The Title to the Poem

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CHAPTER THREE

Who "says" the poem

TITLES that refer to the figure who says the poem by the poet's name, by authorial role, or by third-person pronouns bring up issues that are differently charged with meanings in different cultural situations. Whether the actual giver of the title is the poet or someone else doing the work of copyist or editor is a real question only for an intermediary period between the early stages of printing, when assigning a title was a relatively haphazard practice usually carried out by someone not the author, and the time when the title to the poem and therefore the prerogative of titling it became the poet's. Third-person titles of another, more common variety give the words of the poem to a figure they unequivocally declare not to be the poet. This category has also been used since the early period of titling, evoking new responses from readers as different literary systems have evolved and as poets have made such titles work in altered contexts. For various reasons the histories of titles in this category are harder to chart than the traditions of titles using first- or even third-person pronouns.

The most obvious reason is that they are much more often used and more various; there are at least hypothetically no limits to the choice of figures who can be imagined as saying poems. They can be representative human beings identified by generic situation, class, gender, or occupation; figures borrowed from other texts, sacred or profane, or with mythological or conventionally literary names; historical persons; famous or notorious contemporaries; fictional characters with the kinds of names actual people have in recognizable times and locales. Some titles even claim that a nonhuman creature or object speaks in the poem, for instance: "A dialogue be-

twene the auctour and his eye" from *The Paradise of Daintie Deuises* of 1578; Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea's "The Owl Describing her Young Ones"; Padraic Colum's "The Sea Bird to the Wave"; Hardy's "The Aged Newspaper Soliloquizes."

Because of the virtually limitless range of possible identities in this category of third-person title, they can be given to poems of many different kinds. Or to make this point historically, by contrast with the third-person forms discussed earlier, these had many more separate starting points and so came into the traditions of titling by more varied paths, for instance: from the Bible and traditional religious writings of all sorts; from classical texts and their Renaissance presentations; from popular ballads, legends, folktales; from collections of miscellaneous shorter poems; later from the novel, the newspaper, the commercial, the movies. Because of their range and differences of origin, third-person titles of this kind work according to more varied conventions that they follow or violate in more disparate ways. Early examples from Tottel's collection illustrate some of the different ways that titles of this kind present dissimilar figures, referred to by a generic epithet or signature of class; by a literary, historical, or everyday name; by a personal pronoun. They are imagined as saying poems of the same but also of different kinds: "The repentant sinner in durance and aduersitie" and "The ladye praieth the returne of her louer abidyng on the seas" for anonymous poems; "Complaint of the absence of her louer being vpon the sea," attributed to Surrey; Wyatt's "The song of Iopas vnfinished"; "Marcus Catoes comparison of mans life with yron" and "N. Vincent. to G. Blackwood, agaynst wedding," both assigned to Nicholas Grimald.

Beyond the differences among the figures in these titles and among the forms used to refer to them, which of course multiply in later periods, what titles in this category share is the pretense—*explicitly* made but always at least *implicitly* acknowledged as a fiction—that the words of the poem are not the poet's. To illustrate this paradox of at once explicitly pretending and implicitly admitting the pretense, Wyatt's poem can be a simple model to start with. I choose it among the titles just quoted from Tottel's miscellany because it is the only one certain to derive from the poet's own choice. In the Egerton manuscript this poem is virtually alone among a hundred and twenty-four entries in having a title above the text, "Iopas Song," which like the verses is written in Wyatt's own hand. This unique feature suggests that he recognized his only poem spoken by a named figure (other than his prologues to psalms) to occupy a special category for which a formal presentation would be appropriate without opening him to the charge of uncourtly self-presentation.

As "The song of Iopas vnfinished" is printed in Tottel's miscellany, its

placing and title give simultaneous and contradictory signals. Coming last in the section ascribed only at its end to "T. VVIATE *the elder*," it is presented as verses written by him, while the title explicitly claims that it is the song "of" someone with a different kind of name. Because "Iopas" is a figure familiar to readers of the *Aeneid* (as the bard who performs at Dido's feast), his name in the title also tells them that Wyatt has not invented the singer, unlike the title for Surrey's poem presenting the fiction of a lady in the lonely situation of her complaint. Wyatt's title signals that while the singer exists outside the poem in another text, Wyatt has imagined this song for him, elaborating on Virgil's briefer rendering of it. Paradoxically then, the explicitness of the title's separation of singer from author—by the preposition "of" and by their names—constitutes the fiction that must acknowledge its own pretense.

Any title in whatever form involves some element of fiction as it participates in the making of what Sir Philip Sidney calls the "fayned image of Poesie."[1] Still, titles of the category to be discussed here are distinct among other third-person forms in that they unequivocally deny but implicitly, or in rarer instances even explicitly, admit to pretense even as they pretend. This paradox allows such titles to raise special questions about the fictions they enact. While it seems that readers have usually been willing to enter into the pretense of believing in the imagined existence of an *I* who says the poem as if its words were not the author's, titles formulate the paradox in different ways that shape a variety of responses in their readers. Some, as examples will show, even strain the contradictory claims built into these titles so far that they also overstrain our capacity to respond as if we believed in them.

The "supposed" *I*

No title in this category can deny its presentational function or authority, since part of its pretense is to imagine that whoever gives the title acts solely as the maker of it, but not of the verses, which according to the title are in the words of someone else. The titler's only acknowledged work, then, is to introduce the *I* of the poem to the reader, except in a few relatively rare forms—Thomas Carew's "In the person of a Lady to her inconstant servant" is an example—that quite openly admit the poet's presence as both author and titler.

These explicit admissions show up first in titling practices of Carew's generation, when they suited the playful skepticism of mid-seventeenth-century poets toward their own self-conscious conventionality. A more usual formula of the same explicit kind appears in Herrick's "The parting

Verse, or charge to his supposed Wife when he travelled" and in Richard Crashaw's "Wishes. To his (supposed) Mistresse." It is a telling instance of changing assumptions on which titling practices are predicated that before the 1640's, titles did not make such explicit acknowledgments of pretense. In the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries the distinctions between actual poets and their supposed identities or situations were left relatively unarticulated. For this reason, it seems, forms for presenting poems were too inconsistent, if not self-contradictory, on these questions to promote titles like Carew's, or Herrick's and Crashaw's, that explicitly comment on the distinctions involved. A later use of this title form shows how its apparently open admission of pretense loses its authority when it becomes anachronistic in a changed literary situation encouraging to autobiographical interpretation.

Alfred Tennyson in 1830 in *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* published verses with a title imitating the formula of the earlier titles just cited: "Supposed Confessions of a Secondrate Sensitive Mind not in Unity with Itself."[2] Pointing to the imitation, Christopher Ricks writes: "'Supposed' in order to preclude an autobiographical reading of the poem—as the cleric Richard Crashaw had a poem 'Wishes. To his (supposed) Mistresse.'"[3] The comparison actually goes no farther than the borrowed word *supposed*. For Crashaw's poem, published like Carew's and Herrick's in the 1640's, does not ask the reader to suppose it as spoken by a fictional lover with an imaginary identity to be distinguished from the author of the poem. It presents the poet making verses to conjure up an ideal mistress (recalling Jonson's perfectly formed "creature" in "On Lvcy Covntesse of Bedford"). Like its title, Crashaw's poem itself is playfully but frankly open about its "(supposed)" nature, beginning with "Who ere shee bee" and closing:

> Let her full Glory,
> My fancyes, fly before yee,
> Bee ye my fictions; But her story.[4]

In combination with the fact that by the 1640's poets commonly and often admittedly used third-person pronouns in titles to refer to themselves in their authorial role, Crashaw's parenthetical "(supposed)" acts like a smiling aside to the reader about the conventional "fancyes" and "fictions" at work in both title and poem. Autobiography seems not to be in question.

Tennyson's title, by contrast, actually calls attention to autobiographical possibilities as an issue while apparently trying to forestall it. The title explicitly asks the reader to accept the figure speaking in the poem as a fictional someone distinct from the poet, who distances himself by using the third person in the title and by mocking the maker of the "Confessions" as a "Secondrate Sensitive Mind." The posture of critical distance is called

into question by the bitterness and derisive precision of this epithet, which Tennyson's friend Arthur Hallam in a review of the poem calls an "incorrect" portrayal of its "clouded" mood. He also criticizes its "appearance of quaintness," which seems to refer to the borrowing of the title form "Supposed," belonging to earlier understandings of poetic fictions but by the 1830's an anachronism.[5]

The tone of bitterness in the title may be verified by Tennyson's treatment of the poem, which he suppressed after its first publication for more than half a century, even using a legal injunction to prevent its publication by a journal in 1879.[6] Yet the separation attempted in the title between the maker of it and the figure it mocks is not helped by the poem. There is nothing in it to make the confessor a dramatic fiction except the crude device of declaring his mother dead while Tennyson's in fact lived long after 1830. It therefore shows up the design of the epithet to protect the giver of the title from the charges it makes against the *I* of the poem.

This collapse of the "Supposed" distance between poet and *I* is partly an effect of Tennyson's inheritance from Romantic writers who by 1830 had effectively trained readers to expect in many kinds of poetry autobiographical connections between the poet and the figure saying it. Such expectations were very different from those readers had brought to what was admitted as *supposed* in seventeenth-century titles or in the eighteenth century, as in: the title of anonymous verses in *The Agreeable Variety* of 1717, "On Heaven, suppos'd to be written by a Nobleman"; Cowper's "Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, During His solitary Abode In the Island of Juan Fernandez"; Philip Freneau's "To Crispin O'Connor, A Back-Woodsman, (Supposed to be written by Hezekiah Salem)"; or Charlotte Turner Smith's sonnets "Supposed to be written by Werther." Yet in spite of what Tennyson's title claims, the text of the poem does not try to distance the *I* who says it from Romantic predecessors, the way Eliot uses the opening comparison made by "J. Alfred Prufrock" of the "evening" to "a patient etherized upon a table" to attempt a surgical separation. Tennyson's "Sensitive Mind" who exclaims "I faint, I fall" in the second line sounds very like the voice crying out "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" or "I die! I faint! I fail!" in Percy Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" and "The Indian Serenade." The weakened formula "Supposed" but not the derisively measuring epithet is dropped from Swinburne's title "Last Words of a Seventh-Rate Poet," a parody in which "pennies on" is rhymed with "Tennyson."

Another signal explicitly acknowledging the presence of the poet while supposing an independent figure who says the poem is the choice of preposition in the title. In the earlier period these grammatical signs were commonly confused, or at least hard to read in the light of later critical assump-

tions. Titles in Tottel's miscellany show a representative mix of prepositional clues: "Complaint of a louer rebuked"; "Description of the contrarious passions in a louer"; "The louer to his bed, with describing of his vnquiet state." "The song of Iopas vnfinished," unique among titles for Wyatt's entries in unequivocally separating the supposed speaker from the actual poet by name as well as preposition, escapes the common confusion.

By the mid–seventeenth century this confusion seems to disappear. An example is a title for a poem by William Cartwright that in its own way plays a game about supposing similar to Carew's, or Herrick's and Crashaw's, while further complicating it. The title, "For a young Lord to his Mistris, who had taught him a Song," introduces a poem built on the fiction of a lover saying its verses. By the third-person reference to "a young Lord," the titler distances himself from the suitor in imitation of editorial titles for earlier love poems. By adding the preposition "For," the title openly admits what the conventional form "A young Lord to his Mistris" would pretend to the contrary: that the words spoken by the lover are not his own. The poet has written them as a present "For" him, to advance his amorous cause with verses "For" him to recite.

