

ture; likewise Roberts ([1899], 1–23) and Barnes ([1986], 233). In support of a late first-century date, consider also, for example, the comments of Epictetus 3.13.9, writing in Greek under Trajan. Agreeing with a dating to shortly after Tacitus' own time are Barnes ([1986], 239) and Heldmann (1982), although he offers a different reading of the interchange between author and philosopher; Longinus' "rebuttal" of the Tacitean position held by the anonymous philosopher is "the strongest argument that this chapter was written after the *Dialogus*" (p. 290). G. Williams ([1978], 25) likewise believes that Longinus knew the *Dialogus*. For a reverse direction of literary dependency, see Barwick ([1954], 18–19), who actually thinks that Maternus' "stulti" at *Dial.* 40.2 is a jab at *laudatores temporis acti* like Longinus' philosopher. For the relevance of the argument to the Roman rather than the Greek world, see the sensible observations of G. Williams ([1978], 24).

## NOTES

### 1. THE EMPEROR'S AUDIENCE

1. See A. Cameron (1976), 157–192; Hopkins (1983), 15–17; MacMullen (1967), 170–173 with n.12; Tengström (1977), 43; Yavetz (1969), 18ff. For spectators turned into the spectacle, see, e.g., Suet. *Calig.* 35.2, *Dom.* 10.1; Pliny *Paneg.* 33.3. T. Bollinger, *Theatralis licentia: Die Publikumsdemonstrationen an der öffentlichen Spielen im Rom der früheren Kaiserzeit und ihre Bedeutung im politische Leben* (Winterthur, 1969), which I have not seen, would no doubt be relevant here too.
2. Pliny *Paneg.* 46.4; Tac. *Ann.* 15.59.2, in the mouths of Piso's encouragers.
3. The use of passages from Dio Cassius along with Suetonius and Tacitus to illuminate contrasts in the possible interpretations of Nero and his theatrical activity is rendered only slightly problematic by the state of his text for this period, which has come down to us largely in the epitomes of Xiphilinus (second half of the eleventh century) and Zonaras (early twelfth century). Millar (1964), 2, points out that Xiphilinus provides "not so much a précis of Dio as a rather erratic selection from his material . . . often keeping very close to his wording" and that "some [material], especially where there is a coherent narrative or anecdote of some special interest, is reproduced almost in full"; Zonaras used both Xiphilinus and Dio but engaged less in actual transcription. Dio himself, although he wrote in Greek and a century later than Tacitus, shared common source material with both Suetonius and Tacitus (see note 27), was a Roman senator and consul (in 229), and, in the view of Cizek (1972), 25, had a distinctively Roman perspective.
4. On the Juvenalia, see Tac. *Ann.* 14.15; Dio 61.19.1ff.; Suet. *Nero* 11.1; Bradley (1978), 82; Gatti (1976–77), 105; Warmington (1977), 64–65. The audience may have been from the public at large, Dio 61.19.3; he ignores, however, the private nature of the festival. For Nero's theater on the imperial grounds, see Pliny *N.H.* 37.19; on the question of repetition after 59, see Tac. *Ann.* 15.33.1 The topic of Nero's lyric composition is given at Dio 61.20.1 as *Attis, or the Bacchantes*. On

Nero's composition of poetry, including tragic and lyric verse for performance and possible fragments from his corpus, see Bardon (1936) and (1956), 124ff.; Dilke (1957), 93–94; Lesky (1949), 403ff.; Lienhart (1934), 65–69; Morelli (1914), 130–146; Morford (1985), 2016–18; Schmidt (1990), 156; Sullivan (1978), 167–170; Warmington (1977), 116–117.

5. On the Neronia of 60 A.D., see Tac. *Ann.* 14.20–21; Suet. *Nero* 12.3; Dio 61.21.2; Bradley (1978), 87.

6. To the crowns for Latin oratory and poetry, which were granted to the emperor by the agreement of the competitors themselves, Suetonius adds the prize for lyre-playing, awarded to the emperor by the judges and immediately dedicated by him to a statue of Augustus (*Nero* 12.3). Tacitus merely states that Nero was announced the victor in the oratorical competition (*Ann.* 14.21.4), while Dio's version has him winning the citharoedic prize after the *citharoedi* were disqualified *en masse* as unworthy to compete (61.21.2). To all this Morford draws the natural conclusion in (1985), 2022: "That the competitors very well understood the politics of the festival is proved by their unanimous resolution to award the prize for Latin poetry and oratory to Nero."

