Excerpt: from "Appropriating *Apotomos*: Using the Enthymeme to Teach Introductory Fiction and Nonfiction Writing." Unpublished dissertation. The U of Alaska Fairbanks, 2010.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE ENTHYMEME IN LITERATURE

As Eric Mason (2007) has noted, little information exists regarding the use of the enthymeme in literature: "If the enthymeme's status as a pedagogical method is small, it's [sic] acknowledged usage as a literary technique is microscopic" (72). He suggests that the only discussion of any length about the subject is that centering on James Joyce's "Aoelous Chapter" in *Ulysses*. However, at least two other discussions appear in professional literature: Robert Einarsson's "Narrative Credibility in Rhetoric and Literature: The Case of Jane Austen," and Wolfgang Müller's "Syllogism and Enthymeme in Shakespeare" (1999). Geoffrey G. Forward's quasi-related "What 'Maior' is Falstaff Denying?" (1990) also has relevance to this dissertation's thesis, though less directly than the Einarsson and Müller articles.

For this dissertation's purposes, the only noteworthy point regarding Joyce's use of the enthymeme is that Mason shows that Joyce used two types of enthymemes – one in formal oration and one that presupposes the Sophistic view of the enthymeme as an event. In *Ulysses*, those enthymemes occur, respectively, in the scene in which Bloom attempts to get Mr. Hynes, a reporter, to repay a loan, and in Joyce's version of John F. Taylor's oration about the need to revive the Irish language. Mason agrees with Wayne Tompkins (1974) and with J. M. C. Hodgart (1974) that Stuart Gilbert's assumptions about Joyce's use of the enthymeme – based as those assumptions are on the idea that an enthymeme is an incomplete syllogism – are inaccurate and incomplete.

Whether Joyce was aware that he was relying on enthymemes is unclear, but Shakespeare certainly was aware of the difference between the enthymeme and the syllogism and used those differences. Scholars such as Hardin Craig (1929), Thomas Baldwin (1944), Sr. Miriam Joseph (1947), and Terence Hawkes (1964) have pointed out that Elizabethan dramatists often relied on logic in their plays, perhaps as an indirect result of their schooling. Wolfgang Müller has shown that Shakespeare often poked fun at the inadequacy of the syllogism and relied on the enthymeme for succinctly summarizing many of his most serious characterological portrayals, even though by his schooling he would have been told that the enthymeme (if it were discussed at all) is a subset of logic and therefore its ugly stepchild.

Müller contends that Shakespeare was steeped enough in logic to know its limitations and often to poke fun at them, especially by having comic figures derive implausible but valid conclusions, as in *Comedy of Errors* (1975), when a servant warns his master that consorting with a courtesan is dangerous because light wenches "appear to men like angels of light; light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn: ergo, light wenches will burn. Come not near her" (IV 3.53-55). The piece functions on a variety of levels. It is syllogistic, for given its premise, it is valid – and enthymematic, since the audience fills in the "missing premise" that the servant has some knowledge of the Bible.[1] What might not be immediately recognizable is that it also creates veracity, for the audience would be aware that people with even a small amount of education at the time were exposed to syllogisms. Shakespeare therefore cannot be accused of giving the servant knowledge that he would not likely possess. As Baldwin has noted, the logic taught in Elizabethan schools, based as it was on the rhetorical systems of Ramus and Talaeus, was so prevalent that "euery cobbler can cogge a syllogisme, euery carter cracke of propositions" (58), was simplified and decontextualized. The servant's use of *ergo* is a case in point. Müller points out that the servant seems to feel that using logic's transition will make his argument more effective by making it more formal, a foil similar to what happens in *Two Gentleman of Verona* (1975) when a servant tries to use the syllogism to "prove" he is not a sheep, an absurd but mixing of language and reality.

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[1] The allusion is to *Second Corinthians.*

It is important to note that Shakespeare was not poking fun at the undereducated but rather at the logic system that had produced such thinking. That his intent was to have the audience laugh more at the logic than at his characters also is clear from *Hamlet* (1975). Therein, one of the gravediggers, contemplating Ophelia's suicide, says that "For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches – it is to act, to do, to perform; argal, she drowned herself wittingly" (V.1.9-13). Like the servant in *Comedy of Errors,* the gravedigger relies on a formal transition – *argal*. This one, rather than being a fool's mispronunciation of *ergo,* is based on equivocation, what Müller calls "logic-chopping," and is almost certainly a reference to the Elizabethan logician, Thomas Argall (Baldwin 1928), a reference that adds a brief albeit circumspect sense of veracity.