The title is playful about the literary pretense it exposes, turning it into the lover's pragmatic deception of the lady. This is a kind of double play. It even allows the cynical young lord to insinuate to the lady (who hears only the verses) what the title has told the reader is untrue. In the last line he hints that he has been "taught" not only to sing the lady's song but to compose this one: "You, that have taught, may claim my Breath."[7] The poet, the lover, and the reader are made co-conspirators in the lightly cynical game of seduction, the kind of conspiracy that charges many poems of this period with their special eroticism. It translates into social or sexual terms the literary game of supposing that the *I* of the poem is not its author or titler. Special interest in this sort of conspiratorial title in the mid–seventeenth century may have been excited because this was the period when poets took over the title to be their own titlers.

Interest in titles playing games with the fiction of a supposed *I* revived in the different cultural situation of poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century, in response to new concerns about the relation between the voice in the poem and the poet's. Eliot's finely calculated prepositions in titles are representative of these preoccupations. His also have special effects that depend on the self-consciously charted directions of his own poetry in its own time and on the awareness of them he shaped in his readers.

The preposition in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" as it appeared in *Prufrock and Other Observations* in 1917 (corrected from its probably misprinted form "Rhapsody of a Windy Night" in *Blast II* of 1914) leads us

to expect a traditional poetic voice, inspired to rhapsodize by contemplation of nonhuman nature. This title then clashes violently with the poem, raising the level of discomfort we are made to feel in its displacements of the human first person, grammatically present only in the "I" of lines 8 and 40–41.[8] The interpretive focus that traditionally would be centered in the inspired figure evoked by the title is replaced in the poem by the flatly commanding voice of the street lamp. Both title and text play tricks with the paradox built into third-person titles in this category, which pretend the words of the poem are not by the author of them.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" from the same volume involves the reader in more elaborate games of supposing, but for purposes of comparison with later poems by Eliot we will for the moment look only at the simple structure of the title. The preposition "of" draws an unambiguous grammatical line between the poet and the *I* with a different name (as in "The song of Iopas"). By a pointed shift of preposition in "A Song for Simeon," Eliot later circumvents the paradoxical pretense of this kind of title, in a direct and uncomplicated way making his poem a reverent gift *for* Simeon. It is a presentation made by the author to a figure whose existence is verified in a sacred source outside his imagination and his poem. While the pretense that "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is not in the poet's own voice was a necessary fiction for Eliot in his early period, he had moved away from such impersonations by 1928 when he published "A Song for Simeon." The deliberateness of the change in title form is confirmed by the fact that titles for two of his other poems in the series of *Ariel Poems* published between 1927 and 1930 work in the same direction. "Journey of the Magi" uses the familiar title given to traditional renderings of the story, rather than naming the magus as a persona speaking a monologue. The title "Marina" focuses on the symbol of "grace" invoked but nowhere named except in the title of this lyrical incantation, rather than assigning it explicitly to Pericles who chants it. The choice of preposition in "A Song for Simeon" is a quiet declaration of independence from the poetic demands and doctrines of Eliot's early period, guiding readers to his evolving attitudes toward speaker or persona and the changing uses of voice in his poems. The title is a trustworthy interpreter.

Satirical names

Looking now beyond its grammar at more details of Eliot's title "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," we can consider it in comparison with titles by other poets giving the *I* of the poem similar but not quite the same kinds of name. Titles identifying the first person of the poem by a ridiculous

proper name call attention to the poet using the *I* as a fictional target or instrument of satire, bathos, or parody. The compound name including the title of his own clerical office in Swift's "George-Nim-Dan-Dean's Invitation to Mr. Thomas Sheridan" seems to joke about this attention-getting kind of presentation. Tennyson appears to have a double target in the title for a poem written around 1833, "Mechanophilus (In the Time of the First Railways)." It satirizes celebrations of the mechanical age and titles classicizing mundane modern stuff. Other titles call attention to the author making satiric use of the *I* of the poem by inventing an absurd proper name out of an ordinary word or compound with comic possibilities of sound and meaning. Swift does this in "Clever Tom Clinch going to be hanged," but these titles became more common in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries as the influence of novels on the conventions of titling grew stronger. Some examples are: Tennyson's "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue"; Browning's "Mr. Sludge 'The Medium' "; John Davidson's "The Testament of Sir Simon Simplex Concerning Automobilism" (a satiric response to "Mechanophilus"); Stevens's "Peter Parasol"; *Alfred Venison's Poems* by Pound. It is in the context of these poems, where it does and does not belong, that we can look again at Eliot's much discussed title.

The reader is first introduced to the famous name in the presentation of the volume, *Prufrock and Other Observations*. There its status is as a title for one of the poems, besides being someone's name. As it next appears above the opening poem, "Prufrock" strikes us less as if it were the title of a poem than as if it were the name of a person singing this one. Since the poem is a "Love Song," scarcely a type noted for objective investigation or disinterested wisdom, then insofar as it qualifies as one of the volume's *Observations*, the song itself or the singing of it must be what is observed. That is, someone is making observations of or on "J. Alfred Prufrock" singing his "Love Song," presumably Mr. T. S. Eliot, whose name is the only other one on the title page. The juxtaposed titles of volume and poem position him apart from the *I* who sings the love song.

If the title were "Prufrock's Love Song," the name would predict its bearer to be a vehicle for comic observations because, as Christopher Ricks says, its silly sounding name contains "not only the play of 'frock' against 'pru'—prudent, prudish, prurient—but also the suggestive contrariety between splitting the name there, at *pru* and *frock*, as against splitting it as *proof* and *rock*."[9] Then the name could evoke responses very like those we have to the name of the singer in Tennyson's title "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue." It may or may not be that Eliot had this title consciously in mind as he says he had the title of Kipling's "The Love Song of Har Dyal," or unconsciously, as Hugh Kenner tells us Eliot admitted that he may have retained the name of Prufrock-Littau, furniture wholesalers who adver-

tised in St. Louis in his youth.[10] Still, a comparison with Tennyson's title helps to define the much more interesting effects of Eliot's.

The name "Waterproof" is made out of a word or compound like many of Dickens's names for characters, for instance "Pecksniff" (borrowed by Stevens in his heading "Pecksniffia" for a group of poems that included "Peter Parasol").[11] Since *waterproof* is a compound word formed to describe something that keeps water out, Tennyson's choice of it as the name for a singer located—first by the subtitle "Made at the Cock"—in a tavern is obviously satirical. "Will" adds, besides its alliterative sound, some vague associations with the atmosphere of Elizabethan taverns made familiar by Shakespeare (who uses the name "Will" as a punning word in his sonnets and whose surname, Eliot is likely to have noticed, is formed out of words: *shake* and *spear* or *shakes* and *peer* or *pear*).[12] These evocations are suited to a poem that makes poets, their poems, and their critics the targets of its satire and parody. Bathos is added to Tennyson's title by the generic clash in "Lyrical Monologue" (possibly recalling the earlier coinage of "Lyrical Ballads") for the boozy song of a poet with an absurd name. Tennyson's intentions are so clearly signaled in the title that it raises no questions about the fictional *I* of the poem or his relation to his inventor.

Because "Prufrock" is not quite a word (as are "Waterproof," "Sludge," "Parasol," "Venison"), and especially because it is the surname of someone who has chosen to present himself—as it were in life, before the titler introduces him to us—using the form "J. Alfred," Eliot plays a very different game. He makes it possible for us to join him in pretending belief in the actuality of this person because the formal introduction of him by name is detailed to make it socially accurate, setting it in what Pound calls "modern life," in the "discouragingly 'unpoetic' modern surroundings" that distinguish Eliot's personae from his own.[13] The name places the *I* in time and milieu as real people are—initials seem to have been used in that fashion first among the middle class in both England and America in the later nineteenth century—so that we can be seduced into further speculation, say, about the sort of parents who would choose for their son the middle name "Alfred." A socially plausible answer (since the volume was published in London), that Mr. and Mrs. Prufrock's aspirations to genteel taste in poetry led them to give their baby the name of the poet laureate, ignores the fact we are told on the title page that the choice of name is made by Mr. T. S. Eliot.

Tricking us into such speculation, the title unsettles the expectations it also raises. The name of the first person in the poem is like names made out of funny words and compounds in titles for satirical poems, but unlike them it is not an unequivocally made-up name. Though it is clearly manipulated in its pompous style of presentation, owners of actual names, including many poets, have been known to do that in their own lives. The author

named on the title page as Mr. T. S. Eliot (possibly imitating the style of T. E. Hulme) is the same person who signed some philosophical pieces of this period as "T. Stearns Eliot" (then perhaps copying the poet T[homas]. Sturge Moore, brother of the philosopher G. E. Moore). Poets of the period also liked to give themselves comic pseudonyms, as Stevens early signed himself "Peter Parasol," or sillier still, "Carol More."[14]

The name "Alfred" for the singer of a post-Victorian poem is also open to the suspicion of being a satirical choice, but Eliot cannot be caught in that act since he scrupulously avoids even a much less crude combination than Pound's *Alfred Venison*. Quite possibly his speaker's middle name is a way of involving Tennyson in his poem about the attenuation of later-nineteenth-century Romanticism, as Arnold is implicated by the allusion to "The Forsaken Merman" in the closing lines or Browning, perhaps, in all the "Talking of Michelangelo." Yet the name is not uncommon, possibly even a likely choice of parents with a German family name, and besides, "Pru*fr*ock" echoes the sound of "Al*fr*ed."

Altogether we cannot be secure about what Eliot's choice of name is up to. What we can be sure of is that he does not give us clear interpretive signals in his title about how to read what it presents as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." For the poem turns out to have in place of a beloved only a disappearing "you," and instead of a satirical mouthpiece as its speaker an "I" in a complicated, evasive, obscure relation to the poet named on the title page as the author, or rather the detached viewer and wise commentator, of *Prufrock and Other Observations*.

Pastoral names

Other forms for titles giving the poem to a figure not its author admit the presence of the poet by less direct or less obviously attention-getting means than the types so far explored. Among the most common are titles that place the first person of the poem in a generic fiction, a design clearly illustrated by the epistle and the dialogue. Some titles for those types name the kind as well as the *I*: Samuel Daniel's "A Letter from Octauia to Marcus Antonius," Francis Quarles's "A Dialogue, betweene Gabriel and Mary." Others allude to it by pairing names associated with the genre: William Drummond's "Lavra to Petrarch," Alexander Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard," Tennyson's "Hero to Leander" for epistles; for dialogues, Daniel's "Ulisses and the Syren," Sir William Davenant's "The Philosopher and the Lover to a Mistress dying," Yeats's "The Man and the Echo." Titles for these genres present the reader with two figures in an exchange that excludes the presence of the poet. At the same time that presence is evoked by the formulaic

character of the presentations, which offer decoded readings of the titles: *Pope's Imitation of Ovid's Heroides in an Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard*; or *Daniel's Contest Between Honor and Pleasure in a Dialogue Between Ulysses and the Siren*.