7. On Nero's performance at Naples see Tac. *Ann.* 15.33–34 and Suet. *Nero* 20.2–3.

8. On the second Neronia, see Tac. *Ann.* 16.4–5; Suet. *Nero* 21; Dio 62.29.1, where Nero's poem is identified as a composition on the fall of Troy, the *Troica*. Suetonius is unique in claiming an earlier, aborted performance of the festival at which Nero performed as a *citharoedus*, sang the *Niobe* (this is elsewhere described as one of his tragic roles), and then put off the rest of the festival until the following year. On this difficulty see Bradley (1978), 129–130. The timing of the second Neronia remains controversial; Bradley (1978), 87 and 128–131, supports a date of 64 A.D. with Bolton (1948), 82ff., and against J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (London, 1969), 325.

9. On the tour of Greece, see Dio 62.14; Suet. *Nero* 22.3–24.2.; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7; for other literary and epigraphical evidence, Lienhart (1934), 62–65. Tacitus' narrative unfortunately breaks off before this point. The tragic performances involved here appear to have been dramatic excerpts or scenes rather than whole tragedies and differed from lyre performances in that the singer wore a mask as well as a costume appropriate to his role. He may have performed with a troupe of "extras." For the discussion of his roles, see Chapter 2.

10. See Liddell-Scott-Jones s.vv.

11. On Vespasian's behavior at the theater and its consequences, see also Dio 66.11.2, again with Phoebus as the observer, although Vespasian's sin is now frowning, not snoring; and Dio 62.10.1a, apparently the same anecdote, where Nero marks the frowner and hates him for being stingy with his praise, but Vespasian's name is not specified.

12. A final individual named in connection with an unsatisfactory response to Nero's singing, although the theatrical context is not specified, is Seneca the Younger, also a senator. Tacitus would have us believe that Seneca's critics selected as a potent political weapon against the philosopher the accusation that he mocked Nero's voice whenever the emperor sang (*Ann.* 14.52.3). Dio also reports of Thrasea that he was eventually killed because (among other reasons) he refused to listen to the emperor singing to the lyre, 63.26.3. See also Bradley (1978), 131; Griffin (1984), 162 with note.

13. Tacitus' account of Nero's trip to Greece is of course lost, but repetition would be unlikely.

14. See Picard (1962), 228, who points out that although the *lex maiestatis* was applicable to those who scorned the spectacle, we know of no one punished for this reason alone. Even Vespasian's stint in the doghouse was brief, given his command in 67.

15. Again, the details of the original constitution of the *Augustiani*, or *Augusteioi*, vary from source to source. Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.15.5) and Dio (61.20.3) date their institution to the Juvenalia, but in Tacitus they have been recruited from the knights and no numbers are mentioned, while Dio's troop consists of 5,000 soldiers. Suetonius picks a date shortly after Nero's performance at Naples in 64 A.D.; impressed there by the rhythmic clapping of some visiting Alexandrians, Nero recruits a number of knights and 5,000 of the plebs and has them taught to use special forms of applause whenever he sings (*Nero* 20.3; named *Augustiani* at 25.1). Bradley notes of the Suetonian version that it "suggests a second stage in the development of the body," given the contrast to the date of 59 A.D. in Tacitus and Dio. Thus Dio's figure of 5,000 for this early date would be an error based on final size of the corps; see Bradley (1978), 127–128. Alternately Morford (1985), 2020, argues that their number was expanded to "5000 youths from all classes when Nero began to perform in public" (sc. at his debut in Naples; Suet. *Nero* 20.3), and Gatti (1976–77), 107f; takes a similar line. Given Tacitus' penchant for distortion in the direction of maximum moral outrage, however, I believe it dangerous to take at face value Tacitus' description of the *Augustiani* as all knights at any stage. Gatti (1976–77), 108, suggests more persuasively that Dio's notion of soldiers may arise from confusion over Suet. *Nero* 25.1 (or its source), where the *Augustiani* call themselves the soldiers of Nero's musical triumph upon his return from Greece (compare Dio 63.8.4). In this regard note also the presence of soldiers in the audience at Naples (Tac. *Ann.* 15.33.3) and the second Neronia (Suet. *Nero* 21.1; Tac. *Ann.* 16.5.1, where they beat those who falter). Dio also mentions the presence of soldiers at the Juvenalia who are apparently unconnected to the *Augustiani* he identifies as soldiers a few lines later (61.20.2). On the issue of Hellenistic influence in the formation of such a group, see Bradley (1978), 127–128; Gatti (1976–77), 111f. See also Cizek (1972), 124, who

argues that the *Augustiani* were intended to play a role in Nero's hellenization of Rome.

