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As It Likes You

If you're under the age of 40 (maybe even if you're older) you already *do* phenomenology when you tell a friend what a third party said. Consider how you might report what you heard Jaques say to the deer your friends had wounded in comparison with how the First and the Second Lord tell the story to Duke Senior in Act Two, scene one of *As You Like It*:

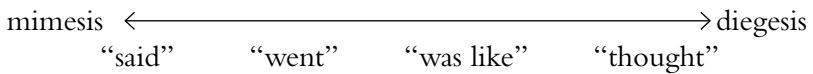
DUKE SENIOR But what said Jaques?
Did he not moralize this spectacle?
FIRST LORD O yes, into a thousand similes.
First, for his weeping into the needless stream;
“Poor deer,” quoth he, “thou mak’st a testament
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
To that which had too much.” Then being there alone,
Left and abandoned of his velvet friend,
“’Tis right,” quoth he, “thus misery doth part
The flux of company.”¹

If the same scene were being performed in today’s idiom, the First Lord’s report might go more like this: “He was ... like, deer, you write

¹ *As You Like It*, 2.1.44–52. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Shakespeare’s plays and poems are taken from the Oxford Shakespeare, 2nd edn. (Shakespeare 2005), and are cited in the text by act, scene, and line numbers in the case of the plays, by sonnet number and line numbers in the case of the sonnets, and by line numbers in the case of the narrative poems.

your will just like people do” and “He was ... like, right, misery takes care of too much company.” “Like”: apparently Jaques’ thousand similes aren’t enough. But “like” in these updated speeches is not a preposition like those you find in a simile. Instead, it functions as a “quotative” (Buchstaller 2003 and 2001), like the First Lord’s “quoth.”

The standard distinction between direct and indirect quotation fails to do justice to the range of situations in which people tell stories and quote other people. Instead of a binary (direct versus indirect quotation) we should imagine a continuum of performance possibilities, with mimesis (impersonation) at one end and diegesis (narration) at the other. Along this continuum Isabelle Buchstaller has ranged currently used quotatives according to how much scope they give for involvement on the part of the teller:



“Said” at one end of the continuum implies direct quotation, reportage of a speaker’s actual words, while “thought” at the other end turns the reportage inward, to what the reporter felt when the other person was speaking. Somewhere in the middle are “went” and “was like.” They bring the past event into visceral presence, inspiring sound effects and gestures that perform the reporter’s feelings. In Buchstaller’s summation,

Using the new quotatives, speakers quote as if they were reproducing a real speech act but package it in a more expressive form, in sound and voice effects. This suggests that speakers take advantage of the full creative possibilities the language offers them in the new quotatives: a stream of consciousness-like display of inner states and attitudes realized in vivid, immediate speech. (Buchstaller 2001: 14)

“Like” affords these possibilities to today’s speakers for the same reason it recommended itself to The Historical William Shakespeare (THWS) and the denizens of the Forest of Arden. “Like” does not purport to be or not to be: it compares and approximates, it blurs the boundary

between inner and outer, it puts objects into subjects and subjects into objects.

In that respect, “like” is phenomenal. “Like” implicates *you* in *it*.

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Take the epilogue to *As You Like It*. The actor who has been playing Rosalind (in the original 1599 production the actor was a boy and sometimes these days is a man) moves freely back and forth, left and right along Buchstaller’s continuum between mimesis and diegesis. Gender critics and queer critics in the late twentieth century have made this speech as famous as Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” was in the nineteenth century. The blurring of distinctions with respect to gender, surely familiar already to readers of this book, also involves a blurring of distinctions with respect to pronouns, to what it pleases us to call “subject positions.” “It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue,” begins he/she/he (Ep. 1–2). So whom do we see speaking here—Rosalind as “the lady” or the actor who has played the role (which has included taking on the guise of Jupiter’s sex toy Ganymede) or both? “What a case am I in then,” exclaims the speaker, making some very nice puns on “case” as happenstance, state of affairs, body, suit of clothes, and (for the Latin-wise among the hearers) syntactical position as subject or object (*OED* 1989: “case,” *n*.¹, I.†1.a, I.4.b; “case,” *n*.², 3.a, †4.b; “case,” *n*.¹, I.9.a).

“What a case am *I* in then”: the confusion here is not just between *she* and *he*, between “Rosalind” and boy actor, but between *he/she/he* on the one hand and *I* on the other, between the character in the fiction being stashed away over there, in the space behind the speaker, and the person standing and speaking here toward the front of the stage. He/she/he solves this dilemma of first-person identity by turning to *you*, the people out there who are looking at *him/her/him* in third person, singular in *his/her/his* case and plural in *theirs*. “My way is to conjure you” (Ep. 10–11)—like, say, a judge administering an oath or a magician calling up the devil—and he/she/he begins with the women. “I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you” (Ep. 11–13)—a timely

reminder of the play's title. "And I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women—as I perceive by your simpering none of you hates them—that between you and the women the play may please" (Ep. 13–16). The play on "play" was calculated to give apoplexy to the likes of Phillip Stubbes, who was sure that the main effect of play-watching was sexual arousal and that after the performance "every mate sorts to his mate, everyone brings another homeward of their way very friendly and in their secret conclaves (covertly) they play the sodomites, or worse" (Stubbes 1877–9: 22). With these verbal gestures directed toward *you*, the speaker breaks up the third-personhood of the play—I watching *them*, each speaking as an *I* to *me* and *us*—if that pure third-personhood ever really existed.

In the original production, as now, the epilogue's gestures cannot be only verbal. At the very least, the actor breaks away from the dancing cast ("Play, music," Duke Senior has commanded, "and you brides and bridegrooms all,/ With measure heaped in joy to th' measures fall" [5.4.176–7]) and moves toward the audience. If we take Duke Senior's reference to "rustic revelry" (5.4.175) at face value and imagine that the measures were hand-in-hand round-dances and not the bodily detached look-at-me dances favored at court (Howard 1998: 69–92), the actor would have to break hands with his fellows. What would he/she/he do with arms and hands then? Perhaps he/she/he would use them to sweep the house in a broad gesture of inclusion, but more certainly he/she/he would *point*, first to himself/herself/himself ("What a case am I in then ..."), then to the women ("I charge you, O women ..."), then to the men ("And I charge you, O men ...").

Verbally at least, actor/Rosalind/Ganymede doesn't just point but comes up close, at least to the men in the audience, near enough to "kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not" (Ep. 18–20). One would have thought such a thing impossible until the invention of the motion-picture camera and celluloid film. In movies, thanks to the camera with its close-up lens, we get much closer to actors' faces than we ever do to faces in real life except for whispering, kissing, and/or having sex. In moments like the epilogue to *As You Like It* we can get just as close to the actors as in films, not physically but psychologically. But

there is an if-clause that doesn't apply to films: in the theater, we have to lend a hand. That is just what the epilogue, in the final lines, asks us to do: "And I am sure, as many as have good beards, or good faces, or sweet breaths will for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell" (Ep. 19–21). By clapping our hands we agree to be conjured. Indeed, we join in the conjuring. We join the round-dance. We revel in the phenomenon. We like *it*; it likes *us*.

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Curiously, many academic critics since the 1970s have refused the epilogue's kind offer. They *don't* like it. They won't clap, much less kiss. I say "curiously," because *As You Like It* would seem to deconstruct norms of gender and sexuality in ways that are liberating for all concerned. At least I have thought so since seeing the National Theatre's all-male production, directed by Clifford Williams, at Wolf Trap Farm Park outside Washington, DC, in September 1974—this, despite *Time* magazine's assurance that what audiences witnessed in the original London production, seven years earlier, was "a remarkably chaste performance free of disturbing homoerotic overtones" (*Time* 1967). On the whole, though, academic critics since the 1970s have refused to be taken in by the sights and sounds of *As You Like It* in performance. Instead, as if acting on Bacon's distinction between *phenomena* and "the real truth" in *The Advancement of Learning*, they have adopted "another manner of severity and attention" and tried earnestly to see beyond appearances to realities (Bacon 2000a: 93).