To some degree any title by naming or alluding to a traditional kind works in this way, but the evocation of the poet's presence is stronger as the titling conventions are more formulaic, or when the *I* of the poem has an identity or is in a situation that makes the generic signal of the title especially artificial. Pope's "Ode: The Dying Christian to His Soul" announces itself as casting in a classically formal, public poem the unspoken words of someone in an intensely private moment. The juxtaposition of kind and situation, made here without tension or embarrassment, puts more emphasis on the poet's presence as performer than the title given John Davies's "A Sinners acknowledgement of his Vilenesse and Mutabilitie," since "acknowledgement" does not name a literary form chosen by the poet to shape what he gives the sinner to say. The very different traditions of pastoral poems and ballads can illustrate in other ways how generic signals in titles direct attention toward or away from the unacknowledged presence of the poet in a poem said to be the words of someone else.

The generic references in titles to the singers of pastoral poems—the shepherds, goatherds, mowers, reapers, ploughmen, milkmaids, shepherdesses or nymphs—focus attention on the poet's performance in a special way. When titles give these figures names, they are the same as or like the ones used for the prototypical singers in the idylls of Theocritus, or rather more often they imitate Virgil's names in his eclogues as he imitates Theocritus. Sometimes pastoral titles copy allusive naming in other ways: Sidney invents the name *Astrophil* to encode his own in a classical form; Spenser transfers borrowed naming into the vernacular and translates the French "Colin" from Clement Marot for his own English pseudonym, "Colin Clout."

Titles imitating each other in their repetition of fictional names copied from earlier poems trace the traditional pattern for pastoral poetry as it flourished in England in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Pope, who acknowledges "*Theocritus* and *Virgil*, (the only undisputed authors of Pastoral)," copies from Virgil's eighth eclogue and its other borrowers the name for one of the speakers in his "Spring, The First Pastoral, or Damon."[15] Ambrose Philips, whose rival claim is that "*Theocritus*, *Virgil*, and *Spenser* are the only Poets, who seem to have hit upon the true Nature of Pastoral Compositions," shows his partisan preference in borrowings like "Hobbinol" and "Cuddy" to name singers in his pastorals.[16] Three examples can show how poets have used the signals encoded in pas-

toral titles to exploit the pretense of separating the fictional figure who says the poem from the maker of it or of its title.

A poem by Christopher Marlowe printed in 1600 in a miscellany of pastoral verse, *Englands Helicon*, was there given the title "The passionate Sheepheard to his loue." It seems to have been the most admired pastoral song of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, judging by how often it appeared in print and manuscript, the many versions of it in circulation, the number of allusions and answer-poems responding to it. Admiration for its radiant and graceful presentation of the poet transparently disguised as the shepherd is easily understandable, but an added reason for its appeal may be that it is a perfect paradigm of that convention. Milton, among other poets who responded to it, uses it as such an archetype to define his own transformed versions of pastoral.

The traditional form of the title for Marlowe's poem as it is printed in *Englands Helicon* gives the *I* of the poem an identity then reflected in some details of his song and precluded by others.[17] "The passionate Sheepheard" offers his "loue" the delights that nature yields in its generic variety of landscapes. His presents to her are partly "made" out of the abundance within reach in the abode of shepherds, allowing his participation in their rural life. Even so, the rustic materials he makes into tempting gifts—"Mirtle," "Iuie," "straw," "wooll"—are opulently embroidered or buckled with "purest gold," "Corall clasps and Amber studs," becoming versions of courtly garments. Working more pointedly against inclusion of the *I* among the shepherds are his references to them, distanced in the third person like the titler's presentation of him: "And wee will sit vpon the Rocks, / Seeing the Sheepheards feede theyr flocks." Here the singer arranges himself and his love in the privileged place of a courtly audience for the rustic scene, a kind of masque in which "The Sheepheards swaines shall dance & sing" for their entertainment. His only move toward explicitly presenting himself in the role given him by the titler is also the most exaggeratedly stylized and most playful gesture in the poem. He will give his love "A gowne made of the finest wooll, / Which from our pretty Lambes we pull." As these lines picture willing nature yielding the pelts already spun and woven as if by magic into a lady's fine gown, they smilingly transform the sweaty work of shearing, the monotony of spinning and weaving, into one seamlessly artful motion. These lines and others in the catalogue of "made" gifts act out what the poem does in transforming nature into pastoral: "And I will make thee beds of Roses, / And a thousand fragrant poesies."

What this shepherd will "make"—and *maker* is among preferred sixteenth-century terms for *poet*—are beds of rose petals to lie on but also ornamental flower beds. The poet as gardener is a favorite trope, "poesies" a frequent pun on *poesy* and also a minor type of verse. His poem, then, is

the singer's last and best gift, containing all the other "delights thy minde may moue," and to move or teach and delight is the true excellence of poetry. Marlowe's song is the quintessential pastoral poem in its celebration of its own conventionality. It is an elaborately simple, sensuous, and passionate game about the fiction of the *I* as shepherd, which it acknowledges to be a costume, not a disguise, for the poet to dress up in for his performance.

The title of Marvell's "Damon the Mower" also makes a display of its conventionality: the reaper in Theocritus's tenth idyll, the "Damon" of Virgil's eighth eclogue, and all imitations of them, stand behind it. It presents the "I" of the poem as a purely fictitious figure; "Damon" is not truly a proper name but a code word for the poet costumed as a rustic. The figure using the first person in the poem, by the recognized rules of the game announced in the title, is wholly the creature of its maker, who has chosen the name "Damon" for his fiction precisely as a signal for what game he is playing.

Marvell then sets it up with a framing first stanza inviting the reader to "Heark how the Mower *Damon* Sung," but this "*Damon*" will not play by the rules. He is aggressively boastful of his own identity: "I am the Mower *Damon*, known / Through all the Meadows I have mown."[18] Casting himself in the role of hero, he pits his own "hot desires" against the heat of the sun; disdains the rivalry of "the piping Shepherd stock"; refuses to be scorned by the "fair Shepheardess" who rejects his "Presents" that, following the same model as Marlowe's catalogue, include the songs "I tune my self to sing."

After eight stanzas of Damon's heroic posturing, the author who presents him in the title and first lines returns to the controlling device of a frame, which conventionally contains the speech of the *I* in the poem within the third-person commentary of its introductory and concluding stanzas. Describing in mock-heroic language how Damon flails about, "Depopulating all the Ground" with his scythe, the poet cuts him down to size:

> The edged Stele by careless chance
> Did into his own Ankle glance;
> And there among the Grass fell down,
> By his own Sythe, the Mower mown.

Following the rules of the game defined by the title, this ought to be the end of the poem and therefore of Damon's fictitious existence, over which the poet in the last two lines here speaks what sounds like a sententious epitaph. Yet this unsportsmanlike Damon will not be put down, silenced, killed off, but pops up again like Falstaff after Hal has said a farewell over his supposed corpse:

Alas! said He, these hurts are slight
To those that dye by Loves despight.
With Shepherds-purse, and Clowns-all-heal
The Blood I stanch, and Wound I seal.
Only for him no Cure is found,
Whom *Julianas* Eyes do wound.
'Tis death alone that this must do:
For Death thou art a Mower too.

Refusing to be the poet's creature, Damon becomes his own author and titler, referring to himself in the third person—"for him no Cure is found"—and pronouncing his own epitaph in another sententious couplet that this time really is the end of the verses in which he has the last word. Marvell's poem, undermining the expectations raised by its title, collapses the convention brilliantly exploited by Marlowe of the *I* in pastoral as a poet performing in the costume of a rustic.

Milton, holding up Marlowe's song as a model in that tradition, makes a place in it entirely his own in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." His first move in this direction is his choice of titles, which have no precedents in earlier pastoral or any other English verse.[19] The unfamiliar language and form of these titles do not give the usual signals about the *I* we will hear in the poem. The Italian nouns do not work like "The passionate Sheepheard" or "*Damon*" to introduce figures made familiar by other poems and do not comfortably translate into an English epithet, by contrast with a title like Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, known in England in numerous translations. They are more like words for moods or ways of experiencing, though not quite the abstractions they would be without the article (as the term *allegro* names a category of musical composition). They therefore invite the question ruled out by the conventions of generic naming in titles: *how is the I to be identified in these poems?*

In "L'Allegro," placed first of the pair by Milton in his *Poems* of 1645, the answer to the question prompted by the title is buried in the grammar of the poem. Personal pronouns, and especially *I*, are suppressed as elaborately as we have seen in poems by Ashbery. The nominative surfaces only twice in "L'Allegro," for the first time not until line 37, which is part of the four-line closing of the invocation. Here "I" is linked with the first mention also of "me":

And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crue
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free.[20]

Since the lines following contain only one other personal pronoun—"And at my window bid good morrow"—the *I* disappears in a procession

of infinitives—"To hear," "to com"—and present participles—"list'ning," "walking"—that is followed by a catalogue of nouns naming generic pastoral figures: "the Plowman," "the Milkmaid," "the Mower," "every Shepherd." Unlike the unlocated "I," these rustics are placed spatially—"neer," "Under"—and in time, as the active subjects of verbs in the present tense, while the "I" has been supplanted by verb forms without subject or tense. A contrast is set up between the generic figures, who are those conventionally named in titles as the singers of pastoral songs, and the almost impersonal utterance of this poem, where the "Shepherd tells his tale" only as a figure in a catalogue, and one that has no source except the poem itself, no identifiable singer who recites it. The nominative pronoun "I" emerges once more, with added prominence for having been absent, in the closing couplet ("me" also surfaces one more time, the possessive only twice in all): "These delights, if thou canst give, / Mirth with thee, I mean to live."

The two couplets in the first-person nominative frame Milton's lines as an answer-poem to Marlowe's "Come liue with mee, and be my loue," which itself has a similar framing structure, moving from that opening line to a transformed version of it at the end of the poem: "If these delights thy minde may moue, / Then liue with mee, and be my loue." In "L'Allegro," which is cast as a reply to Marlowe's invitation, the grammar of the poem takes the place, as it were, of the poet performing in the costume of the "passionate Sheepheard." Here the "I" is present between lines 37 and 152 only as "mine eye," an instrument recording what "it measures," "it sees": "Such sights as youthful poets dream." The nearly abstract title "L'Allegro" matches the nearly anonymous grammar of the poem.[21]

"Il Penseroso" follows the same outline by delaying the entrance of the "I" of the poem, here until line 64, and emphatically asserting its presence in a final couplet that again rewrites the ending of Marlowe's song: "These pleasures *Melancholy* give, / And I with thee will choose to live."[22] Here also a contrast is set up between the "I" of the poem and the poets performing in other pastorals, for whom Marlowe's "Sheepheard" is the perfect model. Within this outline the second poem departs from the design of "L'Allegro" by allowing the "I," once introduced, to move steadily into the foreground of the poem. A crude count of first-person pronouns can show this difference: "I" appears only twice in the whole of "L'Allegro" but seven times in the later lines of "Il Penseroso," which extend twenty-four lines beyond the length of the first poem. The pronoun "me" is used four times, the possessive five in this later part. Because the movements of the two poems are otherwise carefully paralleled, the emerging first-person presence is a pointed development. It seems that the "eye" of the first poem comes into an identity that, though still experiencing "Such sights as youthful Poets dream" in pastoral verses, allows him to envision a different poetic future that will "bring all Heav'n before mine eyes." Out of the nearly anon-

ymous grammar of "L'Allegro" and the earlier third of "Il Penseroso," the poet emerges using the first person to predict how "old experience" gained in the apprenticeship of pastoral will be transformed into a new "Prophetic strain" of poetry.