16. See, e.g., A. Cameron (1976), 234. As "small bands of partisans hired by individual pantomime dancers to ensure that their act was adequately appreciated," the claque would "stimulate and lead applause, which in Roman theaters tended to take the form of rhythmical chanting."

17. Gyles (1962), 198–199, questions with good reason the total efficacy of the claque, arguing that "the claque can not and does not make all the noise when a singer is enthusiastically received" especially when large numbers are involved; she suggests that Tacitus' outrage over audience response at the second Neronia stems from the fact that it was *not* wholly attributable to the claque (p. 196). But her assertion that Nero tried in every way to banish considerations of his status from the minds of his judges and audiences is pure conjecture and unlikely as well (pp. 197–198).

18. Unlike any audience in the tradition common to the three main sources on Nero's life, that of Pseudo-Lucian's dialogue *Nero* greets the emperor's inferior performances with widespread laughter despite the danger. Cf. also Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7. Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus* 3.4.4 contains a suggestive anecdote in this regard: the procurator of Epirus distributes his claque in the theater to ensure that his favorite comic actor wins the crown, and the indignant audience members yell and shout to counter its effects (the judges appear to have been won over by the claque, however). On the topic of claque efficacy, see also A. Cameron (1976), 235–236. Cicero *Pro Sestio* 115 is interesting, although the passage concerns claque in the republic and not the empire: Cicero claims that when a claque starts the applause, it is easy to see how this happens and who is responsible. However, since to argue thus is very much in his own interests here, we should be cautious about accepting his view wholesale.

19. Surveillance during the Greek tour is also a topic of Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7.

20. Tacitus in fact records a protest against the indirect tax-farmers and Nero's subsequent review of the system at *Ann.* 13.50–51, although he omits mention of the theater itself. See the comments of A. Cameron (1976), 164.

21. The closest example of such terminology would be found in the ancient criticism directed at "tragic historiography," e.g., by Polybius 2.56 against the third-century historian Phylarchus, who, in his eagerness to arouse the pity of his readers, graphically described scenes of calamity, siege, and death; this moves Polybius to protest that Phylarchus wrote like a tragedian even though the aim of tragedy is not the same as that of history, but the opposite (2.56.11). See also Polybius 12.24ff. against Timaeus of Tauromenium (likewise third century); Cicero *Brutus* 11.43; Lucian in *Hist. Conscr.* passim; and the comments of Borzsák (1973), 57–59, with bibliography.

22. See the definition of theatricality in Barbara Freedmann, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991), 1, where the context is the theater proper: "a fractured reciprocity whereby beholder and beheld reverse positions in a way that renders a steady position of spectatorship impossible." Burns (1972), 13, uses "theatricality" more generally to mean "any kind of behavior perceived and interpreted by others and described . . . in theatrical terms." But she does emphasize the concomitant sense that one's behavior is on view (p. 33): "We feel that we are in the presence of some action which has been devised to transmit beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of a kind that the 'composer' wishes us to have."

23. I note in passing that thus defined, theatricality is a way of understanding the effects of unequal power distribution on human interaction that is also closely related to the "observer-subject model" of the social theorist Erving Goffman. Goffman's formulation in his classic work *Strategic Interaction* is based on the idea of of "moves," or stages in the game of observation: the "unwitting move" of the party being watched, that is, "a subject's observable behavior that is unoriented to the assessment an observer might be making of it"; next, the "naive move" of the observer when he believes that the subject is engaged in an unwitting move and so takes him at face value; and the logical next step, the "control move" of the subordinate, "the intentional effort of an informant to produce expressions that he thinks will improve his situation if they are gleaned by the observer" (Goffman [1969], 11–16). The fourth is the "uncovering move," which is put into play by the observer when he suspects that what has seemed the subordinate's unwitting move is in fact a deliberate act—a control move—and does not represent the truth of the situation (*ibid.*, 17). The observer might try to counter this orientation of the subject by observing him so discreetly that he will not realize his responses are being evaluated in the first place, that he is on show. See similarly Burns (1972), 14: "in ordinary life people create drama both by their interpretations of behavior and through the effect which their presence (and the awareness that they are 'interpreting') has on the behaviour of participants."