In the case of *As You Like It*, the realities are partly historical and partly contemporary: patriarchy (Rosalind may work wonders in the woods, but in the end Duke Senior is restored as king on the mountain), land enclosures (thanks to daddy's money, Celia can buy Corin's master's sheepcote and turn it into a precursor of Marie Antoinette's Petit Hameau), and heteronormativity (at the very moment Hymen descends to bless Orlando's marriage to Rosalind, "Ganymede" conveniently disappears, ascending back to Olympus as it were, perhaps giving Hymen a high five as they pass in the air). What happens onstage in *As You Like It*—the witty speeches, the disguises, the gestures, the

songs, the dancing, the playful epilogue—may not be repugnant to the phenomena, but they *are* repugnant to certain political preoccupations. I happen to share those political convictions—I’m against patriarchy, capitalist greed, and compulsory heterosexuality—but in the case of *As You Like It* I find “reality”—or what critics have regarded as reality—to be near-sighted, ear-plugged, and hand-cuffed.

Theatrical phenomena versus social facts, appearance versus reality, imaginative joy versus rational analysis: *must* we choose between these binaries? Why can’t we embrace both? After all, aren’t binaries supposed to be arbitrary? Why can’t one hold fast to one’s political commitments and revel in the play’s phenomena at the same time? The problem is not really politics—after all, people who are passionate about their politics are usually passionate about art that affirms their politics—but the requirement to be cool, rational, and objective when faced with works of art. For that, we can carry blame back to the likes of Descartes, to the world as *he* liked it. About passion Descartes seems to have been of a mixed mind—he carried on a vigorous correspondence about the passions with James I’s daughter Elizabeth, he dedicated to her his treatise on *The Passions of the Soul of Man* (1649), he recognized passions as “thoughts”—but on the whole Descartes preferred that objects of knowledge be “not merely clear but also distinct” (Descartes 1988: 174). Passions do not make the grade. Descartes’ epistemological ideals were taken up by Enlightenment thinkers like Locke and Hume and were resisted by Romantic apologists like Shelley and Hegel, but the ologification and ographification of the humanities and social sciences in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (philology, psychology, aesthetics, historiography, semiology, narratology were all invented then) meant that Descartes’ prescriptions about the proper objects of knowledge—that they be clear and distinct—ultimately carried the day.

Hence structuralism, with its search for the principles that underlie the superficial distractions of myths and stories. Hence Saussure’s linguistics, with its attention to the formal system of language rather than the vagaries of individual utterances. Hence deconstruction, with its insistence on the arbitrariness of all forms of difference-marking. Hence Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, with its grounding of personal identity and its discontents in language. Hence political criticism,

with its application of these axioms to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nationhood. Like Freud's unconscious, Jameson's "*political unconscious*" is, literally, undeniable. If you try to deny it, in that very act you are affirming its existence. All true enough—but not true through and through. What happens to sensations, feelings, emotions, aesthetic pleasure? To acknowledge these unclear and indistinct matters becomes an act of "false consciousness."

At least three reasons explain the distrust. For a start, aesthetics had been a primary concern of New Criticism, which held the field before post-structuralism. If critical practice proceeds as a dialectic, then post-structuralism figures as the antithesis to New Criticism's thesis. It is not surprising that both of New Criticism's main concerns, structural form and aesthetics, should be targets for attack under the regime of post-structuralism. A second reason is the personal nature of sensations and feelings. They are the possessions of individuals, bourgeois or otherwise, and hence cannot be generalized in the way Marx's base and superstructure can or Saussure's $s \neq S$ or Lacan's imaginary, symbolic, and real orders. Those apply to everyone; pity and fear are mine or yours. Perhaps the most telling reason for writing off sensations and feelings, however, is that they cannot be written. In Saussure's linguistics and in the critical models it has inspired, sensations and feelings are incidental to the main business at hand, on the order of pitch and rhythm in speech. What *really* matters is not individual variations in pitch and rhythm but the fundamental principles that govern all utterances. The critical dialectic that produced post-structuralism still lacks a coherent synthesis. An "affective turn"—a counterturn to the "linguistic turn" of the 1960s and 1970s—has been announced in the social sciences (Clough 2007: 1–33) and in performance studies (Massumi 2002: 23–45). *Phenomenal Shakespeare* takes its place in this counterturn. After the thesis of New Criticism and the antithesis of post-structuralism a synthesis can be found in phenomenology, specifically in the operations of "like."

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The title *As You Like It* may have suggested itself to William Shakespeare as Author (WSA) through a line in Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590),

WSA's primary source for the play's plot and many of its speeches. Striding into the reader's space in the brusque guise of "a soldier, and a sailor," Lodge in his epistle "To the Gentlemen Readers" takes the sixteenth-century author's usual stance toward critics: "If you like it, so." And if you don't, you're "a squint-eyed ass" (Bullough 1958: 160). "It" in WSA's title has received its fair share of critical commentary. (Does "it" = copulation?) "Like" we tend to take at face value, as a transitive verb, "to find agreeable or congenial" (*OED* 1989: "like," *v.*, 6.a). Certainly the play is full of that kind of liking. "I like this place," Celia says of the Forest of Arden (2.4.93). "And how like you this shepherd's life?" Corin asks Touchstone (3.2.11). It was by feigning a woman's changing passions, Ganymede tells Orlando, that he once cured a friend's love-sickness: he "would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him" (3.2.400–2). In the epilogue the women are bidden "to like as much of this play as please you" (Ep. 12–13).

An exchange among Jaques, Duke Senior, and Touchstone reveals, though, how slippery "like" can be. Jaques is introducing the "motley-minded" Touchstone to the duke. The man swears that he has been a courtier, Jaques tells the duke, and to help prove that is so Touchstone volunteers, "I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one" (5.4.46–7). Fortunately that one was prevented when the duelists met and discovered that the quarrel was based on "the seventh cause," i.e., a lie seven times removed from the original insult. Delighted with Touchstone's gift of separating words from their usual meanings, Jaques exclaims to the duke, "Good my lord, like this fellow." "I like him very well" is Duke Senior's reply (5.4.51–3). To "like" to have fought a duel is to like in a different way than Jaques and the duke "like" the motley-minded gentleman's wit. In a similar way Celia reminds Rosalind, "You know my father has no child but I, nor none is like to have" (1.2.16–17), and Touchstone says of the village priest, "he is not like to marry me well" (3.3.82–3).

In being "like" to have fought a duel, Touchstone "seems ready to," "pretends to," "looks as if he's near to" fighting a duel—a free-standing, intransitive state of affairs syntactically speaking (*OED* 1989: "like," *v.*, 2.2), but a dynamic, conjunctive state of affairs rhetorically speaking.

In the case of the village priest, “like” is an adjective, but it is used predicatively, to conjoin “now” and “the future” (OED 1989: “like,” *a.*, *adv.* [*conj.*] and *n.*², A.7). In its capacity to put two things together, “like” provides the basis not just for similes (where the “like” or “as” is explicit) but metaphors (where they are implied). To liken, to make alike, to make like one is something or is about to perform something: these actions are, after all, what similes and metaphors *do*. Duke Senior in his 2.1 pep speech to his co-mates and brothers in exile offers an example that is altogether characteristic of *As You Like It*. The duke reveals his route to the stage of the Globe via Lodge (the subtitle to *Rosalynde* is *Euphues’ Golden Legacy*) and John Lyly (his *Euphues* and *Euphues His England* made verbal excess fashionable in the early 1590s) when he far-fetches a comparison from natural history to justify his current state of rustication: “Sweet are the uses of adversity/ Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,/ Wears yet a precious jewel in his head” (2.1.12–14).

Earlier Charles the wrestler has performed a similar rhetorical feat of conjoining the human and the natural, the fictitious and the historical, when he reports that Duke Senior “and a many merry men with him” are in the Forest of Arden, where “they live like the old Robin Hood of England” (1.1.109–11). What is the syntactical function of “like” here? An adverb modifying “live”? A conjunction that coordinates “they live” with “[as] the old Robin Hood of England [lived]”? A preposition that relates “they” to “Robin Hood” via an implicit “like to”? The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED 1989: “like,” *a.*, *adv.* [*conj.*], and *n.*²) recognizes all these syntactical slippages whereby what is technically an adjective or an adverb can function like a “quasi-*prep*[osition]” (B.1–5) and like a conjunction (B.6). The noun form of “like” (C.1–3) shapes up as the substantive result of these actions of conjoining A with B, of conjoining Duke Senior and his many merry men in fictitious present-tense France with “old” Robin Hood in historical past-tense England. The dynamic quality of “like,” even as a noun, is suggested by several exchanges between Celia and Rosalind in 1.3. Adjectival, adverbial, prepositional, and conjunctive qualities converge in the peroration to the protest Celia lodges against her father’s decision to exile Rosalind: “And wheresoe’er we went, like

Juno's swans/ Still we went coupled and inseparable" (1.3.74–5). To effect their escape together, Celia resolves to put on poor and mean attire and besmirk her face with umber. "The like do you," she urges Rosalind (1.3.113). Even better, Rosalind exclaims, she will "suit me all points like a man," complete with curtal axe and boar spear (1.3.115–17).