The movement here from anonymity to a poetic identity in the first person is a foreshadowing of the pattern traced in "Lycidas," where the "I" of the elegy is transformed at the end into "he," "the uncouth swain," by the distanced perspective of his older poetic self. The paired poems (which Milton's volume of 1645 prints in an earlier position than the elegy) and "Lycidas," in their parallel but distinct ways, represent stages in the growth of the poet finding an identity by working with and away from the richly conventional figure of the "passionate Sheepheard" as the poet in pastoral costume. The earlier stages are personified in the not quite abstract titles of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," naming figures that are not quite fictional versions of the poet.

The allusive repetition in titles of the names and epithets referring to the figures using *I* in pastoral poems defines their special effects among third-person title forms. It insists on the purely fictitious character of the singers in these poems; the nymphs and shepherds, Phyllises and Damons in the titles are the choices of poets or editors, culled from a large company of other poems. Since the epithets and names refer to so many places where they or others like them have already been given to pastoral figures, they actually point more to their own conventionality than to the particular identity of the *I* saying the poem. In doing so, they focus on the poet whose presence they formally deny. At the farthest extreme from them are the workings of ballad titles, because the conventions of the ballad tend to suppress attention to the poet's performance.

Ballad names

Early ballads of many sorts have anonymous origins, for instance in ancient legends or distant events, or in the public domain of village gossip and tavern talk. Later imitations of these ballads try in various ways to appropriate the authority of their anonymous beginnings, freeing the figures speaking in them from the imaginative needs of individual poets. Wordsworth seems to work for this effect in "The Armenian Lady's Love," which introduces the *I* of the poem as a ballad heroine:

> You have heard 'a Spanish Lady
> How she wooed an Englishman;'
> Hear now of a fair Armenian.[23]

"You have heard" assumes that readers of this ballad have listened to other old stories recited by ballad singers who pass them on from generation to

generation, and to drive home the point there is even a footnote to "that fine old ballad, 'The Spanish Lady's Love,'" which had been recovered for Wordsworth's generation in Thomas Percy's collection, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* first published in 1765. The allusion and note associate the singer we hear in the framing lines that introduce the "fair Armenian" with bards who repeat old stories not of their own invention. The association distances this singer also from the lady whose words he brings to us only as an instrument, not as their maker. The title, copying Percy's form, identifies the poem as an antiquarian's find, a rediscovered relic from antiquity presented to modern readers. Coleridge seems to aim for this effect by the pseudo-archaic spelling of the title "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" in the first printed version of it in the 1798 edition of *Lyrical Ballads, With A Few Other Poems.* The generic title of this volume may also have been designed in part to suggest anonymous origins in antiquity for the poems, and no authors' names appear on the title page.

Borrowed names are the most common generic feature in titles for imitations of popular ballads. By contrast with pastoral names, they present the poems as expressions of local cultures more than as the fictions of poets. To illustrate the difference, the singer of a poem in *Englands Helicon* is not named except in its title, "*Melisea* her Song, in scorne of her Sheepheard *Narcissus,*" nor would readers be likely to have heard of her from some well-known particular literary source. Yet we would be breaking the rules of the game to ask *who is Melisea?* The form of her name alone would tell us all we need to know about her: that she is a nymph or shepherdess, who exists as the instrument for the poet's performance in the kind of song he writes under the name he has presumably borrowed from other poems.

The figure we hear in Wordsworth's "The Affliction of Margaret——" is also named only in the title, and is also unknown to us from a prior literary context. Since her name gives a signal special to the conventions of the ballad, the title again precludes the question *who is Margaret?* "Margaret" is a common traditional English name; it could be the name of any ordinary woman. Still, someone knows her and has heard the story of her "Affliction," her own humble tale of old, unhappy, far-off things that were once familiar matter of today to bards who first repeated her story. The everyday proper name "Margaret" (in manuscript "Mary"), along with the dash that purports to suppress her surname ("*Melisea*" would not have one), authenticates her existence and her natural sorrow, loss, or pain outside the poem, as it were, directing attention to its roots more than to the performance of the poet as the maker of it.

Other sorts of names in ballad titles work in the same direction. Robert Burns uses regional names of actual people in "McPherson's Farewell" and "Strathallan's Lament," and Yeats imitates such proper names in the title "John Kinsella's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore." Their homely particular-

ity makes them seem familiar, their owners a subject of tavern talk. Yeats's speaker is identified as if we had heard of him because he is locally notorious as a bawdy old lover, not solely because he is a conventional vehicle for the poet's performance, like the speaker of "Olde *Damons* Pastorall" in *Englands Helicon*.

Yeats's titles calling the voice in some poems "Crazy Jane" in a different way also create the illusion that their source is in local culture, as if the poet were merely their titler or transmitter rather than their maker and performer. "Crazy Jane" (originally "Cracked Mary") sounds like her village epithet, the way her neighbors speak of her, not a literary epithet—contrast it with Christopher Smart's "The Fair Recluse"—and not a poet's interpretive title like Yeats's "A Crazed Girl." The heading Yeats gives to the group beginning with seven "Crazy Jane" poems seems to joke about this pretense of the poet's disengagement from them. He presents them as "Words For Music Perhaps," as if the poet had found them, collected and titled them, but could not be sure of their origins and intentions, did not quite know how to take them.

The opening poem of the group, "Crazy Jane and the Bishop," can show in more detail Yeats's uses of ballad titling to initiate the illusion of a poem that seems anonymous in origin, bringing us age-old matter transmitted, not performed, by the poet. What works most powerfully to create this illusion is what is not said, either in the title or the poem. The title pretends we have heard of "Crazy Jane," that we recognize her name from village talk (not only as a literary type of God's fool), and that we therefore know who the "Bishop" is in her story.[24] She in turn takes for granted that her hearers are of the locale, since we know the way to "the blasted oak" and therefore have listened to old gossip about her trysts there with "Jack the Journeyman" (another village epithet). The matter of the poem therefore seems to originate in local history it does not tell us because, according to the fiction set up in the title that pretends to name a nonfictional person, we already know it before the titler presents "Crazy Jane" retelling her own version of it.

Also unexplained in the poem is the mysterious, parenthetical refrain "(*All find safety in the tomb.*)," which interrupts the grammar of each stanza. This is not the way refrains usually work in ballads. The conventional form is more nearly approximated in the other repeated line of the poem, "*The solid man and the cockscomb*," which completes the grammar of each stanza in the speaker's own voice, commenting on her own story. By contrast, the parenthetical line is a sentence unto itself, and a sententious truism, which comes as if from nowhere, perhaps as if its source were deep in folk wisdom or—since its appositeness in each stanza is ambiguous—in folk superstition. Because the sentences of "Crazy Jane" continue unin-

terrupted around it, she seems not to hear or notice it, enlarging the possibility that it is unspoken utterance from some unlocatable depths. It is certainly not the same casually amused modern voice that calls the group of poems "Words For Music Perhaps," and not the titler's echoing village talk about "Crazy Jane and the Bishop." It therefore contributes to the fiction that the poem comes to us from a remote source, beyond our knowing or the poet's.

Proper names

Poets in the nineteenth century were attracted to a new kind of title, different from pastoral forms but also giving the *I* of the poem a name borrowed from ancient literary sources. Tennyson's (and Swinburne's) "Tiresias," his "Ulysses," Browning's "Ixion" illustrate the type. Since they share some obvious features with names conventional to pastoral titles, how they are unlike can show up more sharply the differences in effect in their pretense that the named speaker of the verses is not the poet who gives the title.

The way pastoral naming is woven into an intricate net of allusive repetitions, the names are treated as purely fictitious and therefore easily interchangeable, which proper names are not. In most instances the same shepherd can as well be called *Corydon* as *Damon*, *Tityrus*, or *Narcissus*. "Astrophell," Sidney's pastoral pseudonym encoding his own actual first name, is also used in *Englands Helicon* for the singer of a poem attributed there to Nicholas Breton. Each name focuses attention on the poet performing in pastoral costume under what is not a proper name but a name of an appropriate type, so that titles using them put little pressure behind their formal claim that the singer of the poem is not the author.

The nineteenth-century titles "Tiresias," "Ulysses," "Ixion" work differently though they also cite names for the figures saying the poems, who have multiple literary sources. One reason these titles have other effects is that they consist of names not in the pastoral network (unlike the names still used in the nineteenth century as titles for tributes to dead poets, like Shelley's "Adonais," an elegy on Keats, and Arnold's "Thyrsis," a monody on Clough). Not being conventional to pastoral, they do not signal us to think of them as names for the poet in transparent disguise. Another reason is that the poems treat the figures named as if they were not literary fictions but people who actually lived, so that they invite us to think of the titles as having the status of proper names claiming the independent identity of the *I* in the poem, which it is interested in maintaining. In this respect they are unlike pastoral titles but very close in their workings to another kind that interested the same poets: Tennyson's "Columbus" and "St. Simeon Sty-

lites," Browning's "Cleon" and "Fra Lippo Lippi" are examples of titles calling the *I* of the poem by the proper name of an actual historical figure.

Typically, nineteenth-century titles of this kind consist only of the name (unlike "Iopas Song"), which focuses them on the figure who says the poem and on the title's status as a proper name. It suppresses identification of the *I* with the poet's performance, or of the poem as that performance in a recognizable literary kind. When detail is added to the name, as in the full presentation of Browning's "Abt Vogler (After He Has Been Extemporizing Upon the Musical Instrument of his Invention)," it more firmly places or characterizes the figure we hear in the poem, widening his separation from the poet. The effect is like that of the final title for the poem originally called "The Tomb at St. Praxed's," which Browning revised as "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church" to focus it on the speaker it particularizes: that one bishop, not a representative cleric, and not a poet. The title places the *I* of the poem as that one bishop speaking to someone on a special occasion, not shaping his speech into a generic form of verse like a ballad, a pastoral song, an epistle, an ode.

Such titles allow possibilities attractive to poets of this period. Most obviously, by their emphasis on the independent existence of the *I* in the poem from the author, they challenge the authority of autobiographical readings such as seem to have provoked Tennyson to suppress his "Supposed Confessions of a Secondrate Sensitive Mind" and Browning his first publication, *Pauline*, printed anonymously in 1833 with the subtitle "A Fragment of a Confession."

Tennyson thwarts what he calls the "absurd tendency to personalities" of "almost all modern criticism" in titles like "Ulysses," although elsewhere he admitted privately to have included "more of himself" in the poem than it or its title acknowledge.[25] Browning uses not only the titles of poems but the titles of volumes and their prefaces, or poems placed in them as prologues or epilogues, to hold off identifications of himself with the figures named in the titles. The advertisement to *Dramatic Lyrics*, published in 1842, describes the volume in terms Hardy later adopts from Browning for the prefaces of his quoted in Chapter 1: "Such Poems as the following come properly enough, I suppose, under the head of 'Dramatic Pieces'; being, though for the most part Lyric in expression, always Dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine."[26] Browning's own model for the leap the title of this volume takes over generic barriers may have been *Lyrical Ballads*. His later *Dramatic Romances*, *Dramatic Idyls*, and *Dramatis Personae* drive home the same point.