The distinction between syllogisms and enthymemes in Shakespeare is not just one of form but more often than not between validity and verisimilitude. The syllogism provides a comic effect but does little to further the play or to create characterization except of the most facile. By contrast, verisimilitude furthers plot and characterization by creating a bond between the play's reality and that of the real world. Consider, for instance, the syllogisms of the servant and the gravedigger in contrast to the enthymeme of the fool in *Twelfth Night,* wherein the court jester, turning society's tables on his mistress, shows true depth of character (in the very real sense) by using an enthymeme to chastise Olivia for excessive mourning over her brother's death. His entreaty impels participation by an audience that consists not just of playgoers on laughing at him but rather a "real" audience in the form of his mistress, Olivia, and of playgoers impelled to participate within the dialogue instead of sitting safely outside it, looking in. Shakespeare seems acutely aware of those audience positions, for much of the subsequent plot hinges on Olivia's realization that she, and not the servant, is the real fool. As she fills in the requisite information and underlying logic, so do the playgoers, a response that is both intellectual and emotional, a melding of logos (the discourse), ethos (the jester's ability as a rhetor), and pathos (Olivia's knowledge and emotional makeup, plus the viewers' own similar responses):

> Clown: Good madonna, why mournst thou so?
>
> Olivia: Good fool, for my brother's death.
>
> Clown: I think his soul is in hell, madonna.
>
> Olivia: I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
>
> Clown: The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul, being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen. (I.5.63-70).

Understanding the difference between the syllogism and the enthymeme involves understanding differences between validity, veracity, and verisimilitude, concepts that impact literature but that are often and erroneously used interchangeably, including in literary analysis. The three impact plausibility, the completeness of which, Fisher (1987) argues, determines the depth to which audiences participate intersubjectively, which involves the beliefs, convictions, and life experiences the audience brings to the literary work. The degree to which this intersubjective response occurs, it can therefore be posited, likewise determines the degree to which the literary work creates catharsis. The result, in terms of music, is the difference to which the singer sings a song and the degree to which the singer becomes the song, a transformation that enables the listener to live in the music through the artist. How successful the artist is results in a transformation the moment he or she steps onto the stage, for the act is as much anticipatory as participatory, like a great meal savored hours before dining. It is no accident that one of Shakespeare's most powerful enthymemes occurs at the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet,* formed by two couplets in the Prologue, which if condensed to a traditional enthymeme becomes *A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life in order to bury their parents' strife*:

> From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,
> A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life:
> Whose misadventured piteous overthrows,
> Doth with their death bury their parents' strife. (Prologue, 5-8)

Validity depends on the logic of a statement being true to itself. Arguing that those who are star-crossed often take their lives, and that Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed lovers results in a valid statement, but only if we accept the real-world audience conviction that being star-crossed can make one susceptible to suicide, a leap in logic that requires veracity to be completed. It involves a series of referents between the literary world and the real world. As Merachem Brinker points out in "Verisimilitude, Conventions, and Beliefs" (1983), all details in a literary work serve a function. This contention specifically argues against Roland Barthes' (1968) premise that not all details in a literary work move a story forward in terms of plot or character. Brinker reminds us that an audience participates in the literary act both forward and backward, the act of reading or viewing thus being as much evidentiary as entertaining. Though Brinker specifically refers to a reading rather than viewing experience, the effect is the same for both types of works, particularly since the two acts collapse upon each other with the works of Shakespeare, which today are read more than seen:

> The reader's impression that the objects represented in a work of literature are concrete and palpable is one that is established in the course of the reading process. Not all of the structures present in the tale and in what is being told are immediately present in each phase of the reading process. Therefore, the reader won't always be aware that specific details are "unnecessary" or "superfluous" . . . from an analytical standpoint . . . [until the reader] surveys the whole of the work at the end of the reading process. (262-263)

Validity syllogistically structures enthymemes in literature, and veracity renders them palpable to the readers or playgoers, but it is verisimilitude that holds the literary work together and makes it impact the reader's or viewer's entire world, like the teeth of a zipper being meshed during and after the literary experience. The enthymeme in the Prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* does not just encapsulate the play's central theme, it also gathers and imbues all of the Elizabethan era's prevailing storm over predestination, a notion central not only to the times' ongoing and often violent reactions to Calvinism but also to the basic differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. If the play were stopped at that point and the audience were asked to reflect upon the couplet they just heard, it might have taken their breath away; for the enthymeme is as much whirlpool as encapsulation: marrying a love story to the question of free will lay at the heart of the relationship between man and God, its onstage contemplation a risk only a master would consider undertaking. Because of that, one might argue that *Romeo and Juliet* marks the point at which a master playwright became a man for all ages. His works thereafter took on an anticipatory/participatory intersubjectivity that had hitherto been not been possible.