The refusal of "like" to stay fixed as a part of speech is probably to be explained by the word's origins as "body," "shape," "form" (*OED* 1989: "like," *a., adv. [conj.], and n.*², etymology), an entity that is always in motion. The Old English word *lich* survived into the late fifteenth century to refer to a living body, especially the trunk as opposed to the limbs, as well as to a corpse. The word in the latter sense was resurrected by medievalizing English writers of the nineteenth century (*OED* 1989: "lich," 2) and survives still in the most common German word for corpse, *Leich*. Beneath all the modern uses of "like"—as verb, adjective, adverb, conjunction, quasi-preposition, and various combinations of the five—is the fundamental idea of *con*+formity, of fitting something *with* the body or fitting the body *with* that something. "I like this place": Celia perceives and expresses a certain relationship, a harmony, a conformity, between her body and the Forest of Arden. In all its forms, "like" is like that. With respect to sentences, "like" challenges the logic of syntax. With respect to fiction-making in general, "like" points up the fiction's status as a copy, a simulacrum, a mimesis of something that is not itself. With respect to drama in particular, "like" connects the pretending actor with the imagining spectator/listener. "I am like ..." becomes "this looks like ...," "this sounds like ...," "this feels like" *As You Like It*: the first word in the title sets up these dynamics.

With respect to epistemology, "like" insinuates a way of knowing that connects subject and object via the subject's body. That reciprocity is registered in the palindrome of "I like it" and "It likes me." The second form, now obsolete in standard English, is actually the older (*OED* 1989: "like," *v.*¹, etymology). "Like" functions in this case as an intransitive verb. "It" is doing the acting but has no direct object. "I" sneak into the proposition as it were by the side door, as "me," as the beneficiary or indirect object of the action being performed by "it."

Instead of observer → observed we get observed → observer. The first formulation, with “I” as the subject, “like” as a transitive verb, and “it” as the object, is now the more familiar, probably because it better fits our post-Cartesian epistemology in which the observer is very much in charge. “I like it” and “It likes me”: the two phrases may seem to amount to the same thing, but the shift in emphasis from “I” to “it” should throw us off balance. The chiasmus challenges us to reconsider the linear subject → object relationship we take for granted and to rethink it in dynamic reciprocal terms. Instead of making a distinction between subject and object, “like” sets up an analogy. Perhaps, then, the best notation would be subject:object::object:subject. What Touchstone says about “if” (5.4.100–1) is no less true about “like”: much virtue in “like.”

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Phenomenology as a school of philosophy favors *like*, not *is*. That difference becomes apparent when we compare three primal scenes of observation—one in Bacon, one in Descartes, and one in Husserl—and investigate which is closest to *As You Like It*.

In *The Advancement of Learning* Bacon may distinguish *phenomena* from geometrical demonstration, but he acknowledges “the ordinary face and view of experience” as the starting place and in so doing acknowledges the situatedness of the observer. Advancement in learning depends on the observer’s moving forward in a deliberate, disciplined, and thorough way from direct observation to hypotheses to general principles. But firsthand experience is the starting point. The 182 aphorisms of *The New Organon* (“the new instrument” might be a more idiomatic translation of Bacon’s Latin title *Novum Organum*) chart the way forward. “There are, and can be, only two ways to investigate and discover truth,” Bacon declares in Book One, axiom 19. The first way—the erroneous way—“leaps from sense and particulars to the most general axioms” and then, from that seemingly secure position, backtracks to consider intermediate axioms, explanations that properly belong in between particulars and abstract principles. The method that Bacon advocates begins in the same place, with

sense and particulars, but rises “in a gradual and unbroken ascent to arrive at last at the most general axioms” (Bacon 2000b: 36). Abstract principles stay grounded in common experience.

For the fourth edition (1640) of *The Advancement of Learning*, expanded from two books to nine and translated into Latin, the engraver William Marshall, perhaps acting on instructions from Bacon’s literary executor William Rowley, supplied both a frontispiece showing Bacon sitting in his study and an engraved title page laying out Bacon’s program of observation. (See Figure 1.1.) The scene in the study is a posthumous confection based on a 1626 head-and-shoulders likeness engraved by Simon de Passe, but Bacon’s posture and his accoutrements capture the essence of his method. Seated in a study bare of any objects but a drapery, a few books, and writing tools, Bacon stares out at the world (and the viewer) with frank intensity. The drapery, a standard prop in representations of scholars’ studies, can be associated with revelations, as it is in Prospero’s study in *The Tempest*, Act Five (Smith 2010). The books in this case are not tomes by recognized authorities but the very books that the sitter is in the process of writing as he looks out so intently. The book on the desk is *The Great Instauration*, the first part of which the reader of *The Advancement of Learning* actually holds in hand. On the title page itself light raking the objects from the left invites the viewer to apprehend a light side (left) and a dark side (right). Lined up top to bottom on the left are the “*Mundus Visibilis*” (the visible world) realized as a terrestrial globe, a sun face, and a monument featuring an obelisk inscribed “*Oxonium*” (Oxford) and “*Moniti Scientiae*” (“Admonitions to Science”) resting on a base adorned with Oxford University’s coat of arms, a stack of three of Bacon’s scientific books, and a delta inscribed with History-Poetry-Philosophy along the outer edge and Memory-Imagination-Reason within. On the right, again reading from top to bottom, are the “*Mundus Intellectualis*” (“World of the Mind”) realized as a globe of the three-quarters moon, the face of a quarter moon (with the light coming from the wrong side), and a monument featuring an obelisk inscribed “*Cantabrigia*” (“Cambridge”) and “*Meliora Philosophiae*” (“Betterments to Philosophy”) resting on a base adorned with Cambridge University’s coat of arms, a stack of

three of Bacon's legal books, and a delta inscribed with Natural-Human-Divine along the outer edge and Nature-Man-God within. (The association of Cambridge with divinity might be expected, given the university's reputation for religious controversy in the earlier seventeenth century.) That the world of the mind is cast in shadow should come as no surprise in a book that attacks "too great a reverence, and a kind of adoration of the mind and understanding of man: by means whereof, men have withdrawn themselves too much from the contemplation of Nature, and the observations of experience and have tumbled up and down in their own reason and conceits" (Bacon 2000a: 30). To ascertain truth, the shadowy intellect needs the bright world of appearances. At the top, in the title page's most striking detail, the World of the Mind shakes hands with the Visible World beneath a motto reading "*Ratione et experientia foederantur*" ("They are allied by reason and experience").

Included in the situatedness of the observer in Bacon's scheme are the *feelings* of the observer in the face of what he or she sees. Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison in their history of *Objectivity* point out how Bacon and other early scientists were attracted, not to the typical specimens and processes that claim the attention of modern science, but to the odd, the strange, and the monstrous (Daston and Galison 2007: 67). What interests Bacon in *Silva Silvarum, or A Natural History* (1627 and later editions) are phenomena that, if they were physical objects, might be collected in a Renaissance "Wonder Cabinet" and be responded to accordingly. *Silva Silvarum* contains 1,000 numbered "experiments," most of which are closer to what we would call "experiences," lively descriptions of this, that, and the other, along with reasoned explanations and, sometimes but not always, instructions for how to prove those explanations for yourself. There is a playful spirit about the whole enterprise, and affects are as present as effects. Take, for example, number 236, the first of several "Experiments in Consort touching the Imitation of Sounds." Speech sounds are so "curious and exquisite," Bacon observes, that it takes a long time and many trials for a child to learn to speak. "But all this dischargeth not the wonder": so hard is speech acquisition that you might think it happens—"exceeding strange" as the possibility may seem—through some kind of transfer



Figure 1.1 Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1640), frontispiece and title page engraved by William Marshall. Left: Bacon in his study. Right: the Visible World and the World of the Mind shake hands.