The volume published in 1855 with the still bolder title *Men and Women* emphasizes dramatic characterization even more strongly. The final poem, dedicated "To E.B.B." with the title "The Last Word," later changed to the more intimate spoken phrase "One Word More," acts as epilogue and man-

ifesto. The poem opens with Browning presenting the book to his wife, imagined as a private moment between them taking place outside the covers of the volume: "There they are, my fifty men and women / Naming me the fifty poems finished!"[27] These are figures named in the titles of the poems they speak, whom he sets apart from his own "person" intimately saying this "One Word More" to his wife:

> Love, you saw me gather men and women,
> Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
> Enter each and all, and use their service,
> Speak from every mouth, — the speech, a poem.
>
> . . .
>
> Let me speak this once in my true person,
> Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea.

What Browning's presentational devices show is that poems of this kind, besides fending off autobiographical readings of them as confessions, at the same time open an escape from other generic categorizing. If what is spoken "from every mouth" is—and Browning's wording is meticulous on this point—"the speech, a poem"—then it takes its form from the character of the speaker, past experiences and present circumstances, occasion, listener, all of which inform the moment of speaking and therefore the shape of the speech. Contrasts would be with Pope's "Ode: The Dying Christian to His Soul" or Wordsworth's "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman." Since these like all title presentations precede the poems, they predict features that they announce are predetermined by the poet and that acknowledge other poems as generic models for this "Ode" or this "Complaint." Titles that merely give a proper name or add details that further support its status *as* a proper name do not make the same predictions. Even "Ulysses," which presents a poem having something to do with heroic adventure, does not raise more particular expectations than that, in contrast with Daniel's title "Ulisses and the Syren," which predicts the form of an allegorical dialogue.

We can use "Ulysses" to explore more fully the freedom from established literary kinds allowed to poems with this form of title. Tennyson's presents what follows as the speech of a hero known to all his readers but, as is often true of poems of this kind, the poem enters his story long after his recorded epic actions. It therefore treats him as an actual person like Columbus, with a personal history extending beyond what we know from literary sources, but not like Allen Tate's "Aeneas at Washington," who is a legendary hero transported into the unheroic twentieth century. For this poem Tennyson had a literary model for imagining the hero's story after the *Odyssey* is over in Dante's *Inferno* xxvi, but as Robert Langbaum points out, Ulysses' old age "is incidental" to Dante's version, crucial to Tennyson's.[28] Tennyson

gives the same structure to several poems of this kind: the figures of "Ulysses," "Tiresias," "Columbus" all speak as weary old men looking back from a diminished present at their famous pasts. This pattern begins in the titles, which free the poems from kinds associated with celebrations of heroism, making them seem to be shaped instead to the pressures brought to bear by the present circumstances of the speaking figure and by the responses of his fictional listener.

The freedom achieved in this way of titling and shaping his materials opened for Tennyson another possibility allowed by the titles for this kind of poem: the impersonation of character in greater psychological detail. Something like this intention is implied by his son in *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* when he describes these poems: "He purposely chose those classical subjects from mythology and legend, which had been before but imperfectly treated, or of which the stories were slight, so that he might have free scope for his imagination."[29] A result, Hallam Tennyson recognizes, is that a "modern feeling was to some extent introduced into the themes" by the encouragement these treatments gave to particularity of detail (here the relevant nineteenth-century sense of "modern").

Browning's poems spoken by figures whose names constitute their titles are more often historical than mythological. They circumvent generic expectations as well as autobiographical readings mainly by inventing and elaborating on specific settings and occasions in copious atmospheric detail. This shapes the speech of the *I* whose character is at the same time dramatized by his response to the place and occasion. In doing this the poems also make the most of the opportunity for the exploration of particularities. In Browning's work the circumstances that give rise to the speech of his "men and women" are epitomized by what "Fra Lippo Lippi" calls "a string of pictures of the world."[30] The details that fill these "pictures" are of course the very particulars that fill this and other similar poems by Browning. Because of their dramatic immediacy, because the language to describe them is often casual and colloquial, they are, like Tennyson's characterizations, infused with a "modern feeling" that coexists with their detailed evocation of an imagined past. "Fra Lippo Lippi," fully embodying these features, is a manifesto for this kind of nineteenth-century dramatic poem, in the way the painter's descriptions of his "pictures of the world" are made analogies for the manner and matter of the poem itself and of the volume *Men and Women*. It seems that another great Victorian master of particularity, George Eliot, appreciated the poem as such a dramatization of Browning's position when she wrote about it in a review dated 1856: "we would rather have 'Fra Lippo Lippi' than an essay on Realism in Art."[31]

Pound imitates this title form for a number of shorter poems: "Cino" and "Plotinus" will be examples here. He also borrows Browning's term *Personae* (from *Dramatis Personae*) for the title of his own 1909 volume

where these poems are included with others of the same type. He describes that type in a letter to Williams of 1908 as "the short so-called dramatic lyric," where again the defining term is copied from a title of Browning's.[32] These are among many tributes to his "Master Bob Browning" (saluted that way in the poem with its title, "Mesmerism," borrowed from Browning) that appear repeatedly in his poetry and prose writings.[33] In a letter of 1928 he proclaims his lineage in two of his languages: "Und überhaupt ich stamm aus Browning. Pourquoi nier son père."[34] Like so many declarations of indebtedness, Pound's borrowings from Browning point to very real connections while at the same time signaling differences.

The title of Pound's 1909 volume looks back to *Dramatis Personae. By Robert Browning*, published in 1864. Pound's title page reads *Personae of Ezra Pound*. The finely made adjustments of prepositions and punctuation give instructions to readers that Pound's personae are, in Donald Davie's words, "less *dramatis* personae than they are embodied aspects of his own situation and his own personality (though this is truer of some poems than of others)."[35] The distinction rests on identical terms with different meanings. *Dramatis Personae*, the traditional heading above a theatrical cast of characters, presents Browning's volume as if it were a collection of speeches by dramatized figures separate from the author. Pound's title page erases the separation grammatically with *of* to fit the new meaning it gives to the theatrical metaphor. Richard Blackmur comments on its significance as Pound uses it in a review of the 1926 edition of *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound*:

> The nub of the matter is in the title. . . . *Personae* were the masks of Roman actors. But they were not masks worn to hide character but to show its clearest face. They hid only the irrelevant and unseemly, the unreality of the private individual under the definition and the clarity of a symbol. So Ezra Pound has supplied a variety of masks—some beautiful, some malicious, some ironical—and all better made than any in our generation.[36]

Pound himself comments directly on this understanding of the title for his volume *Personae* in one of its poems called "Masks," in which he recites a catalogue invoking "Strange myths of souls":

> Old singers half-forgetful of their tunes,
> Old painters color-blind come back once more,
> Old poets skill-less in the wind-heart runes,
> Old wizards lacking in their wonder-lore.[37]

Except for the "painters" (perhaps a reference to Browning's), these "singers," "poets," "wizards" are personae, "old disguisings," of Ezra Pound in other poems.

Pound's "Scriptor Ignotus," dedicated "To K. R. H. Ferrara 1715" in *A*

Lume Spento of 1908, copies and revises Browning's "Pictor Ignotus" subscribed "Florence, 15—" in directions typical of the way many of Pound's presentations work. Both titles refer to the *I* of the poem in the anonymous formulas for the signature in a poetic miscellany or the attribution in a museum label for a painting, but the subscriptions giving local habitations and dates claim that the unnamed speakers are not fictions but actual persons who lived in times and places at a distance from the authors of the poems. Pound even adds a note to tell us what we would surely not know otherwise, that the title has in mind Bertold Lomax, "English Dante scholar and mystic," that he died in 1723 with his "'great epic'" still "a mere shadow," and that the poem is his address to a lady organist of Ferrara.[38]

Browning reinforces the separation between the *I* and the poet by choosing a painter to say the poem, which is a defense of his "pictures" to an unappreciative listener. The occasion allows a detailed evocation of what Browning imagines to have been the atmosphere of sixteenth-century Florence in which the painter works. Pound narrows the distance between himself as author and his persona: by making him an artist who is specifically a poet, who is like Pound himself a scholar of Italian poetry, who has not written an epic, whose vow to his beloved to "make . . . / A new thing / as has not heretofore been writ" would remind readers of Pound's often repeated call to arms for poets of his generation to "Make it new!" The poem itself does not weave particulars of setting or occasion into the speech of the unknown scriptor that would identify him with the actual person described in the note. He compares himself to Dante but also to Pierre de Ronsard, his lady to Iseult as well as to Beatrice. His speech is in the tradition of promises to immortalize the beloved; he is the mask of the poet-lover, and of Ezra Pound who wears it to write "Scriptor Ignotus." The poem therefore makes only the slightest gestures toward the detailed treatment given to Browning's *dramatis personae*. Browning's closest imitator of such treatments is not Pound but Edwin Arlington Robinson, for instance in "Rembrandt to Rembrandt (Amsterdam, 1645)," published in 1927.

Pound's poems are often spoken under the masks of "Old singers," "Old poets," "Old wizards," and they are often presented by titles in the same form as Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" that consist only of the proper name for an actual person who lived in a distant time and place. An example is "Cino," with the subscription "(*Italian Campagna 1309, the open road*)." This presentation and some brash colloquial lines like the opening—"Bah! I have sung women in three cities"—are like Browning in particularity and immediacy, but the poem as a whole is less a burst of speech than an incantation full of "Strange spells of old deity" and "the souls of song."[39] The title for a sonnet of the same period names the "I" of the poem "Plotinus,"

who seems to be another mask of the poet, a visionary who makes "images" of the self:

> I cried amid the void and heard no cry,
> And then for utter loneliness, made I
> New thoughts as crescent images of *me*.[40]

In a poem of the same period Pound again salutes Browning by borrowing from his title "Paracelsus" but making it new as "Paracelsus in Excelsis." Browning's is a dramatic poem in five scenes adding up to more than four thousand lines; Pound's is thirteen. Its stripped form is fitted to the wizard-persona's stark vision: "Being no longer human, why should I / Pretend humanity or don the frail attire?" He sees himself among beings who rise above "the world of forms" to become like works of art:

> We seem as statues round whose high-risen base
> Some overflowing river is run mad,
> In us alone the element of calm![41]

The "I" is another mask for the poet whose vision is the poem. Its title, incorporating "Paracelsus" into a rhyme with "Excelsis," treats the proper name as a word in the game of poetry, abstracting it from historical context and dramatic impersonation.