24. Thus the concepts of theatricality and the observer-subject model are really species in the sociological genus of "role-playing" or "dramaturgy." See Brisset and Edgely (1990), 1–46, for a survey of the scholarship and an evaluation of Goffman's work.

25. See Tac. *Ann.* 13.15–16; Dio 61.1.2 and 7.4; Ps. Sen. *Octavia* passim; Schol. *Juv.* 1.71; *Jos. A.J.* 20.153 and *B.J.* 2.150; Eutrop. 7.14.1; Suet. *Nero* 33.2; all conveniently gathered by Bradley (1978), 198, although he erroneously gives the earlier Dio reference as 61.1.7.

26. According to Tacitus, Agrippina thus took revenge on Nero for ousting

her favorite, Pallas, from his post *a rationibus*; in Dio, it is because she was prevented from levying money. See Tac. *Ann.* 13.14.2–3 and Zonaras 11.12, p. 38, 23–32 D, supplied in the Loeb edition as a footnote to 61.7.4.

27. In support, Bradley (1978), 200: “The Tacitean items . . . in the section on the death of Britannicus show clearly enough that Tacitus and Suetonius drew on a common fund of material for their respective accounts of that event . . . Dio also has similarities.” The consensus of modern historians on the question of the sources and interrelation of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio for the life of Nero in general is that they used a common source or sources but that the later writers did not rely directly on their predecessors. That Suetonius had Tacitus’ account at his disposal is strongly indicated by his rebuttal of the latter’s insinuations about Nero’s poetic plagiarism (Suet. *Nero* 52, with Tac. *Ann.* 14.16.1), but, as Heinz (1948), 2, argues, chronological considerations argue against the likelihood of a direct dependence of Suetonius on Tacitus, while compositional ones make Dio’s direct dependence on Suetonius also unlikely. A more detailed consideration of Suetonius’ differences in content from Tacitus is offered at Heinz (1948), 137, with a similar argument for Dio and Tacitus at 138. Heinz concludes by positing the existence of a common model for the account of Nero. On Dio and Tacitus, see also Jahn (1920), 29–32; on all three historians, see Cizek (1972), 5–46; Griffin (1984), 235–237 (app. 1); Martin (1981), 23–24 and 208; Syme (1958), 689–692 (app. 36). These accounts lead to the same conclusions: Suetonius was too close to Tacitus for systematic use, Dio could not rely on Suetonius because of the latter’s chronological hopscotching, the passages of Dio that are parallel to Tacitus display a more detailed knowledge than his. See also app. 77 on Suetonius and the *Annals* in Syme (1958), 781–782, where Syme questions whether Suetonius ever refers to the third hexad of the *Annals*, despite the issue of plagiarism cited above. The identity of the common source or sources is another question altogether. Modern favor alternates between Pliny the Elder, Cluvius Rufus, and Fabius Rusticus, all mentioned together at Tac. *Ann.* 13.20.2. (see, e.g., the authorities already cited; Bradley (1978), 17–18; Warmington (1969), 1–9; but the problem has little bearing on the present study.

28. The depiction of a murder at the dinner table in both Suetonius and Tacitus, and indeed the whole question of Nero’s guilt, have not been untouched by skepticism, especially given Tacitus’ dramatic stage-effects. See the comments of Robichon (1985), 93; criminals rarely court stage-effects. Robichon also expresses doubt about the existence in ancient Rome of such a poison as Tacitus and Suetonius describe, and notes that Plutarch does not mention the murder of Britannicus among Nero’s crimes (pp. 94–97). It is interesting too that Josephus says that few at the time suspected that Britannicus’ death was an unnatural

one (*A.J.* 20.153), for all that Tacitus, Dio, and Suetonius suggest that everyone was in the know.

29. Greenblatt (1980), 13; J. C. Scott (1990), 14, offers a very similar exegesis, without however citing Greenblatt: “The capacity of dominant groups to prevail—though never totally—in defining and constituting what counts as the public transcript and what as offstage is . . . no small measure of their power.”