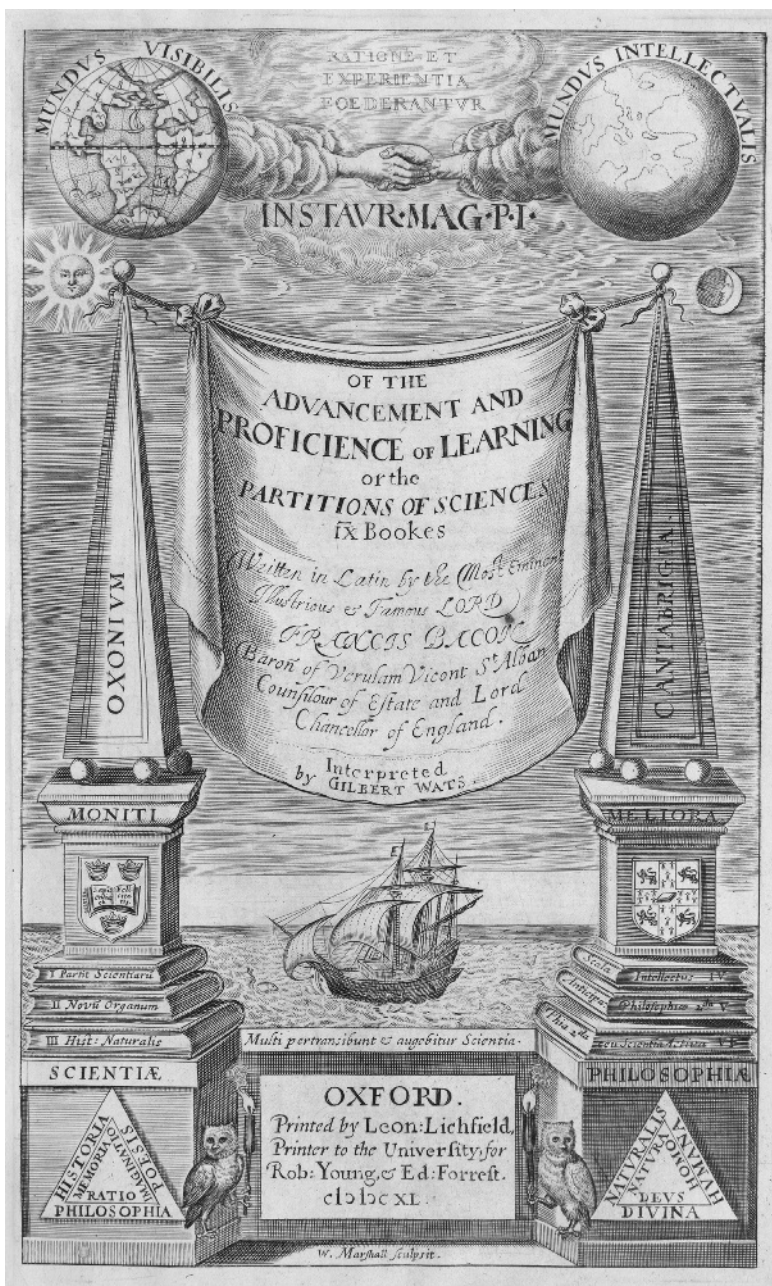


Figure 1.1 (*cont'd*)

of “spirits” from teacher to student (Bacon 1627: sig. 14v). A later series of experiments (numbers 904–11) argues that this is exactly what happens: “All operations by transmission of Spirits, and imagination have this; that they work at distance, and not at touch” (sig. II2). Wonder, Bacon says in still another experiment, touches off astonishment, which is occasioned by “the fixing of the mind upon one object of cogitation, whereby it doth not spaiate and transcur, as it useth” (sig. AA5v). That is to say, the mind, instead of moving from object to object as it usually does, becomes transfixed by a single object. The cause of that arrested movement is astonishment, and it has visceral effects: “an immoveable posture of the body; casting up of the eyes to heaven; and lifting up of the hands” (sig. AA5v). The scene of observation implied by *Silva Silvarum* is crowded with objects, playful, full of feeling, engagingly gregarious. Bacon welcomes wanderers among the thousand trees in his *Silva* (literally, “forest”).

Descartes’ scene of observation is lonelier, at least to start with. Descartes begins his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (published in Latin in 1641, a year after the expanded Latin edition of Bacon’s *The Advancement of Learning*) just as Bacon does, with sense and particulars:

although the senses occasionally deceive us with respect to objects which are very small or in the distance, there are many other beliefs about which doubt is quite impossible, even though they are derived from the senses—for example, that I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hands, and so on. Again, how could it be denied that these hands or this whole body are mine? (*Meditations* VII.18 in Descartes 1988: 76–7)

There, however, Descartes parts company with Bacon. Where Bacon immediately turns outward toward the phenomena of the world, Descartes turns inward to consider the thinking observer—namely, himself. The six “meditations” are just that: six disciplined first-person exercises in which Descartes takes stock of his own mind. Famously, what Descartes discovers in the course of this inventory are two clear and distinct thoughts: (1) I exist because I think (“my essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing” [VII.78]);

and (2) I can think my body but my body can't think me ("I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing" [VII.78]).

With respect to the world outside the mind (including the body itself) these two thoughts have had profound implications—and not only for Descartes personally. Instructed by Descartes, thinkers from Locke to Derrida have considered some thoughts more worth thinking than others. Descartes may recognize that "thought" (defined in the *Meditations* as "everything that is within us in such a way that we are immediately aware of it" [VII.160]) includes sensations, imaginings, emotions, and acts of will as well as intellection, but only one category of thought constitutes truth: perceptions that are "clear" and "distinct." Over and over in the *Meditations* Descartes uses these two criteria as he makes his way forward. In *Principles of Philosophy*, published three years later, he gives these terms precise definitions: "I call a perception 'clear' when it is present and accessible to the attentive mind I call a perception 'distinct' if, as well as being clear, it is so sharply separated from all other perceptions that it contains within itself only what is clear" (no. 45 in Descartes 1988: 174–5).

The trouble with sensations, imaginings, emotions, and acts of will is that, as thoughts, they are *not* clear and distinct. Quite the contrary. The same holds true for the perceived properties of all material things, including the human body. Only a few qualities—size, extension, shape, position, motion, substance, duration, and number—can Descartes perceive clearly and distinctly. And even these can change, as when the solid piece of wax he holds in his hands melts when he places it near the fire. As for color, sound, smell, taste, and tactility, "I think of these only in a very confused and obscure way, to the extent that I do not even know whether they are true or false, that is, whether the ideas I have of them are ideas of real things, or of non-things" (*Meditations* VII.43 in Descartes 1988: 92). The best way to know size, extension, shape, position, etc. is not through the senses but through geometrical diagrams of the sort Descartes includes in his *Optics*, published along with his *Discourse on Method* in 1637. Figure 1.2 shows how the relationship between viewer's eye and objects of vision can be plotted geometrically, via a series of triangles.