Although the titles that present these personae are often in the same form as "Fra Lippo Lippi," in relation to the poems they head and the contexts in which they appear they work quite differently. Pound himself explains what these differences are in the previously quoted letter to Williams of 1908:

> To me the short so-called dramatic lyric—at any rate the sort of thing I do—is the poetic part of a drama the rest of which (to me the prose part) is left to the reader's imagination or implied or set in a short note. I catch the character I happen to be interested in at the moment he interests me, usually a moment of song, self-analysis, or sudden understanding or revelation. And the rest of the play would bore me and presumably the reader. I paint my man as I *conceive* him. Et voila tout![42]

His terms fit the poems. They are "song" or "revelation." They "paint" as they "*conceive*" (in both senses of apprehending and bringing to life), not what they see, as does "Fra Lippo Lippi" in the artist's "pictures of the world." In that poem the painter's art is an analogy for Browning's kind of poem, but the figure of the artist himself is not a mask for the poet in Pound's sense. The painter is a particularized dramatic character who is given lines to speak with which their author, the poet, is in sympathy. By contrast, "Scriptor Ignotus," "Cino," "Plotinus" are personae who represent the poet, to quote Blackmur again, "under the definition and the clarity of a symbol." Although the poems are presented in titles of the same forms

as Browning's, they do not ask for the same complicity in pretending to accept the independent existence of the *Personae of Ezra Pound* that is asked of Browning's readers in the instructions of his title page, *Dramatis Personae. By Robert Browning.*

Elizabeth Bishop in the title "Crusoe in England" gives the figure whose voice we hear in the poem a name that confers on him a multilayered identity shaped by his relations to twentieth-, nineteenth-, and even eighteenth-century first-person speakers. Like "Ulysses"—and Tennyson's poems were among books of her aunt's that Bishop read as a child[43]—the title "Crusoe in England" identifies the *I* of the poem by a proper name famous as the name of a seafaring adventurer in a literary narrative that is also known by his name. But then, unlike Homer's hero or Tennyson's, the narrator of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* of 1719 had an actual, contemporaneous prototype, the Scottish sailor who lent his name to the admittedly pretended "I" of Cowper's "Verses, supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, During His solitary Abode In the Island of Juan Fernandez," first published in 1782. Bishop's "Crusoe" is related to Defoe's fictional and to Cowper's "supposed" first-person speaker, each in some sense authenticated by Selkirk's well-known history, which was recounted in various prose reports of the time including one by Richard Steele, who "had the pleasure, frequently, to converse with the man soon after his arrival in England in the year 1711."[44] Among the other reports of Selkirk, one claimed to be "Written by his own Hand," while the many reprints of Cowper's poem included an attempt, in 1787, to pass it off as "an original composition of Selkirk during his solitude."[45]

Something like this conflation of the actual and the imagined is reflected in special ways in the precise final form of Bishop's title "Crusoe in England," revised from "Crusoe at Home." Locating the figure with a fictional name in a real place treats him as an actual person like Selkirk or like the prototype of Tennyson's "Columbus," not a legendary but a historical seafarer, adventurer, discoverer. Bishop's title also points to the way the poem shapes his story. He tells it when he is "old" and "bored," when his famous voyage is only a memory to dwell on in the "uninteresting" present, which is located after the conclusion of Defoe's written account but parallel to the years Selkirk lived, according to Steele often bewailing the lost "tranquillity of his solitude," beyond his return to England.[46]

Defoe's hero is of course Bishop's immediate model for a fictional *I* with a supposedly true history, which his narrative recounts in such bewitchingly minute detail that the illusion of reality is irresistible. Bishop's revised title "Crusoe in England" lays claim to an illusion of reality like Defoe's, but when set beside Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, her title shows its own different directions to the reader. The *I* of her poem is not *Robinson Crusoe*, what he would be called in

the title of an autobiographical narrative by its editor, likely also to be its publisher, whose entrepreneurial enthusiasm Defoe's title imitates. In Bishop's title the speaker is more familiarly named just "Crusoe," someone we need no editor to introduce us to, someone we already know or know of. This adjustment in the title is pointed, especially where naming is a recurring interest in both the poem and the narrative.

What Defoe's narrator tells us most about in the opening paragraph, which begins the transformation of his fictional story into history, is his name:

> I was born in the year 1632, in the City of York, of a good family, tho' not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull . . . afterward at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named *Robinson*, a very good family in that country, and from whom I was called *Robinson Kreutznauer*; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, nay, we call our selves, and write our name *Crusoe*, and so my companions always call'd me.[47]

Bishop's title takes pleasure in its pretense as Defoe's does, but she invites us to join her in playing a more complicated game with it. By naming the *I* of the poem what his "companions" always called him, her title refers to him not as he is presented to readers of a printed account like Defoe's, but as he is spoken to *in real life*—that is, in the life of Defoe's fictional hero outside his written narrative. This asks us to imagine that we are familiar with "Crusoe"—we do not ask *who is Crusoe?*—as if he were a person we might know, as if we had not in actual fact heard of him solely because he is the famous hero of a literary narrative, an eighteenth-century *Odyssey.* At the same time the title treats him as a celebrity whose return to England we might learn of in the news, someone we know to have been elsewhere.

The layering of representations that begins in the title with the third-person naming of the *I* of the poem raises a question "Crusoe" himself asks in many forms, but nowhere as explicitly as it is asked in a poem also from Bishop's culminating and retrospective last volume, *Geography III.* That poem, which has the archetypal title "Poem" and occupies the central space in the volume, explores the nature of representation questioned throughout Bishop's work, beginning with "The Map," which opens *The Complete Poems.* In "Poem" the "I" who contemplates a dim little painting, "but how live, how touching in detail" (like Defoe's narrative), asks:

> art "copying from life" and life itself,
> life and the memory of it so compressed
> they've turned into each other. Which is which?[48]

The complicated design we have seen in Bishop's third-person title "Crusoe in England," naming a famous fictional *I* treated as an actual person, also

raises this question, which is not asked in poems with such titles by Tennyson, or Browning, or Pound. It troubles her "Crusoe" but not Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or Cowper's supposed "Selkirk," and troubled questioning is the mode of her poem.

The issue of "art 'copying from life,'" of representation, is concentrated in the title: on the name the poet gives her speaker, and therefore on how she names her poem. For "Crusoe" himself, the confusion of representations around the act of naming gathers like the clouds over his island. He begins by contrasting a newly discovered island he has read about—"They named it" he does not say what—with the island in his memory, which is "un-rediscovered, un-renamable. / None of the books has ever got it right."[49] His own effort was and is to get it right, which he tried and tries to do by endlessly varied acts of naming, like a twentieth-century Adam cast away in an unrecorded world. He remembers how he named—by word or epithet but more often by comparison—everything about the island, but there is a strange silence in the poem about whether or not he gave a name to the island itself (would it be "un-renamable" either way?). By contrast, Defoe's narrator begins the journal he keeps after being shipwrecked on his island with his first act of naming it "the *Island of Despair*, all the rest of the ship's company being drown'd, and my self almost dead."[50]

Bishop allows "Crusoe" to borrow from this christening with revealingly different effects, beginning with his application of the name just to a part of the island:

> One billy-goat would stand on the volcano
> I'd christened *Mont d'Espoir* or *Mount Despair*
> (I'd time enough to play with names),
> and bleat and bleat, and sniff the air.

Here getting it right is not finding the right name for fact and feeling—Defoe's narrator has no hesitation in calling his "dismal unfortunate island" simply "*Despair*"—but playing with names like a poet. (Who else, besides someone stranded on a desert island, would have a lifetime for word games?) By such play "Crusoe" discovers that two epithets contradictory in meaning are meaninglessly, or significantly, alike in sound. Then are words real things insofar as they are sounds, or are they names for real things that do not fully exist until they are named?

The same game is played more obliquely in this passage with the nickname "billy-goat" (boy-goat, but *billy* as noun once meant *fellow* or *mate*) for the creature whose eyes "expressed nothing, or a little malice." The familiar, friendly epithet contrasts with the creature's strange bleating noises:

> The goats were white, so were the gulls,
> and both too tame, or else they thought

> I was a goat, too, or a gull.
> *Baa, baa, baa* and *shriek, shriek, shriek,*
> *baa . . . shriek . . . baa . . .*

The passage is again revealingly reshaped from its source, this time lines spoken by Cowper's supposed "Selkirk":

> The beasts that roam over the plain,
> My form with indifference see,
> They are so unacquainted with man,
> Their tameness is shocking to me.[51]

"Crusoe" ignores Cowper's particular satiric point here that the insulting "indifference" offensive to the dignity of "Selkirk" comes from the beasts' ignorance of human cruelty. His interest is again in questions of naming: are the goats' bleats like words in being sounds or like words in being animal names for *goat* and *gull* that they misapply to man, as he may misapply "billy-goat" to some radically other thing?

Defoe's narrator applies hilariously inapposite names to make himself at home on his island, but he does so with cheerful bravado. Describing his efforts to secure himself from "savage wretches," he tells how he "kept close within my own circle": "When I say my own circle, I mean by it my three plantations, *viz.* my castle, my country seat, which I call'd my bower, and my enclosure in the woods." He titles himself "My Majesty, the Prince and Lord of the whole island," perhaps a source for Cowper's famous line, "I am monarch of all I survey"; in time he calls his "castle" his "home."[52]

At least as hilarious but much more troubled, sadder, are the efforts of Bishop's "Crusoe" to transplant an Englishman's home to his island by the power of renaming. He sees piles of "Snail shells" that "at a distance" look like "beds of irises":

> —well, I tried
> reciting to my iris-beds,
> "They flash upon that inward eye,
> which is the bliss . . ." The bliss of what?

Is the missing word from Wordsworth's line the counterpart of the island name missing from this poem? Could "Crusoe" not remember "solitude" because questions disturb him about words' worth as names for either fact or feeling: "The bliss of what?" Or was his memory receiving interference from Cowper's supposed "Selkirk," who asks a different question: "Oh Solitude! where are the charms / That sages have seen in thy face?" Or could he not finish the line from "I wandered lonely as a cloud" because Wordsworth had not yet (not by 1709 when Selkirk was rescued, not by 1719 or 1782 when Defoe's and Cowper's renderings were published) written the book of poems where "Crusoe" back in England could "look it up"?

"Crusoe," like "A poet" who is the "I" of Wordsworth's poem, "wandered lonely," but in a space that "seemed to be / a sort of cloud-dump" offering "not much company" except the goats whose "questioning shrieks, . . . equivocal replies" might be dubiously analogous to language insofar as they are unlike, or like, human names in relation to the things they do or do not represent. His island, itself rediscovered but not renamed in his memory, seems to his imagination more real (though not nameable "the bliss of solitude") than the island he lives on. Unlike Bishop in the title, he does not say that it is "England," nor does he call it "Home," as the original title named it with pained inappropriateness, but only "another island, / that doesn't seem like one, but who decides?" Who decides to call it an "island"? to name it "England"? to say it is more real than "my poor old island" because it is so named officially in the same "books" that have never been able to get his "un-renamable" island right?