30. On this passage in Tacitus, see also the suggestive analyses of Henderson (1989), 188–189, and Henne et al. (1982), 143, who I find have commented along lines very similar to my discussion above: “It is interesting to note how power and the act of speaking are here closely associated by Tacitus. And Nero, through his speech, delineates the role which he would like to attribute: it is . . . that which gives to the abnormal the proportions of the known and the usual.”

31. “Post crepusculum statim adrepto pileo vel galero popinas inibat circumque vicos vagabatur ludibundus,” Suet. *Nero* 26.1. (*Galerus* in this context probably means wig; see Lewis and Short and the *OLD*, s.v.); “Nero itinera urbis et lupanaria et deverticula veste servili in dissimulationem sui compositus pererrabat,” Tac. *Ann.* 13.25.1; and see also Dio 61.81.1 and 61.9.1.

32. Baldwin (1972), 156, claims: “In reality, these discreet imperial ventures into the seamier districts of Rome were inspired by a need to know what the people were saying.” Another example of the importance of interpretation, perhaps, but I can find little backing for so rosy a view. Heinz (1948), 25, finds hints referring disapprovingly to this pastime of Nero’s in Seneca’s *De Clementia* 1.7.4, 1.8.1, 1.8.3–4, where (for example) Seneca comments in address to Nero that it is all right for the lowly to participate in brawls, but kings should not sink even to violent language (1.7.4).

33. Dated to 56 A.D. on the basis of this passage and Tac. *Ann.* 13.25.1–3 by Warmington (1976), 83; to 54/55 by Bradley (1978), 155. Both point out that *Ann.* 13.47.2 indicates the excursions continued into 58 A.D.

34. Dio at 57.1.3–5 articulates a similar analysis of how to interact safely with an emperor—except for Tiberius, of whom he remarks “it was dangerous not to understand his meaning . . . but worse still to understand it.” For Tacitus, too, Tiberius is an old hand at dissimulation, and to understand his meaning openly could be dangerous (see *Ann.* 1.11.2–3, and, on his tendency to dissimulate, 4.71.3 and 6.50.1); Domitian likewise is a master feigner (see, e.g., *Agric.* 42.2–3). So to some degree it is the working of power *simpliciter* that is marked, for Tacitus, by the theatrical perspective; in the case of Nero it finds a particular emphasis in Tacitus’ construal of his anecdotal information, in his choice of vocabulary, and in his politicization of what took place at the theater.

35. Only in Tacitus, too, does Nero take the initiative in attacking Julius, as Bradley (1978), 156, points out, adding that the accounts of Dio and Suetonius

are closer to each other. For a comparison of the sources, see also Heinz (1948), 27ff. In corroboration of Dio's version, in which Nero's behavior is common knowledge, see Pliny *N.H.* 13.126. Here this contemporary of the emperor discusses a salve that Nero smears on his face to remove the bruises from his outings, as a result of which he can show the world an unmarred face the next day, "contrary to rumor."

36. The aftermath of the Julius episode is also worthy of remark. Both Suetonius (*Nero* 26.2) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.25.3) note that Nero subsequently added men to his retinue to protect him in the event of such an attack. But whereas in Suetonius they are tribunes and follow him at a distance and in secret, in Tacitus they are soldiers and gladiators who specifically "allowed the modest beginnings of brawls, as if they were a private matter" only to intervene if the victims became too violent. So even the brawls become pseudo-brawls, and the soldiers are present to ensure that the response remains of the right sort.

37. Tac. *Ann.* 14.1–8; Suet. *Nero* 34.2–4; Dio 61.12–13.

38. On Tacitus' treatment of the death of Agrippina, see Dawson (1969), who argues from the inconsistencies in the narrative that the whole episode is a "farrago of lies and absurdities" (see especially 254–257). Dawson well analyzes Tacitus' depiction of Agrippina's final moments as "a perfect piece of theater" and suggests more hypothetically that the scene's verisimilitude comes from the stage itself—Tacitus has borrowed the details from a production of the *Orestes* with Nero in the title role ([1969], 261). Hind (1972), 205, suggests more credibly Seneca's *Oedipus* (1032–39) and the *Octavia* (368–372). See Chapter 2, note 52.