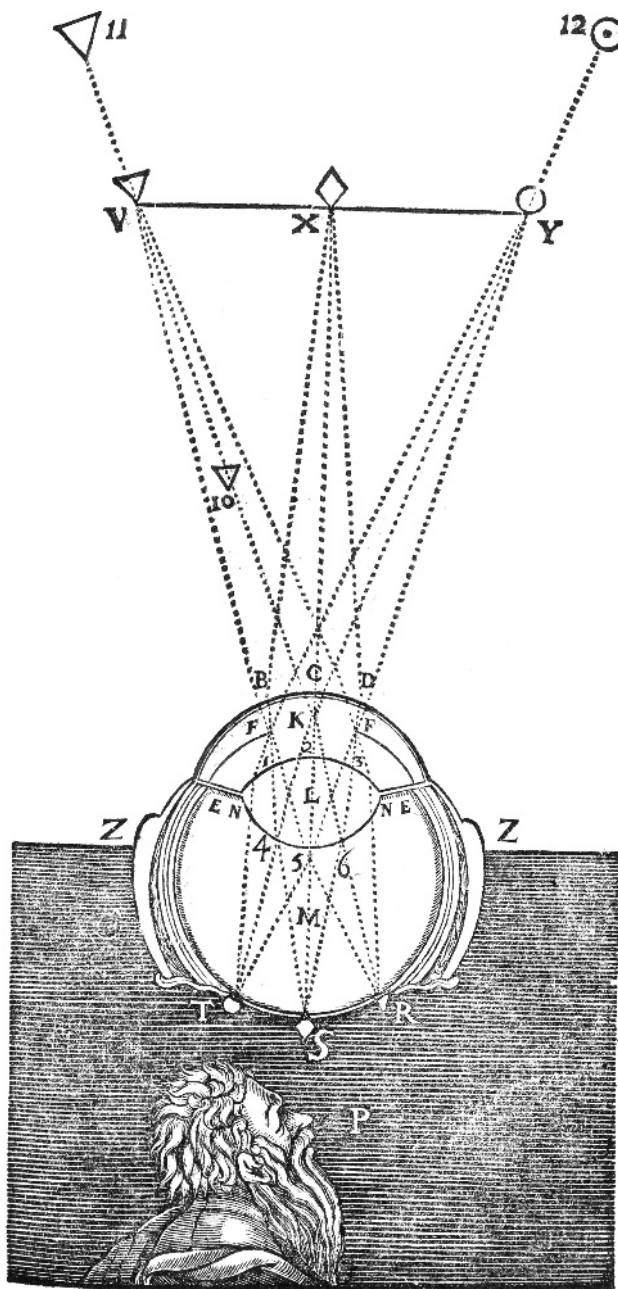


Figure 1.2 René Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae* (1644), Geometrical demonstration of visual perception as a function of focus, distance, and strength of light rays.

To gaze fixedly at object X in this figure is to relegate objects 10 and 12 to peripheral importance—literally, since the trajectory of the light rays in each case strikes the back of the retina in a peripheral position. On the other hand, object 10 might be judged to be closer than object X because the light rays coming from object 10 are stronger. By the same criterion, object 12 will be judged to be farther away.

The point of Descartes' analysis is the isolation of objects in the viewer's environment. What holds true for physical objects holds true for thoughts. Arithmetic and geometry, Descartes observes early in the first meditation, "contain something certain and indubitable" (VII.20)—*whether these things really exist in nature or not*. The illustration in Figure 1.2 is repeated several times in the course of the *Discourse on Method*. Left unexplained in each case is the gap between the meticulously dissected eye and the *owner* of that eye. What do those 80+ parallel lines at the bottom of the image indicate? Perhaps the night sky as the viewer at the bottom casts his gaze upward to stars or planets (points V, X, and Y at the top), his dissected eye functioning like a telescope. But the ambient darkness in which the viewer is situated also suggests the flesh in which the eye, protruding outward, is seated. Someone who knows how Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* represents waves of thought and sound (see Figure 2.5) may see a resemblance between Descartes' linear ambience and Saussure's wavy ambience. Descartes' viewer is a *situated* viewer, not the totally detached thinker familiar from Philosophy 101. But *where* is he located? In what context does he do his difference-marking? That is left ambiguous.

As a demonstration of his method, Descartes concludes *Meditations on First Philosophy* with a rehash of the arguments he arrived at intuitively, this time "arranged in geometrical fashion" (VII.160), with definitions, postulates, axioms, propositions, and demonstrations. Descartes does so at the request of one of the critics whose objections he takes up after the meditations proper are finished. In effect, Descartes goes over the same territory three times: once in the form of six private meditations, once in the form of a pronoun-trading dialogue (other thinkers—Johan de Kater, Marin Mersenne,

Thomas Hobbes, Antoine Arnauld, Pierre Gassendi, and Pierre Bourdin—write anonymously as “I” or “we” and object to Descartes as “you,” to whom Descartes replies as “I”), and finally as a demonstration out of geometry.

In Part Two of *Ideas* (1913) Edmund Husserl sets in place yet a third scene of observation. He does so with a nod to Descartes’ *Meditations*. Again we encounter the solitary thinker sitting in his study, on a particular day, in a particular season of the year (it was winter in Descartes’ case, it seems to be summer in Husserl’s). A photograph of Husserl in his study at Göttingen, where he was teaching when he wrote Part Two of *Ideas*, lets us look in on the scene of observation as Husserl describes it in words. (See Figure 1.3.) “I am conscious of a world endlessly spread out in space and having endlessly become in time,” Husserl begins.

I can let my attention wander away from the writing table which was just now seen and noticed, out through the unseen parts of the room which are behind my back, to the verandah, into the garden, to the children in the arbor, etc., to all the Objects I directly “know of” as being there and here in the surroundings of which there is also consciousness—a “knowing of them” which involves no conceptual thinking and which changes into a clear intuiting with the advertence of attention, and even then only partially and for the most part very imperfectly. (Part Two, §27, in Husserl 1982: 51–2)

What Husserl attempts here is a step-by-step framing of experience that begins with himself as a first-person observer and moves outward by degrees into the ambient world. Where Descartes looks inward, Husserl looks outward. And he does so by *degrees*: where Bacon surrounds himself with curiosities, where Descartes posits a geometrically plotted distance between himself and objects out in the world, Husserl recognizes a continuum in which the first-person observer is implicated in the many objects around him and—this is the key consideration—the objects are implicated in the observer. The objects exist in an infinite “horizon of indeterminate actuality” that surrounds the observer like a halo, like a mist (52). The ambient world, Husserl says, “is continually ‘on hand’ [*vorhanden*]



Figure 1.3 Edmund Husserl as the center of thought in his study at Göttingen (glass plate photograph, before 1916).

for me, and I myself am a member of it" (53, with original German from Husserl 1950: 58). As the observer casts attention on certain objects, in a particular moment, within a particular space, those objects move out of indeterminacy into presence, but they remain imbedded in the ambient world. They cannot be abstracted from that world and plotted on a graph any more than the observer himself can. The ambient world is, in Husserl's precise terms, "the world in which I find *myself*" (53).

By turning attention to this or that aspect, Husserl *frames* the ambient world. "Bracketing," "reduction," "putting in parentheses," and "*epochē*" (suspending judgment) are other terms Husserl uses for this act of attention-giving. In such acts of framing, all axioms, presuppositions, theories, and hypotheses are set aside. Instead, the observer attends to objects as they present themselves to him and, no less important, he attends to himself as he is present to objects. The stance is neither objective nor subjective but something in between. The result, in epistemological terms, is very close to "As it likes me." For phenomenologists, knowledge does not exist apart from the knower and the circumstances of coming-to-know.

As Husserl is careful to point out, the thing being attended to does not have to be a physical object. Take "the world of numbers." While he is occupied thinking about "pure numbers and their laws," Husserl observes, certain numbers and certain laws will come in and out of focus within a "partly determinate, partly indeterminate arithmetical horizon" (54). But the world of numbers can be dismissed; the "*natural* world ... the world in the usual sense of the word," cannot (54, emphasis original). The world "at hand," the world of things and people, is always present in its teeming plenitude. It is the always-present ground out of which figures emerge, the ground against which figures come to be known. In Husserl's mind (and in the minds of Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and later phenomenologists) the natural world presents itself in the here-and-now. The observer can change his stance in time, just as he can in space, turning his attention backwards or forwards in time, but the time of knowing is always *now*. For all its insistent first-personhood, phenomenology as practiced in the twentieth century was essentializing in its claims about human perception

and indifferent to cultural differences. (And indifferent to gender: the observer in these first-person writers is always a *he*.)

Husserl in *Ideas* assumes that the world at hand is present to other people in that world in the same way it is to him. He does, however, allow for individual differences in the way that the world at hand affects consciousness:

Each has his place from which he sees the physical things present; and, accordingly, each has different physical-thing appearances. Also, for each the fields of actual perception, actual memory, etc., are different, leaving aside the fact that intersubjectively common objects of consciousness in those fields are attended to as having different modes, different manners of apprehension, different degrees of clarity, and so forth. (Husserl 1982: 55–6)

Husserl imagines an infinite world of possibilities, but he imagines that the phenomenological observer and his fellow observers occupy a “here” that is also a *now*.