The Enthymeme as Tool for Teaching Critical Thinking in Literature

As this dissertation posits, a starting point for writing fiction involves identifying an intended work's main enthymeme, a pedagogy that appropriates Lawrence Green's theory that argumentation is a series of enthymemes that the overriding enthymeme both reflects and sets into motion. That great literature is essentially persuasive, as Wayne Booth contended in his masterwork, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1963), is cogent, a notion consistent with the fact that some of Shakespeare's most mind-spinning enthymemes occur at crux-points in his greatest works, since the importance of the human element in the shaping of argument is fundamental to the enthymeme, the result of which is the symbiotic shaping of the drama. Because the enthymeme ultimately is contingent upon cultural values, it follows that the more distant the action in question is from the cultural norms and assumed world information, the more the writer risks distancing the audience.

Sometimes that indirect relationship works to the artist's advantage. As Müller shows, in *Timon of Athens* (1975) the misanthropic philosopher Apemantus makes his distaste for everything involving human affairs abundantly clear by constantly using enthymemes that are so syllogistically logical as to be almost devoid of humanity. To assure that the enthymemes *work*, however, Shakespeare must be careful not to include information that might be foreign to his audience and that would not impel them to reach the conclusion he seeks. Shakespeare knows that most of his audience is familiar with the Ancient Athenian world and would not take Apemantus's conclusion at face value but rather an apodictic judgment that says at least as much about him as about the proposition. He may not question his "unassailable truth" that all Athenians are knaves, but the audience certainly would.

Timon: Why does’t thou call them knave, thou knowest them not?

Apemantus: Are they not Athenians?

Timon: Yes.

Apemantus: Then I repent not. (I, i).

Restructuring the dialogue as a syllogism results in the following:

Those men are knaves.	(Proposition)
Athenians are knaves.	(Major premise)
Those men are Athenians.	(Minor premise)
Therefore, those men are knaves.	(Conclusion) (181)

That a disillusioned Timon later adopts the same form of argument shows how bereft of humanity his soul has become: “Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men. Then, if though grant’st th’art a man, I have forgot thee” (IV.3.476-478). It speaks volumes about the man Timon has become and brings large parts of the play into summary.

Enthymemes whose inherent logic relies on universal truths to convey their logic, rather than on culturally contingent truth based solely on ethos-derived particulars, occur in several places in *Hamlet*, whose protagonist, Müller suggests, is “the most intelligent figure ever to be brought on the stage,” one who excels in both rhetoric and logic. In contrast to the sterile logic of Apemantus and the later Timon, Hamlet’s enthymemes are imbued with humanity and knowledge that Shakespeare’s audiences would accept as unassailable truth even though it is conditional upon cultural norms. For example, when Hamlet is about to journey to England, he bids farewell to his mother and not to the king. When Claudius admonishes the prince for not including him, Hamlet retorts, “Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh; so my mother” (IV.3.52-55). Hamlet, of course, is arguing that since man and wife are one flesh, he need only speak to one to be talking to both. But the enthymeme is ironic and, like the best of the Isocrates's identified enthymematic property of *apotomos*, encapsulates the narrative on a variety of levels. By excluding him from the statement, Hamlet denies Claudius the role of stepfather while simultaneously implying that he, Claudius, is not of one flesh with Hamlet's mother.

