally the high style is disgraced° and made foolish and ridiculous by all words affected, counterfeit,° and puffed up, as it were a wind-ball[5] carrying more countenance[6] than matter, and cannot be better resembled[7] than to these midsummer pageants in London, where to make the people wonder are set forth great and ugly giants marching as if they were alive and armed at all points,[8] but within they are stuffed

1. **sound neither to** do not have some connection with.
2. **smatch** taste of.
3. **husbandman** farmer.
4. **which made that** i.e., the foregoing have produced the result that.
5. **wind-ball** an inflated ball used in a game, struck to and fro with the fists.
6. **countenance** appearance, show.
7. **resembled** compared.
8. **at all points** fully.

full of brown paper and tow,[9] which the shrewd° boys underpeering do guilefully discover° and turn to a great derision.[10] Also all dark° and unaccustomed works, or rustical and homely, and sentences° that hold too much of the merry and light, or infamous and unshamefast,[11] are to be accounted of the same sort, for such speeches become not princes nor great estates,° nor them that write of their doings, to utter or report and intermingle with the grave and weighty matters.

9. **tow** the unworked stem or fiber of flax.

10. Castiglione uses this image to describe bad princes puffed up with self-love: "[T]hey are . . . like the Colosses that were made in Rome the last year upon the feast daye of the place of Agone, which outwardly declared a likeness of great men and horses of triumph, and inwardly were full of towe and ragges" (Hoby 263; for the original, see Castiglione 4.7.454). For discussion of such festivities and pageants, see Bergeron, Stephens, and Laroque. For data on the construction and operation of such pageant figures, see Nichols 1.489–90. This comparison stages a clash between a more traditional mentality in the Renaissance that expressed itself in such civic pageantry and a more skeptical, perhaps modern, mentality that is evident in the irreverent behavior of the "shrewd boys" as well as in the author's recounting of their activity. The passage also registers a play between the guile of the boys who undo or undercut the pageant and the pageant's beguiling the minds and eyes of the audience. For Puttenham's linked discussion of decorum, see 3.23.

11. **unshamefast** immodest.

Chapter 7

Of figures and figurative speeches

As figures be the instruments of ornament in every language, so be they also in a sort abuses,° or rather trespasses, in speech, because they pass the ordinary limits of common utterance, and be occupied of purpose to deceive the ear and also the mind, drawing it from plainness and simplicity to a certain doubleness, whereby our talk is the more guileful and abusing.[1] For what else is your *metaphor* but an inversion of sense by transport;[2] your *allegory* by a duplicity of meaning or dissimulation under covert and dark° intendments;° one while speaking obscurely and in riddle called *enigma*; another while by common proverb or adage called *paroemia*; then by merry scoff called *ironia*; then by bitter taunt called *sarcasmus*; then by paraphrase or circumlocution when all might be said in a word or two; then by incredible comparison giving credit, as by your *hyperbole*; and many other ways seeking to inveigle° and appassionate[3] the mind? Which thing made the

1. **abusing** deceiving. Cf. Quintilian 9.3.2–3; note that Quintilian says that figures would be errors (*vitia*) if they were intended by the speaker or writer and were not aesthetically pleasing to the hearer or listener.

2. **an inversion of sense by transport** a transposing or alteration of meaning by a change (from literal to figurative). Puttenham's definition of metaphor contains a certain redundancy, since the word means literally a "bearing or transporting across (a boundary)." Puttenham examines metaphor in 3.17; see the discussion and notes there for his habitual odd usage of *inversion*. All of the other tropes mentioned here receive close treatment in 3.18.

3. **appassionate** impassion.

grave judges Areopagites (as I find written) to forbid all manner of figurative speeches to be used before them in their consistory of justice, as mere[4] illusions to the mind and wresters of upright judgment, saying that to allow such manner of foreign and colored° talk to make the judges affectioned° were all one[5] as if the carpenter, before he began to square his timber, would make his square crooked[6]: insomuch as° the strait[7] and upright mind of a judge is the very rule of justice till it be perverted by affection.°[8]

This no doubt is true and was by them gravely considered; but in this case—because our maker or poet is appointed not for a judge but rather for a pleader, and that of pleasant and lovely causes and nothing perilous, such as be those for the trial° of life, limb, or livelihood; and before judges neither sour nor severe, but in the ear of princely dames, young ladies, gentlewomen, and courtiers, being all for the most part either meek of nature, or of pleasant humor; and that all his abuses° tend but to dispose the hearers to mirth and solace by pleasant conveyance° and efficacy° of speech—they[9] are not in truth to be accounted vices, but for virtues, in the poetical science° very commendable. On the other side, such trespasses in speech (whereof there be many) as give dolor and disliking to the ear and mind by any foul indecency° or disproportion° of sound, situation,° or sense, they be called, and not without cause, the vicious° parts or rather heresies of language. Wherefore the matter resteth much in the definition and acceptance of this word *decorum*, for whatsoever is so, cannot justly be misliked. In which respect it may come to pass that what the grammarian setteth down for a viciosity° in speech may become a virtue and no vice; contrariwise, his commended figure may fall into a reproachful[10] fault, the best and most assured remedy whereof is, generally to follow the saying of Bias: *ne quid nimis*.[11] So as°

4. **mere** absolute, complete.

5. **all one** the same.

6. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.1.5–6 (1354a).

7. **strait** strict.

8. The Areopagites were the earliest aristocratic council or court of ancient Athens; the name derives from the Areopagus (hill of Ares), a hill northwest of the Acropolis, where the court met. According to Aeschines (1.92), this court differed from other Athenian courts in its resistance to the wiles of rhetoric. Aristotle also alludes to the resistance of the Areopagus to emotional speeches; see *Rhetoric* 1.1.5 (1354a); cf. also Lucian, *Anacharsis* 19; Castiglione 4.23.475 (Hoby 277).

9. **they** i.e., figurative speeches.

10. **reproachful** worthy of reproach.

11. ***ne quid nimis*** "nothing too much," a Latin translation of the Greek μεδὲν ἄγαν, one of the Sayings of the Seven Wise Men or Sages of Greece taught to ancient schoolboys. The Latin is cited by Erasmus, Puttenham's probable source, as *Adagia* 1.6.96 (LB 2.259B, *CWE* 32.63); Erasmus attributes it to Bias. According to modern scholars, the phrase was supposedly written on Apollo's temple at Delphi, and it is impossible to determine which ancient writer actually coined it. Gascoigne also uses the phrase (without attribution) in *Certayne Notes* (458). (The Seven Sages are substantially legendary, though some were actual people. Plutarch [*Solon* 12.4] provides this list: Bias of Priene, Chilon of Sparta, Cleobulus of Lindus, Periander of Corinth, Pittacus of Mytilene, Solon of Athens, and Thales of Miletus.) Bias, sometimes called Bion, should not be confused with the Greek bucolic poet Bion (fl. 100 BCE).