What if we make allowances for people who share bodies and minds like ours but, who through an accident of time, do not happen to be physically present in the world about us? What about THWS and his original readers and audiences? Can we make any claim to share an “intersubjectivity” with them? The dominant way of going about academic business for the past 30 years provides a quick and definite answer: no. New historicism insists on the radical differentness of the early modern past, with its physical, public modes of punishment, its one-sex model of human reproductive organs, its fusion of heresy, treason, and sodomy, its belief in magic and witches. Lacanian psychoanalytical theory maintains that there is nothing natural about personal identity, that it is scripted by language, and that language in turn is scripted by culture. We speak a different cultural language; therefore we know a different cultural reality. Deconstruction would counter that all acts of meaning-making, including any attempt to reconstruct consciousness in the historical past, can happen only through difference-marking and that even the consciousness that seemed to be so present for Husserl is a function of language, an

illusion made out of words. What common ground could there possibly be for “intersubjectivity”?

:

Now for the Retort Courteous. To new historicism, with its objectification and estrangement of the past, a counter argument is ready at hand in Jean François Lyotard’s *Phenomenology* (1986, English translation 1991). Husserl in *Ideas* is keenly consciously of a past and a future that converge in the present: “This world, on hand for me now and manifestly in every waking Now, has its two-sidedly infinite temporal horizon, its known and unknown, immediately living and lifeless past and future” (52). Lyotard applies this observation to history. Objects of historical inquiry, Lyotard argues, are never really objects: a continuum of time connects the analyst with what she or he analyzes. As the analyst moves along the continuum, so too do the objects of analysis. Objects, no less than the analyst, are always in a process of becoming: “Just as we cannot assign some definitive meaning to a subjectivity, since this subjectivity is cast forward toward a future whose open possibilities will define it further, so the full meaning (the direction) of a historical situation is not assignable once and for all” (Lyotard 1991: 121). Past and future converge in the only practicable reference point along the continuum: now. We and THWS may not share a place, but we do share a time. If Lyotard is right (and I think he is), the main problem for “intersubjectivity” is not time but place.

One advantage of Lacan’s psychoanalytical theory—an advantage for English professors if not for patients in psychotherapy—is the power Lacan accords to language. Personal identity, as Lacan understands it, is made out of language. During the first five or so years of life every speaking human being is inducted into what Lacan calls the Symbolic Order and, with that, into ways of being in the world that language dictates. My “I,” seemingly so *there* when I speak, is actually the repository of everything that has been said to me and everything that I have heard others say. Lacan has in mind Language-with-a-capital-L, but culturally minded thinkers have seized on the corollary that different languages—or even the same language spoken

at different times in history—dictate different ways of being in the world. Plausible enough. On the other hand, every speaking human starts with the same equipment for seeing and speaking: a body. And not just with a physical body but with an *image* of a body, and not just with the image of a body but with the image of *my* body, as I discover its separateness in the mirror of experience during the first 24 months of life. What the inert mass point is to physics, Lacan says, the *imago* is to psychology (Lacan 2006: 153). In Lacan's scheme of psychic development, perception through and *of* one's own body comes before speech.

The imposition of language creates—and this is Lacan's key observation—an existential dissatisfaction, a sense of alienation from the wholeness of being that each human speaker knew before Language. Works of art, Lacan claims, fascinate us precisely because they address and temporarily redress those dissatisfactions. Like Wordsworth's "intimations of immortality," certain moments in works of art give us access—tantalizing, all too brief access—to what Lacan calls, perversely perhaps, "the Real."² Rosalind and Celia's entry into the last scene of *As You Like It*, escorted by the god of marriage, shapes up as one such moment. "Then is there mirth in heaven," Hymen sings, "When earthly things made even/ Atone together" (5.1.106–8). "Atone," literally to-be-at-one, is the word that makes this momentary transcendence possible. And so does the fact of singing. Melody, rhythm, tone, the expression of air from the lungs into ambient space: these qualities are present in speech, but in music they overwhelm the more usual, more mundane *naming* functions of speech. The gap between *imago* and language in Lacan's scheme opens up, it seems to me, a space for phenomenology, for knowing-through-the-body that has a fraught, perhaps tragic relationship to knowing-through-language.

With respect to THWS and his original readers and audiences, the language in question may be early modern English, a language both

² Whether Lacan is reading Wordsworth or Wordsworth is reading Lacan is a nice question: "Shades of the prison-house begin to close/ Upon the growing boy,/ But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,/ He sees it in his joy" ("Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," ll. 69–72, in Wordsworth 1982: 353).

like and unlike the contemporary English we speak in, think in, feel in, live in; but if Lacan is right, the existential situation we face *vis-à-vis* knowing-through-the-body versus knowing-through-language is the same as THWS and his contemporaries faced. “Intersubjectivity” does not require an impossible journey in some sort of time/space-ship, but that we master a language we partly know already, early modern English. Hence the frequent recourse in this book to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. As for the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *imago*, we can come to know something about that through careful attention to visual images, to *ekphrasis* or picture-painting in poetry, to performance practices in the theater. We can insist on the body, even when the evidence at hand is not visual but linguistic. With its focus on the nexus between body and language, historical phenomenology may offer a glimpse into Lacan’s “Real” in the same way that works of art do.

Deconstruction would seem to present a far more serious challenge to historical phenomenology and the possibility of “intersubjectivity” between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century readers and writers and their twenty-first-century counterparts. Derrida’s entire critical project, after all, is an attack on *presence*, on Husserl’s sense of the world as being present to him and himself as being present to the world in acts of framing. It was with Husserl, in fact, that Derrida began his life-long project, first with a translation of Husserl’s *Origin of Geometry*, complete with a long critical introduction, and then with a critique of Husserl’s “pure phenomenology” in *Speech and Phenomena*.³ Geometry may seem an odd place to begin, but Husserl’s interest in how geometry could be produced as an abstract closed system of thought, set apart from everyday experience, gave Derrida an opportunity to scrutinize Husserl’s in-control self-present thinker. We have noticed already how Husserl claims to be able to move in and out of “the world of numbers” at will. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*: for Derrida it is the “pure” that presents the problem. A *sense* of presence there

³ An accessible introduction to the development of Derrida’s writing out his critique of Husserl is provided by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her “Translator’s Preface” to Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Derrida 1997: ix–xc).

may be, Derrida concedes, but that sense can never be direct and unmediated. It is a function of the marking of difference that Derrida, following Saussure, finds in all acts of meaning-making. Far from being “pure,” Derrida says in a rare moment of italicized directness, “*Phenomenological reduction is a scene, a theater stage*” (Derrida 1973: 86, emphasis original). With that *aperçu* I take Derrida to be referring to the secondhand status of the impressions that Husserl regards as just *being there*, “at hand.” About those impressions, Derrida insists, there is nothing “natural” at all. What gets framed in Husserl’s acts of *epochē*, according to Derrida, is an illusion, the elements of which—visual images as well as words—are not natural givens—things out there in the world—but man-made fabrications. To mark things off for attention you need a marker. And that marker, according to Derrida, is language.

In effect, Derrida doesn’t destroy Husserl’s phenomenology; he pushes it to its logical conclusions. In doing so, he opens up the possibility for a specifically *historical* phenomenology. Metaphysical presence, absolute knowledge: that may have been Husserl’s goal, but it does not have to be ours. We can accept that knowing-in-place-in-time is like a theatrical scene. We can accept the speeches and the props in that scene as artifacts, not natural givens. We can accept the fact that presence is an illusion made with those speeches and props. But we can still be interested in the illusion of presence, and we can be interested in it in historical, culturally specific ways. We can take stock of the speeches and the props in just the way that Philip Henslowe inventoried the Lord Admiral’s Men’s props, costumes, and playbooks in 1598 or so (Foakes 2002: 316–25). Our relationship to the scene of knowing does not, in the first instance, put *us* at the center but THWS or the boy actor who played Rosalind in 1599 or the citizen’s wife and her maid sitting in the third gallery at the Globe. We can insinuate ourselves into the scene-of-knowing, but we can never be at the center. The photograph of Husserl sitting at his desk in Figure 1.3, for example, may invite us as viewers to assume Husserl’s subject position, especially when the photograph is placed alongside Husserl’s first-person verbal description of his study in §27 of *Ideas*, Part Two. But we find ourselves, inescapably, behind Husserl’s back.

We may be part of an intersubjective “field of perception” (Husserl 1982: 51), but we can never be at its center. Husserl, after all, is looking the other way. He doesn’t even know we are there. And he is dead. Those considerations should not stop us, however, from projecting ourselves into the historically reconstructed field of perception as far as we are able. If Lyotard gives us permission to do so with respect to time (history is not *then* but *now*), Derrida does so with respect to place (the scene of knowing is *not-here*). Lacan, with his focus on the *imago*, encourages us to include the perception of one’s own body as the precursor of speech.