Toulmin's insistence that logic as traditionally understood does not effectively reflect real-world concerns also is borne out in Shakepeare's enthymemes, which as Müller points out are best when enthymemes involve logic whose structure is obscured: "[A] rule of thumb [is] that the effectiveness of the enthymeme is the greater in Shakespeare's plays the less its underlying logical structure is perceptible" (182). It would seem, then, that logic may be detrimental to effective drama, perhaps because by its nature logic attempts to keep pathos out of the mix. That is consistent with Aristotle's suggestion that if persuasion is truly to be successful it must be handled covertly instead of overtly. It follows that the enthymeme is superior to the syllogism, a persuasion that is contingency-based and therefore also culturally-biased, an example of which occurs in *Julius Caesar* (1975). As is appropriate to the enthymeme's encapsulating power, Shakespeare situated the enthymeme in a scene's climax, when Cassius attempts to persuade Brutus to take part in the conspiracy against Caesar:

> Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
> Where there is in it one only man. (I.2.134-135)

As Müller demonstrates, the argument, sans pathos, lays out as follows:

Rome is not Rome.	(Proposition)
Rome is room (for many people)	(Major)
Now there is room in Rome for only one man.	(Minor)
Rome is not Rome.	(Conclusion) (183)

Not only is the overt syllogistic form obscured, the cultural bias is so acute that most contemporary audiences would not make a connection that Shakespeare's audience would immediately recognize: for the power of this enthymeme rests on a homophonic pun, *room* being pronounced almost exactly like *Rome* in Elizabethan England.

Julius Caesar also is an excellent example of two other enthymematic qualities: the power of *apotomos*, and the latticework of enthymemes that underlies persuasion even in the form of drama. In what is arguably among the half-dozen greatest Shakespearean speeches, Mark Antony links a series of enthymemes to defend (himself and) the murdered Caesar's honor. Refuting Brutus' claim that Caesar was ambitious and thus wished to abolish the Republic, Mark Antony's speech climaxes with a series of causations (Why Statements) designed to prove that Caesar's ambition was not for personal gain:

> He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
> Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.
> When that the poor hath cried, Caesar hath wept;
> Ambition should be made of sterner stuff. . . .
> You did all see that on the Lupercal
> I thrice presented him a kingly crown.
> Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition? (III.3.87-101)

It is not necessary to elucidate each set of enthymemes. Once one realizes that enthymemes exist, their presence and power become obvious. What is important to our purposes is that the enthymeme at its best reflects Isocrates's insistence on its *apotomoic* quality. Divested of *apotomos*, Shakespeare's enthymemes become flaccid: Ambitious people are not friendly, faithful, or just; but Caesar was those things, and therefore Caesar was not ambitious. Likewise, ambitious generals do not fill public coffers, nor do they weep for the poor, but Caesar did those things, and therefore Caesar was not ambitious. Restating the latter as a *What because Why*, we have:

Caesar was not ambitious, because he filled public coffers and wept for the poor.

The above example shows that this dissertation's enthymematic approach can be used not only for teaching introductory fiction writing (as Chapter Sixteen discusses) but also that it is an efficient approach for teaching critical thinking through literature. For instance, rather than just having to memorize the speech, as is common, students can analyze the enthymeme with the Old/New formula and see that it is too vague for effective discourse. Caesar is one variable, his ambition the other, the resulting value of O + O seemingly at odds with the lines being so famous. Further discussion, however, should make it clear that Caesar and his ambition are so entwined that for most practical purposes there is only one variable.

By using the formula, and therefore by approaching the enthymeme one variable at a time, students quickly see that they need to focus, or funnel, one or both sides of the What Statement – the assertion. One result among a variety of possibilities could be: *Mark Antony's enthymematic assertion regarding Caesar's ambition is culturally contingent, because of the assumed knowledge of Elizabeth audiences about Rome and about royal power.*

If we express the more general variable as V1, the more specific as V2, and the reasons in the Why Statement as Ys, then the new enthymeme outlines a potentially superior essay:

Variable 1	Cultural contingency in enthymemes
Variable 2	Mark Antony's enthymematic assertion regarding Caesar's ambition.
Why (Y) 1	Elizabethan audiences' assumed knowledge of Rome
Why (Y) 2	Elizabethan audiences' assumed knowledge of royal power

Once students discuss a single instance of enthymematic reasoning in detail, they should be able to identify other examples of syllogistic versus enthymematic logic, an exercise certain to enhance critical thinking. It soon becomes clear that, whereas overt syllogisms in Shakespeare are almost invariably objects of derision either for themselves or for those expressing them, covert syllogisms occur throughout the plays and derive their power of persuasion from their enthymematic form.

Another such instance occurs in *1 Henry IV*, when Prince Hal says to Falstaff, "And thou a naturall Coward, without instinct" and Falstaff replies, "I deny your Maior." As Geoffrey G. Forward has argued (1990), the reference has perplexed readers because the syllogism is not explicit. Students with even moderate enthymematic training, however, would see that people may be looking at the reasoning in the wrong way.