Starting with her title, Bishop creates an *I* with a unique identity apart from her own, shaped by her uses of his remarkable origins. "Crusoe," we have seen, has special status as a fictional figure with an actual contemporaneous prototype who is spoken of in the title as he would be by his familiar friends. And this is how the poem treats him. Bishop's attitude toward him is above all friendly, which narrows the distance between them while maintaining it. Friendliness, unlike pity, does not "begin at home" (where it begins for "poor miserable Robinson Crusoe" in the opening sentence of his journal). We feel friendly toward others, not ourselves. The poem makes us feel that way toward "Crusoe," who is likeable for his inventiveness and practical energy, his humorous capacity to make up, to make do, to make things: "Home-made, home-made! But aren't we all?" The affection the poem expresses for these qualities matches "Crusoe's" for the results of his contrivings: "I felt a deep affection for / the smallest of my island industries." It is also matched by Bishop in a notebook entry dated 1934 about a stay on Cuttyhunk Island: "on an island you live all the time in this Robinson Crusoe atmosphere; making this do for that, and contriving and inventing. . . . A poem should be made about making things in a pinch."[53]

The companionable distance created by the poem's friendliness toward "Crusoe" is supported by its anachronisms, which make him a contemporary of the author and the reader. His speech is wholly modern, with none of Pound's archaisms. It has none of Browning's names, dates, and historically reconstructed details to set him at a distance, for instance in Defoe's or Selkirk's early eighteenth century. On the contrary, "Crusoe" can—almost—quote lines (then not yet written) by Wordsworth, whose language is echoed everywhere in Bishop's poem. This makes the "I" and his author alike and sympathetic, and yet keeps them separate; she could supply "Crusoe" with the word missing from his quotation.

Both the title and the poem humorously keep their balance in treating the first-person speaker as someone who is not the author but like her, someone she would enjoy as a friend. Both are modern poets, which for them means post-Wordsworthian poets who playfully ask disturbing questions about representation, about the connections among words, things, meanings. "Crusoe" is a free-standing figure with an identity distinct from Bishop's, yet is her fictional representation of that real presence, "art 'copying from life.'" The illusion invites us to ask "Which is which?" This question, at the center of "Crusoe in England," the volume *Geography III*, and *The Complete Poems*, is not raised by Defoe or Cowper. Nor is it asked about the presentations of the historical or mythological figures named as speakers in later-nineteenth-century impersonations or as personae in earlier-twentieth-century symbolic monologues.

The inclusive *man*

The nineteenth- and twentieth-century titles that consist of a proper name for the first person we hear in the poem pretend to exclude the presence of the author but acknowledge us as listeners. Another kind of third-person title, mainly appearing soon after Pound's early recastings of the dramatic monologue as the mask, presents the first-person speaker in a form that ultimately includes both the poet and the reader in its reference.

The group of D.H. Lawrence's poems published in 1917 was begun about five years earlier, when he was reading Pound, whom he had met in London. Its original title was to be *Man and Woman*. Setting it beside Browning's *Men and Women*, a comparison Lawrence is likely to have intended, we see that the everyday social particularity suggested in Browning's title—one we might expect for a Victorian novel—is transformed into an archetypal formula with mythic and biblical associations. The more provocative title Lawrence finally gave to the volume, *Look! We Have Come Through*, emphasizes the intimacy of these love poems and their status as what in the foreword to them he calls "confession," but it also focuses the volume on the poem in it with a title it borrows from, "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through."[54] This combines the immediately personal idiom of the revised volume title with the general and archetypal epithet of the original. It refers to the "I" of the poem in mythic outline as "a Man," who is modernized by the colloquialism describing his heroic achievement as having "Come Through."

This title and others in the volume of the same pattern like the one for the poem immediately preceding, "Song of a Man Who Is Loved," are designed to include an archetypal reader with the poet in the form of reference to the *I* whose personal history is told in the poems. Again more particu-

larly the archetypal woman reading the poems is specified both as listener and participant in the experience of the first person speaking the poem immediately following. It is titled "One Woman to All Women," another echo and alteration of a title of Browning's, "Any Wife to Any Husband," from his volume *Men and Women*. These transformations of Browning's titling are like Pound's in transcending everyday particularity, an effect supported by the combination of archaic with colloquial language in the poems. Yet Lawrence's presentations of the *I* are very different from Pound's symbolic masks of the poet. Lawrence's archetypes are ideal images of the unity of experience in which both poet and reader participate.

Hardy's *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verse* was also published in 1917, with two poems titled to refer to the first person who says the poem in something like the same mixed way, but with different effects. "The Man with a Past" conjures up a figure on a large scale or in imposing silhouette by its echo of epic openings: the first words of the *Aeneid* as in John Dryden's translation—"Arms and the man I sing"—or of *The Faerie Queene*—"Lo I the man." (Robinson's title "The Man Against the Sky" of 1916 has the same reverberations.) Yet Hardy's added colloquial idiom "with a Past" evokes instead of suitably heroic memories a skeleton in the closet, some melodramatic secret. Here the clashing of styles in the title both matches and mocks the speaker's reading in the text of the "blows" that "time" dealt him "long ago."[55] If the title were "He Laments His Past," on the same model as the two following, "He Fears His Good Fortune" and "He Wonders About Himself," it would distance the poet and the reader from the speaker and would direct us to read the poem without much hesitation as another instance of what Hardy calls "dramatic impersonation." By referring instead to the first-person speaker as "The Man," the title mythologizes the feelings expressed in the poem much as they are enlarged by the protagonist himself. It therefore equivocates about who after all the mythmaker is, allowing that we—who are included in "Man"—along with the giver of the title may be implicated in this essential human self-delusion.

"The Man Who Forgot" from the same volume could be the title of a tragic legend, but it also sounds rather like a limerick—*There once was a man who forgot*—or a title in a collection of light verse, like Ogden Nash's "The Man Who Frustrated Madison Avenue," or Louis Simpson's "The Man Who Married Magdalene," or the potential title in Stevens's *Schemata* notebook, "The man who could not sell even nectarines." The clash of associations in Hardy's title becomes more sharply mocking in its relation to the poem, where we learn what the title holds back: what it is that "The Man Who" says the poem "Forgot."[56]

One reading of the answer is that the speaker in remembering his past has forgotten that it is past, that "Forty years' frost and flower" have rotted

what his memory keeps deceptively alive. Another way to read this answer to the title is that he forgot to forget. He alone remembers as real and sees in seductively "fair" moonlit imaginings what is no longer an actuality—"Nothing stands anywhere"—to "brains" the less deceived. This reading recognizes a hint that the "I" of the poem is everyman and also more particularly a late-Romantic poet. To this figure, what Hardy in "Shut Out That Moon" calls "that sad-shaped moon" (revised to "stealing moon") is an insidious muse inducing memories "almost forgotten" except by poets writing in the "decline" of daylight, yet still indispensable to their imaginations: "My right mind woke, and I stood dumb." Since the poem "The Man Who Forgot" allows both answers to the question left open by the title, it includes the reader as well as the poet in the experience of the protagonist named by the titler as "The Man." That form of reference identifies the "I," the poet, and the reader all as modern versions of the epic hero struggling to keep alive what is "almost" but not wholly "forgotten," at the same time that we are suitable figures for nonsense verses who are not in our "right mind."

We and the poet meet again as we are implicated in the way the title refers to the speaker of Stevens's "The Man Whose Pharynx Was Bad," another epic-limerick hero. The poem is included in Stevens's first volume, *Harmonium* (in the edition of 1931), but was projected as early as 1905, when his journal records that he was reading Hardy. An entry for December 31 of that year reveals what he recognized as their kinship of feeling: "A weighty day of course. . . . read a little of Hardy's 'Trumpet Major' and after dinner read more. Pulled my curtains shortly after four and lit my lamp, feeling rather lonely—& afraid of the illusions and day-dreams that comfort me."[57] The scene and mood are an almost uncanny prediction of Hardy's "Shut Out That Moon," dated 1904 and published four years later in *Time's Laughingstocks*, confirming the rightness of the sympathy Stevens early felt between them:

> Close up the casement, draw the blind,
> Shut out that sad-shaped moon,
> She wears too much the guise she wore
> Before our lutes were strewn
> . . .
> Within the common lamp-lit room
> Prison my eyes and thought;
> Let dingy details crudely loom,
> Mechanic speech be wrought.[58]

Hardy's grimly dismayed self-mockery in this and the other poems discussed here is very close to the quality of feeling in Stevens's early poem

"The Man Whose Pharynx Was Bad," in which the first person of the opening stanza—"I am too dumbly in my being pent"—lives in a late-Romantic version of the world where Coleridge and Wordsworth were "in the great City pent":

> The wind attendant on the solstices
> Blows on the shutters of the metropoles,
> Stirring no poet in his sleep.[59]

The figure speaking "dumbly" is the modern "no poet" but, as the pronoun "I" disappears after the first stanza to become "One" in the last, "The Man Whose Pharynx Was Bad" finally stands obliquely for the reader as well as the poet.

There are three other poems by Stevens with titles presenting the speaker as absurdly heroic or heroically absurd *man* who speaks in the poem as *one*: "The Snow Man," also in *Harmonium*; "The Man on the Dump" and "The Sense of the Sleight-of-hand Man," both in *Parts of a World* of 1942. The specially charged connection between their form of title and their pivotal pronoun is confirmed by the fact that in *The Collected Poems* there are only two other poems built around the speaker's use of *one*.[60]

Generic one is what grammars also call an indefinite pronoun. They describe it as the formal equivalent of generically used *you*, *we*, *us*, but with the difference that these are personal pronouns collectively referring to "people in general" but still with traces of their personal origins. This terminology describes what we know from our experience of both written and spoken language, that *you*, *we*, *us* work dramatically, as a sort of appeal by the speaker to the listener, an evocation of shared experience, a reminder of some common bond. *One*, somewhat more usable in writing than in speech, has no personal roots but includes all persons impersonally, grammatically, in what Otto Jespersen terms the "generic person." It is the English equivalent of *on* in French, *man* in German, linguistic parallels not likely to be lost on Stevens. *One* suppresses connections between the speaker and someone else listening because of its impersonal oneness, avoiding dramatic interchange or expression, like a blank mask. It is used, as Jespersen says, "often as a kind of disguised *I*."[61] In "The Man Whose Pharynx Was Bad" the disappearance of "The Man" who speaks as the first-person singular nominative "I" into the generic indefinite pronoun "One" is the grammatical record of his grotesque "malady," an absurd analogy in its blank inexpressiveness for the "dumbly pent" condition of the generic person, "one." It includes "no poet" and indefinite reader in a nonconnection between speaker and hearer.

"The Snow Man" is another title presenting "Man" in an aspect at once ridiculous and archetypal, by conjuring up the image of a cheery, childish,

perishable artifact, the snowman, and also an elemental, mythic being, the man of snow (who might be compared with "The man of autumn" of "Secret Man" in Stevens's *Opus Posthumous*). In the poem the snowman is immediately dissolved while the man of snow emerges gradually. The process is recorded grammatically as the "One," who opens the poem-sentence guardedly regarding, disappears into the other-than-humanly personal "listener" who, "nothing himself," is receptive to "Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is." Although the grammar of the sentence makes no dramatic interchange between speaker and hearer, "the listener" obliquely allows the possibility of our representation with the poet in the generic man of snow.[62]

Differences between these presentations of "Man" and the absurdly grand figures who speak the two related poems in the later volume *Parts of a World* are again guardedly recorded in the grammar of the speakers, beginning with the pronouns they choose to speak in or behind. Both still prefer the indefinite *one*, even using it more often, but that repetitiveness itself charges *one* with a new expressive energy: in "The Sense of the Sleight-of-hand Man" "One's grand flights, one's Sunday baths, / One's tootings at the weddings of the soul"; in "The Man on the Dump" "One sits and beats an old tin can, lard pail. / One beats and beats for that which one believes."[63] Also in each of these poems, unlike the earlier two, there is a moment when "One" speaks as "you," still a generic pronoun but with personal roots, acknowledging a bond between speaker and hearer, creating a dramatic connection grounded in shared experience. The "Sleight-of-hand Man" asks, "Could you have said the bluejay suddenly / Would swoop to earth?" Questions, which even when verging on the rhetorical imply at least some unspoken response, are another grammatical gesture not made by either *one* in the earlier poems. The identification with "you" happens for "The Man on the Dump" when "One rejects / The trash"

> and the moon comes up as the moon
> (All its images are in the dump) and you see
> As a man (not like an image of a man).