Let us return to the epilogue of *As You Like It* and its playful ways with *I*, *he/she/he*, *you*, *they*, and *it*. Which of the three primal scenes of observation is most accommodating to the play of *like*? Certainly not Descartes’, in which the thinking *I* is positioned in a precisely calibrated distance from the thought-about *it*, so that *it* is made to appear as clear and distinct as possible. Husserl’s scene seems wide open when an actual performance is at hand. Bracketing the moment when the actor begins “It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue” turns attention toward bodies, space, time, and sound, toward the physical relationship between audience and actor, toward the costume, posture, gestures, and tricks of voice that create and uncreate the fiction, toward the *feeling* of what is happening. When the object at hand is not a performance but a printed text of *As You Like It*, the picture gets more complicated. Texts, after all, are not objects out there in the world like Husserl’s desk or the objects behind his back in the room or the sounds of his children playing in the arbor. Texts are *representations* of such objects, and they come to us, albeit in the present, with a history. We need a strategy for moving from things-present to things-absent, from now to then, from particulars to a more general understanding. Bacon’s scene of observation gives us what we need.

Historical phenomenology involves an understanding of “experience” that is closer to Bacon’s than to Husserl’s. For THWS and his contemporaries, “experience” was off-text, and it involved *doing*

something rather than just *reading* about it. When Jaques in *As You Like It* tells “Ganymede” that he would like to become better acquainted, his interlocutor is dubious. They say you’re melancholy, he/she/he retorts, and melancholics come in for more criticism than drunkards. Ah, but *my* melancholy is not like the scholar’s, the musician’s, the courtier’s, the soldier’s, the lawyer’s, or the lady’s.

JAQUES ... it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels [trauells], in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.

ROSALIND A traveller [Traueller]! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad. I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men’s. Then to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

JAQUES Yes, I have gained my experience.

ROSALIND And your experience makes you sad. I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad—and to travel [trauile] for it too!

(4.1.15–27, with original spelling from Shakespeare 1968: 218)

The oppositions Rosalind sets up here are six: traveling versus staying put, other lands versus my lands, eyes versus hands, experience versus foolery, sad versus merry, and travail versus repose. Bacon’s essay “Of Studies” (1597), published two years before *As You Like It* was first acted, adds the more usual opposition of doing versus reading: books “perfect nature, and are perfected by experience” (Bacon 1987: 153).

Be that as it may, Rosalind’s prejudice against experience was not uncommon. Her sentiments (and her word play on “travel” and “travail”) are echoed by William Cornwallis in his essay “Of Censuring”: “Experience doth much, but it is too full of scars and wounds, and is brought with gray hairs, and danger: when the other hath no less that hath travailed but in his study” (Cornwallis 1600: sig. H2v). Not a surprising sentiment from someone whose *Essays*, although inspired by Montaigne’s (French editions 1580, 1588, and 1595, English translation 1603), read more like a commonplace book of *sententiae* worthy of Polonius. Montaigne’s own essay “Of Experience” is much closer

to the oldest (now obsolete) sense of the word “experience” as putting something (an object, a person, an idea) to the test (*OED* 1989: “experience,” *n.*, †1). “There is no desire more natural, than that of knowledge,” Montaigne begins the essay. “We attempt all means that may bring us unto it. When reason fails us, we employ experience” (3.13 in Montaigne 1613: sig. GGG6). Proceeding in his typical wide-ranging way, Montaigne puts this aphorism to the test, first by calling to mind a remembered testimonial from one of his favorite writers (in this case Martial in epigram 1.46: “By diverse proofs experience art hath bred,/ Whilst one by one the way examples led”), then by considering that experience, like reason, comes in many “shapes” (“Reason hath many shapes, that we know not which to take hold of. Experience hath as many”), then by using eggs’ resemblance to one another to anticipate Derrida’s difference-marking (“Dissimilitude doth of itself insinuate itself into our works, no art can come near unto similitude”), and so on for another 27,000 words in John Florio’s English translation. Lots of words; lots of experience. It is from trials like Montaigne’s that the more usual sense of “experience” today—knowing something in a subjective way (4.a)—derives. Montaigne proceeds by a kind of back-and-forth motion, touching now on what Socrates, Cicero, Aristotle, or another authority may have said, now on his own firsthand experiences.

With respect to subjectivity, Bacon’s idea of experience, although governed by strict induction, is close to Montaigne’s. The one thousand “experiments” in Bacon’s how-to-do-it manual *Silva Silvarum* are presented as instructions—recipes, really—for how to put this or that observation to the test. The observation in each case isn’t really a hypothesis, as it would be in a modern scientific experiment, but a “what if?” situation. The reason you should do the experiment is to try it out for yourself—in effect, to *experience* the experiment firsthand. Experiment number 363 is typical:

Take a bladder, the greatest you can get; fill it full of wind, and tie it about the neck with a silk thread waxed; and upon that put likewise wax very close; so that when the neck of the bladder drieth, no air may possibly get in, nor out. Then bury it three or four foot under the earth,

in a vault, or in a conservatory of snow, the snow being made hollow about the bladder; and after some fortnight's distance, see whether the bladder be shrunk: for if it be, then it is plain, that the coldness of the earth, or snow, hath condensed the air, and brought it a degree nearer to water: which is an experiment of great consequence. (sig. N4)

Among Bacon's experiments having to do with perception, the one about the acquisition of speech, discussed above, presents the personal connection in even more intimate terms. For Bacon, experience doesn't come naturally, any more than it does for Husserl. Experience requires a plan. You don't just open yourself up to experience and then have it; you've got to *seek* experience, set up parameters, and try out possibilities within those parameters.

For experiments in historical phenomenology we can work within three basic paradigms. Each of the three involves a psychological subject set within what Husserl calls "the world at hand." The physical dimensions, temporal reach, and content of these worlds at hand will vary, of course, according to the main variable, the psychological subject, to wit:

- author ↔ world-at-hand (phenomenology of transcription)
- characters ↔ world-at-hand (phenomenology of representation)
- reader/sensor ↔ world-at-hand (phenomenology of reception).

Versions of all three of these paradigms have been tried out already. Caroline Spurgeon's once famous book *Shakespeare's Imagery, and What It Tells Us* (1935) may offer no direct acknowledgment of phenomenology as a philosophical movement, but it exemplifies the first paradigm by situating WSA within a phenomenal world of the sort that Husserl, Heidegger, and their disciples understood. Thus, a tabulation of all the images in CWWS indicates that THWS not only loved gardening but "was deft and nimble with his hands, and loved using them, particularly in the carpenter's craft, and, contrary to our ideas of most poets, he was probably a practical, neat and handy man about the house" (Spurgeon 1935: 205). (By contrast, Francis Bacon's images suggest a mind attuned to "everything touching the house and daily

life indoors, such as light and fire, furnishings, hangings, textiles, needlework, clothes, jewels, marriage, birth, death, parents, children and human relations generally" [16].) Old questions about whether THWS ever traveled to Italy or other places (see, for example, Lambin 1962 and Praz 1963)—questions that belong to the author ↔ world paradigm—have morphed in studies like Michele Marrapodi's *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (2007) into more sophisticated questions within the characters ↔ world paradigm as mediated by texts. Spurgeon may have been a proto-phenomenologist, but she was interested only in the author ↔ world paradigm.

To the third paradigm belong reader-response criticism as practiced by Wolfgang Iser, David Bleich, and others in the 1970s and more recent studies of early modern reading practices like Katharine A. Craik's *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (2007) and the essays collected in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Raven, Small, and Tadmor 1996). In Iser's and Bleich's analyses, the printed book with its words and conceptual gaps in effect becomes the world-at-hand in its totality. Present in a more tentative, less conclusive way is the world-at-hand that the reader creates out of those printed codes. Among these flirtations with phenomenology, only reader-response criticism has investigated the *process* of coming-to-know, and except for Craik only in cognitive terms. Touch, the feel of the book in the hand, is beyond notice in these studies, as are any other bodily sensations that might contribute to the reality-effect created through reading. In comparison with reading, the phenomenology of theatrical performance has been much better served in books like Bert O. States's *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms* (1987) and *Hamlet and the Concept of Character* (1992) and Alice Rayner's *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre* (2006). Perhaps that is so because in theater the world-at-hand is palpably present: the reader becomes a sensor and the text becomes the bodies, actions, and speeches of other people, all of them sharers along with the sensor of the same intersubjective field.