Falstaff's *Maior* almost certainly refers to the major premise that would occur were we to state the exchange syllogistically:

Natural cowards are cowards without instinct.	(Major)
Falstaff is a natural coward.	(Minor)
Falstaff is a coward without instinct.	(Conclusion)

Forward probably is correct in his assertion that Shakespeare sets up the scene with almost legalistic clarity in order to make the syllogism as explicit as possible without detracting from the drama. First, he creates two contradictories, or opposing propositions, in order to develop the conflict. Falstaff bombastically portrays himself as a valiant warrior but with equal fervor denounces cowardice. Not only is this effective comedy, it resonates Isocratic, Aristotelian, and Quintilian argument from contradiction. The notion also is in keeping with Thomas Wilson's theory of "the repugnauncie of Propositions" (1560 qtd. by Forward), including contraries. When

Prince Hal accuses Falstaff of having run away, the latter, unable to refute the minor premise, acts the major one. Falstaff calls its universality into question by making it a particular by asserting that he is a coward *with* instinct.

As Forward points out, Prince Val is caught in a conundrum. There is no need here for a detailed discussion of the entire argument. Hardin Craig (1929), David Bevington (1988), and Forward posit that its structure *affects*, and is affected by, the rest of the play. Falstaff's "transcendent reputation in argument" (Forward, n.p.) enables him to maneuver Prince Hal's charges by attacking the prince so adroitly that Hal ends up in an "inescapable dilemma" (Forward) in which he cannot object to, much less refute, Falstaff's assertions without having becoming the butt of his own (i.e. Hal's) elaborate joke. He is reduced, like a man beaten at repartee, to reiterating his earlier charge that Falstaff is a coward. The syllogism, as Forward points out, becomes

All men who run are cowards.	(Major)
Falstaff ran.	(Minor)
Falstaff is a coward.	(Conclusion) (n.p.)

What Forward fails to examine is his own thesis. He assumes that an enthymeme is a truncated syllogism and therefore argues for a syllogistic formalism of the interchange between the two characters. In doing so, however, he overlooks the role of pathos. It is the audience, and not logic, that is the arbiter of who "wins" the argument, since in terms of simple logic the Hal-Falstaff donnybrook is an impasse. The audience members sees through Falstaff's bravado because Shakespeare, like any other master playwright, uses the audience as extra cast member much like a sports team relies on it fans.

Once students can identify, assess, and write about enthymemes, it may surprise them that a research paper that explores enthymematic literary reasoning easily becomes within their range. For example, the past decade the nontraditional students (ages 18 to late 40s) I teach during the school year, plus the seventeen year olds whom I teach during a summer preparatory, are pleasantly shocked to learn they can write research papers of 2000 to 2500 words on a single enthymeme that occurs near the end of *Romeo and Juliet*.

In Act IV, Scene iii, Lord Montague tells the Prince that “Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight./Grief of my son’s exile hath stopped her breath” (214-216). Because no readily obtainable information exists about the idea (and professors thus are unlikely to receive plagiarized papers on the subject) the Old/New formula produces these variables:

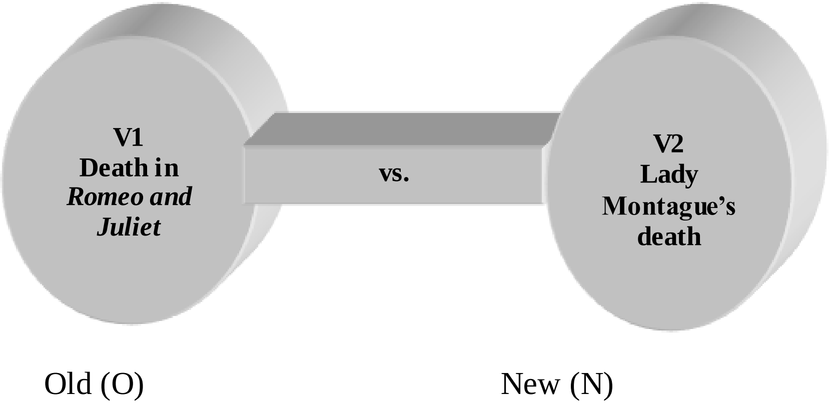

Figure 43: Lady Montague’s Enthymeme

The students begin by exploring the subject’s logic. They quickly realize that, though the enthymeme is syllogistically valid, it has little basis in reality, even that of the play. Even if a playgoer does not consult a map, it is clear that Mantua, where Romeo is exiled, is only a few miles from Verona – Balthazar, his servant, rides there in a matter of hours. The matriarch of a clan, Lady Montague could visit her son whenever she wishes, something that, human nature strongly suggests, she would do often, rather than die of grief.