"One" becomes "you" and "a man" at the same "moment," connecting "The Man" heroically alone on his grotesque promontory with someone listening. The acknowledgment is more direct, grammatically but also feelingly more personal than in "the listener" at the end of "The Snow Man." The presence of the poet speaking to the reader is therefore closer to the surface in the interplay between the title and the grammar of the poem, which includes us in the figure of "a man" now not so "dumbly pent" that his language cannot include "you."

The title of John Ashbery's "A Man of Words" in *Self-Portrait in a Con-*

vex Mirror evokes memories of these titles, but more especially of Stevens's "Men Made out of Words," which ends with a chillingly inclusive aphorism: "The whole race is a poet that writes down / The eccentric propositions of its fate."[64] Ashbery's title at the same time echoes in disturbingly revised form the familiar idiom *a man of few words*, which brings to mind the traditional hero, the strong silent type, the doer of deeds, for whom "A Man of Words" is the anti-hero. The "Man" the title deconstructs to "Words" is shrunk further in the opening lines to become "smaller / Than at first appeared," the maker only of "a skit," dry, brittle "grass writing," as chillingly lifeless as a weather report "with / The outlook for continued cold."[65]

This disembodied figure is isolated in the third person of the title and the clinical opening phrase, "His case," and by the almost implacably steady avoidance of other personal pronouns, which gives the poem itself an impenetrably cold, dry surface. A more direct hint that "His case" is the malady this poet fears he may suffer from, that this poem is another *Self-Portrait*, escapes midway in the first-person pronouns that slip out in a parenthetical negative: "not the metallic taste / In my mouth as I look away." The reader, who has been kept from discovering the first person "Behind the mask" of grammar worn by "A Man of Words," has only this glimpse until the closing lines, where one more personal pronoun surfaces, but with more controlled obliqueness: "Just time to reread this / And the past slips through your fingers, wishing you were there." Here "you" is a grammatical mask for the first-person singular, but unlike "He" does not isolate the hidden *I* from the reader. Generic "you" includes us grammatically and dramatically in the appeal it makes to shared experience, which here seems to be the experience of absentness and separateness expressed by another rewritten idiom, the transformed version of the postcard cliché *wishing you were here*. The pronoun "you" also includes the briefly exposed "I," expressing this later-twentieth-century poet's sense of connection with poets of the "past," "you" who shared his fearful recognition that "All diaries are alike, clear and cold." It is a gesture of kinship with poetic forebears, perhaps Stevens particularly under the guise of heroically absurd "Man," who struggled to make new "The story worn out from telling." That figure seems not as much to be a fictional person here as, more precisely, a grammatical person.

34. Barry Miles, *Ginsberg: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 391.

35. Allen Ginsberg, *Composed on the Tongue* (Bolinas, Calif.: Grey Fox Press, 1980), 76.

36. Ibid., 112.

37. Ibid., 111.

38. Ibid., 147.

39. Allen Ginsberg, *White Shroud: Poems 1980–1985* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 40.

40. Ibid., 84–85.

41. Ginsberg, *Composed on the Tongue*, 112–13.

42. A description of how "this poet" spends his lunch hours is given on the back cover of Frank O'Hara, *Lunch Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1964).

Chapter 3

1. Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apologie for Poetrie," *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. G. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), 1: 166.

2. Alfred Tennyson, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (London, 1830), 31–42.

3. Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson* (New York: Collier Books, 1972), 40.

4. Richard Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple. Sacred Poems, With other Delights of the Muses* (London, 1646), 43–47.

5. John Jump, ed., *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 46.

6. Alfred Tennyson, *The Poetic and Dramatic Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. W. J. Rolfe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), 4n.

7. William Cartwright, *Poems* [1651], *The Plays and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951), 461–62.

8. T. S. Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (London: The Egoist, 1917), 27–30.

9. Christopher Ricks, *T. S. Eliot and Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 2. The discussion here is clearly indebted to Ricks's in many respects.

10. Ibid., 4; Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959), 3.

11. A direct connection between Tennyson's choice of "Waterproof" and a description of "Mr. Bumble" in *Oliver Twist* has been pointed out by Paul Turner, cited by Christopher Ricks, ed., in Alfred Tennyson, *The Poems of Tennyson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 2: 96n.

12. Another contribution might be the name of "Will Honeycomb" for the man-about-town in the club created by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in *The Spectator*.

13. Pound makes this distinction in a letter of 1913. See T. S. Eliot, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 1: 101.

14. Samuel French Morse, "Wallace Stevens, Bergson, Pater" and Robert

Buttel, "Wallace Stevens at Harvard: Some Origins of His Theme and Style," in *The Act of the Mind*, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce and J. Hillis Miller (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 58n2, 31n1.

15. Alexander Pope, "A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry," *Pastoral Poetry and an Essay on Criticism*, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (London: Methuen, 1961), 29.

16. Ambrose Philips, "Preface," *Pastorals* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1973).

17. *Englands Helicon*, ed. Hyder Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), 1: 184–85.

18. Andrew Marvell, *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, 3rd ed., rev. Pierre Legouis and E. E. Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1: 44–47.

19. I have also not found any precedents among titles for Italian poems.

20. John Milton, *Poems of John Milton*, type-facsimile (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 30–36.

21. The title phrase "A Poem Nearly Anonymous" was invented for an essay, "Lycidas," by John Crowe Ransom. See *The World's Body* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1938), 1–28.

22. Milton, *Poems*, 37–44.

23. William Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (London, 1849), 1: 282.

24. W. B. Yeats, *Words For Music Perhaps and Other Poems* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1932), 24.

25. Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* (London: Macmillan, 1906), 696; George Marshall, *A Tennyson Handbook* (New York: Twayne, 1963), 95.

26. Robert Browning, *Dramatic Lyrics* (London, 1842), 3: 2.

27. Robert Browning, *Men and Women* (Boston, 1856), 343–51.

28. Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), 91.

29. H. Tennyson, *A Memoir*, 427.

30. Browning, *Men and Women*, 29.

31. Boyd Litzinger and Donald Smalley, eds., *Browning: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 177.

32. Ezra Pound, *The Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 36.

33. Ezra Pound, *A Lume Spento and Other Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1965), 28.

34. Pound, *Letters*, 294.

35. Donald Davie, *Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 23.

36. Eric Homberger, ed., *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 228.

37. Pound, *A Lume Spento*, 52.

38. Ibid., 38–40.

39. Ibid., 17–19.

40. Ibid., 56.

41. Ezra Pound, *Personae of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1971), 32.

42. Pound, *Letters*, 36.

43. George Starbuck, "'The Work!' A Conversation with Elizabeth Bishop," *Elizabeth Bishop and Her Art*, ed. Lloyd Schwartz and Sybil Estess (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 319.

44. Richard Steele, "Steele's Account of Selkirk," in Daniel Defoe, *Romances and Narratives*, ed. George Aitken (New York: AMS Press, 1974), 3: 324.

45. John Howell, "Introduction," *The Life and Adventures of Alexander Selkirk* (Edinburgh, 1829), 8; letter dated Feb. 6, 1787, printed in *Gentlemans Magazine* 58 (1788): 206.

46. Steele, "Account of Selkirk," 328.

47. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe and Other Writings*, ed. James Sutherland (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 5. All quotations of this work are taken from this edition.

48. Elizabeth Bishop, *Geography III* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 36–39. A different point about "Crusoe in England" is made by Robert Hemenway, "Afterword" to David Kalstone, *Becoming a Poet* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989), 255, by citing the second and third of these lines from "Poem" but omitting the question "Which is which?"

49. Bishop, *Geography III*, 9–18.

50. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 59.

51. William Cowper, *Poems* (London, 1782), 305–8.

52. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 134, 120, 83.

53. Quoted by Bonnie Costello, *Elizabeth Bishop: Questions of Mastery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 208.

54. D. H. Lawrence, *Look! We Have Come Through! The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), 250.

55. Thomas Hardy, *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses* (London: Macmillan, 1917), 164–65.

56. Ibid., 217–18.

57. Joan Richardson, *Wallace Stevens: The Early Years, 1879–1923* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 235. Elizabeth Bishop recognizes the affinity among the differences between Hardy and Stevens in a letter of 1965: "Re-reading Hardy I was struck by his titles—just looking them over in the index—and thought what wonderful titles a lot of them would have made for Wallace Stevens, too." Titles such as "'Voices from Things Growing in a Churchyard' or 'On One Who Lived & Died Where He Was Born' could perfectly well be Wallace Stevens titles—and what would *he* have done with them?" Elizabeth Bishop, *One Art*, ed. Robert Giroux (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 442.

58. Thomas Hardy, *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses* (London: Macmillan, 1922), 45–46.

59. Wallace Stevens, *Harmonium* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1931), 128.

60. The other two poems are "Banal Sojourn" in *Harmonium* and "Poems of Our Climate" in *Parts of a World* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1945), 8–9.

61. Otto Jespersen, *Essentials of English Grammar* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1933), 150–51.

62. Stevens, *Harmonium*, 12.

63. Stevens, *Parts of a World*, 74–75, 22–24.

64. Wallace Stevens, *Transport to Summer* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1947), 87.

65. John Ashbery, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), 8.

Chapter 4

1. Ben Jonson, *Epigrammes*, in *Epigrams, The Forest, Underwoods* (New York: Facsimile Text Society, 1936), 769.

2. Both these tendencies in criticism at large and with respect to Jonson in particular are exhibited and discussed in representative ways in *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, ed. Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985).

3. Jonson, *Epigrammes*, 773–74.

4. Robert Herrick, *Hesperides: Or, The Works Both Humane & Divine of Robert Herrick, Esq.* (London, 1648), 3, 32, 33.

5. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 550.

6. Ibid., 625.

7. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 33–34.

8. John Gould Fletcher, *Fire and Wine* (London: Grant Richards, 1913), 56; Louis MacNeice, *The Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice*, ed. E. R. Dodds (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 443.

9. MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, 443.

10. Robert Graves, *New Collected Poems* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 43.

11. John Ashbery, *A Wave* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 13.

12. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1891–92), 426.

13. Ibid., 17–18.

14. Ibid., 427.

15. Ibid., 186.

16. Cited by Randall Jarrell, *Poetry and the Age* (New York: Octagon Press, 1982), 114.

17. Frank O'Hara, "Personism: A Manifesto," *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*, ed. Donald Allen (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1971), 498.

18. W. H. Auden, *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1945), 42–43.

19. Mark Strand, *The Late Hour* (New York: Atheneum, 1978), 23.

20. O'Hara, *Collected Poems*, 545.

21. Roman Jakobson, "Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb," *Russian Language Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 2.

22. O'Hara, *Collected Poems*, 342–43.

23. Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 101–84.