The three core chapters in *Phenomenal Shakespeare* are offered as examples of how to *do* historical phenomenology, mostly within the second paradigm (characters ↔ world) and the third (sensor ↔ world)

but with a glance or two into the first (author $\leftrightarrow$ world). Within each paradigm the way of proceeding is the same. First you choose an *it*, an object of study, something as large as “the experience of reading in early modern England” or something mid-range like Francis Meres’s reference to “Shakespeare’s sugared sonnets among his private friends” (Ingleby, Toulmin Smith, and Furnivall 1909: 1:46) or something as specific as the couplet to sonnet 23: “O learn to read what silent love hath writ;/ To hear with eyes belongs to love’s fine wit” (23.13–14). Then, like Husserl in his study, you should ground yourself with respect to the sensations represented in the object of study or implied by it. In the case of sonnet 23, that act of grounding would turn attention to the relationship among reading, seeing, and hearing—the relationship for *you*. Do you only see when you read? Do you hear? How do you coordinate seeing with hearing? How do you coordinate seeing and hearing with reading? Reading with remembering? And what about the “love” that is doing the writing—how might that influence the reading? Just what does it mean to *read* with love? Or write out sonnet 23 in your own hand, perhaps even hand what you have written to a friend. How does that act of manuscript transmission change your experience of the words? You might think of these meditations as warm-up exercises or, as one my students, Elizabeth Wilcox, likes to call it, “grooming,” looking in the mirror before you open the door—or the book.

Next comes the framing, the bracketing, the putting-in-parentheses, and that requires first of all a clear sense of the paradigm within which you are working. Who is the psychological subject? With respect to sonnet 23, is it THWS? WSA? The “private friends” in Meres’s remark? A contemporary purchaser of the 1609 quarto of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets. Never before Imprinted*? You as the reader of an edited text here and now? You as a replicator of the manuscript transmission implied by Meres? Whichever the paradigm, whoever the psychological subject may be, the next step is to take stock of the world at hand. In the cases of the first two paradigms, author $\leftrightarrow$ world and characters $\leftrightarrow$ world, that will involve a project of historical reconstruction. The evidence will be the same sorts of materials used in new historicism: polemical writings as well as literary texts, material

things as well as verbal and visual representations of things, diaries and letters as well as published books, medical treatises as well as blazons of beauty, conduct books as well as play plots, court cases as well as fictions. No less important than books and things is an examination of the words that are used to designate the experience at hand. Again and again I find myself turning to the *Oxford English Dictionary* with its etymologies and obsolete meanings, not in an attempt to give meanings a historical fixity but to put back in motion all possible meanings of the word at hand. The very word “experience”—where it comes from, the various things it meant in 1600—should prompt us to stop short when we reach for that word so casually.

Peculiarly important to historical phenomenology are the stories that THWS and his contemporaries told themselves about perception, about what was happening in their bodies and brains when they looked, listened, read, and loved. From Aristotle’s treatise “On the Soul” and its successors and from Galen’s medical treatises the original consumers of CWS inherited accounts of perception that involved the entire body, not just the brain. Central to such accounts was the very synesthesia described in the couplet to sonnet 23: “to hear with eyes.” No less prominent was the word “wit,” which served as a place-holder for what would later be called “mind,” “psyche,” and “consciousness.” The qualifications in “love’s fine wit”—both the “love” and the “fine”—become more than figures of speech in a physio-psychology that located the central processor in the heart, not the head.

“Psychology” as an early modern invention and the key ideas of that psychology have been usefully digested and summarized by Katherine Park (1988a, 1988b). Thomas Wright’s summary in *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1604) is as handy as any. “Three sorts of actions proceed from men’s souls,” Wright explains, “some are internal and immaterial, as the acts of our wits and wills; others be mere external and material, as the acts of our senses, seeing, hearing, moving, etc.[:] others stand betwixt these two extremes, and border upon them both” (Wright 1971: sig. B4). External movements, starting with the eyes or the ears or the skin’s surface, reach the brain via internal movements of an aerated fluid called *pneuma*, *spiritus*, or (Wright’s preference) “purer spirits” that courses through the veins

(remember this was before William Harvey had demonstrated the pumping of blood through the veins by the heart) or, as the latest anatomical studies were suggesting, through nerve filaments or “sinews.” The motions continue in the brain, where sensations of sight, hearing, touching, etc. are fused by “the common sense” into kinesi-
thetic “images” in the imagination and are further shaped by memory into *phantasmata* or “fancies,” which travel via *spiritus* to the heart, which determines the entire body’s reaction—including the brain’s. Once arrived at the heart, the fancies “pitch at the door” and signify the object that has been sensed externally. “The heart immediately bendeth, either to prosecute it, or to eschew it: and the better to effect that affection, draweth other humors to help him” (sig. D7). These “humors” are the body’s four basic fluids: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm, each of which is seated in a different organ and causes the body to react in a certain way, desiringly in the case of blood, angrily in the case of yellow bile, sadly in the case of black bile, and sluggishly in the case of phlegm—or in some combination thereof. These *liquid* humors produce the *psychological* humors that we still recognize today, even though we would assign different names to the chemicals involved—serotonin, for example—if not to the felt result. A psychological subject experiences the rush of the liquid humors as a “passion” of one sort or another. It was only after the heart had added passion and the entire body had reacted accordingly that fancies were sent (via the spirits) back to the brain for judgment by the wit and actions by the will. Curiously, after all those sensations, waves, boilings, and coolings, Wright imagines operations of wit and will to be “internal and immaterial.” Otherwise, the whole process is thoroughly corporeal: for THWS and his contemporaries, coming-to-know may have started as something external and material and ended as something internal and immaterial, but in between was something that partook of both. It was Descartes’ maverick move, 40 years later, to try to eliminate that something in between. Investigations of pre-Cartesian psychology within the characters ↔ world paradigm have been provided by Michael Schoenfeldt (1999), Gail Kern Paster (2004), the essayists collected in Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan (2007), and others.

It is within the third paradigm, reader/sensor $\leftrightarrow$ world, that historical phenomenology comes into its own. For the phenomenology of reception, three temporal framings are possible: one limited to the historical moment in which the work in question was created and received, one trained on the analyst's own moment, and one opening the present into the past. If Lyotard is right, only the third is actually, practically possible. Past and present exist not as separate compartments but as relative points along a continuum that THWS and we (that's you and I) all occupy. Historical phenomenology embraces the openness of Lyotard's proposition. One happy result is the chance to combine early modern stories of perception (the synesthesia of looking, hearing, and reading in "wit") with the most recent cognitive research (the similar pattern of neural firings in discriminations among visual and aural stimuli, a state of flow that Michael Spivey [2007] calls "the continuity of mind"). As we have observed with respect to Husserl's scene of observation, it is perfectly possible for a twenty-first-century observer, equipped with cognitive theory, to insinuate herself into the intersubjective field of THWS's private friends, as long as the observer recognizes that she is an intruder. Potentially at least, the encounter can end in a critique of the observer's own period-bound assumptions.

You can't know anything apart from the way in which you come to know it: we can take the fundamental principle of phenomenology as practiced by Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty and apply it to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century evidence available to us in the form of plays, poems, narratives, non-fictional writings, paintings, tapestries, embroideries, building designs, travelers' accounts, diaries, commonplace books, court records—indeed whatever evidence comes to hand. In the last analysis, however, the attention turns back on *us*. An historical phenomenology must inevitably be a *present* phenomenology, but not a *presentist* phenomenology if that means willfully turning one's back on the past. Among the traditional humanities subjects—classics, philosophy, history, literature—it would seem that history would have the best claim to objectivity. After all, the materials of history—state papers, wills, military records, census figures, maps—are *there*, ready to be seen and handled. Depending on where

As It Likes You

you live, you may be confronted on a daily basis with the material evidence of history in the form of buildings that still stand, sometimes after hundreds of years. In the case of documents as well as buildings, we *inhabit* the evidence. It is the shadow of the present cast back into the past as well as the analyst's orientation toward the future that makes it possible for historical phenomenology to stay rooted in the concerns, political commitments, and cognitive research of the present at the same time that it tries to make sense of the past, in the past's own terms.