Next, checking veracity, the students discover that melancholia (what we would call manic-depression) was an illness en vogue when the play was written. Levinus Lemnius (1576), Stephen Batman (1583), C. Dariot (1583), and Dr. Timothy Bright (1586) had published extremely popular treaties on the subject within a decade of when the play was written. Three decades later, Robert Burton (1621) would publish a major work that summarizes the illness and its hold on the era. Shakespeare almost certainly borrowed phrases from Bright's work for *Hamlet*, which several scholars agree is a study of melancholia (Scott 1969); and Sir William Cecil Burghley, acknowledged as the real-life person for Polonius, was Bright's closest friend. John W. Draper (1945) and Lawrence Babb (1951) argue that Shakespeare went to great lengths to fit *Romeo and Juliet* to cultural, meteorological, and astrological patterns that correspond with the particular imbalance of humors associated with the illness. It was a structural complexity, Draper insists, that the playwright would never again attempt.

Veracity, students are now aware, establishes referents between signifier and signified that create connection to the real world. The series of signifier/signified does not necessarily make up a cohesive whole, however. That is the role of verisimilitude, the sense of realism French critics call *vraisemblance,* a concept that (1) satisfies the reader's mind, one part of which is constantly looking for flaws within the work and for real-world inaccuracies, and (2) establishes a fictional world completely consistent with the real one. According to Jonathan Culler (1988), two attributes are necessary for verisimilitude. The first, realistic motivation, assumes that characters act in ways that are consistent with the parameters of how we readers would react in similar situations. This intersubjectivity of wondering why a character acts in a certain way in some aspect of a film or novel, Wallace Martin (1986) argues, in essence duplicates the writer's thinking in creating the story. In contrast to validity and to veracity, respectively the self-consistent infrastructure of the work in question and the array of signifiers and signified that connect the literary world to the real one, verisimilitude creates an emotional and external landscape that has a real-world "feel" regardless of how many signifiers the two worlds may have in common.

Culler's second attribute is completely in keeping with Brinker's and Roland Barthes's contentions of seemingly inconsequential details playing a major role in verisimilitude. Culler suggests that inessential details are those reportorial details that do not move the story forward but that seem "to derive directly from the structure of the world" (66). Rather than Lady Montague's death violating human nature, as is true if we assess the situation in terms of validity, verisimilitude makes sense of earlier information the audience learned about her. Her seeming strength when she stops her husband from brawling in the first Act may be a product of mania; not speaking up for Romeo, when he is on trial for his life for killing Tybalt, may be the result of depression. It is a depression that would have deepened when she learns of the impending Paris-Juliet marriage, likely to upset any détente in the hostilities, followed by Juliet's "death" the morning after the trial, a second Capulet death for which Romeo and probably the entire Montague clan are certain to be blamed. Like iron filings to a magnet, the enthymeme helps audiences effect a backwards reading; it also strongly hints at how Lady Montague died. Since Elizabethans believed that women are more prone to suicide than are men (Scott), and since Elizabethans knew that melancholia and suicide are correlated, it is likely that she took her own life, perhaps hoping to serve as scapegoat. Two Capulets have died, and Mercutio, a kinsman of the prince, is dead. No Montague has suffered a similar fate.

Whether Lady Montague dies of natural causes or by her own hand is a matter of conjecture. What *is* clear is that Shakespeare *had* to kill her. His was a world of raging feuds: the

Spanish versus the English (with the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada only five or six years in the past), the Catholics versus the Protestants, the Anglicans versus the Separatists, and the three civil brawls between Thomas Knyght and Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, over de Vere's having twice impregnated Knyght's niece, Anne Vasavour, lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth. Feuds are always caused by imbalance: an uncorrected slight, a wrong that has not been righted, a death that has not been revenged. By play's end two major characters die in the Capulet clan and two in the Prince's clan. Without a second major death in the Montague clan, the feud eventually would renew despite the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, and despite by the Prince's implication at the end of the play that the suicides were a *liebestod* death-pact sanctioned if not created by God.

(Chapter continues)