39. Many of the elements I have picked out as theatrical in Tacitus' account are reproduced in the versions of Suetonius and Dio; in the former, the details of Agerinus' framing and the false charge against Agrippina ("abiecto clam iuxta pugione ut percussorem sibi subornatum arripi constringique iussit, matrem occidi, quasi deprehensum crimen voluntaria morte vitasset," *Nero* 34.3); in Dio, possibly influenced here by Tacitus, a minimal account of the framing, but also Agrippina's dissimulation of her suspicions about Nero's intent (62.13.4) and the senators' thanksgivings (62.15.1), which I discuss. But there are significant differences in the treatment and the emphases; Dio's Agrippina is not made to voice her understanding of how to react, nor does she cling to her script until the last minute, while only Tacitus uses the word *stage-setting* (*scaena*) or its equivalent of Nero's preparations, and in Suetonius Agrippina is never granted her insight or her dissimulation at all. On other, less pertinent differences in the three accounts, see Warmington (1977), 92–93. Bradley (1978), 201, lists other sources for Agrippina's death. In the near-contemporary praetexta *Octavia*, no suggestion of acting or dissimulation is offered at all in the references to her murder.

40. In a sense, it is Nero's acting that prevails over Agrippina's alternate version; as C. A. Gales has suggested to me (personal communication, July 1992), the injunction to stab to the stomach could be seen as Agrippina's attempt to publish *her* script as truth, an act for which we have a new audience (the praetorians and senate); but this new audience is immediately assimilated back into necessary role-playing before Nero. A similar line of argument is taken by Woodman (1993) in his superb exposition of Tacitus' presentation of the Pisonian conspiracy. Woodman's analysis of *Annals* 15.48–74 shows how Tacitus attributes the plotters' failure to their own sense of being actors in a drama, so that they are eventually outwitted by the better performer, Nero: The conspirators "have been led by their own dramatics to the tragic confusion of drama with reality, and hence with the military action which a conspiracy demands. For they, after all, are only amateur actors, their unwonted status determined by the perception of themselves as the Caesarian tyrannicides; Nero, on the other hand, is a veteran performer, able at will to slip in and out of the many roles which his repertoire contained but which, for the moment at least, excluded that of murder victim" ([1993], 121–122. I am very grateful to Professor Woodman for making an advance copy of his article available to me).

41. R. D. Scott (1974), 108–109, emphasizes the gulf here exposed between public behavior and unspoken knowledge. Dawson (1969), 253, goes further in suggesting that this gulf is not emphasized but invented by the historian; Nero's letter to the senate on Agrippina's scheming, her suicide, and the earlier accident of shipwreck (Tac. *Ann.* 14.11) represents the truth of the historical situation and is so understood by those who celebrate his survival.

42. Betensky (1978), 419, focuses on Tacitus' "use of phrases of meeting and embracing," which she labels "the technique of confrontation," to discuss the theatrical nature of Nero's interactions with the members of his court (such as his effusive leave-taking of Agrippina as she boards the fatal ship). Her choice of the embrace as the defining instantiation of hypocrisy is far too restrictive, but she well points out that it is by "emphasizing the gap between the gesture and the real feeling, that Tacitus infuses the Neronian books of the *Annals* with the sense that theater has overtaken real life" (p. 435).

43. R. D. Scott (1974), 106, claims that "Tacitus exploited Agrippina's death . . . to demonstrate that Nero was quite mad, an actor living in his own unreal world," but this is not quite right. Nero is portrayed as all too sane in his ability to distinguish between the script he forces on others and the truth.

44. Tacitus' Nero is so successful at imposing his script on his subjects that when the conspirator Subrius Flavus throws the "truth" about himself back at him, he is stunned—he is used to committing crimes, not listening to them (*Ann.* 15.67.3).

45. Consider the impact of eyewitness descriptions of Stalinist trials and, more generally, works such as Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and Czeslaw Milosz' *The Captive Mind*.

46. This is a common theme in Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*, where acting and flattery on the part of subordinates are linked to incidences of social mobility and the rise of those who rank low in the imperial bureaucracy. See, e.g., *Discourses* 3.7.30–31 and 4.1.55. Worthen (1984), 13, suggests of a different era that acting is a theme treated with hostility because it epitomizes the ability to mold oneself into a courtier or other figures “who share the actor's freedom both to transcend and to subvert the hierarchic order” which the upper class had a strong interest in maintaining.

47. Emphasized, e.g., by Goffman (1967), 58: “And of course in scrupulously observing the proper forms [the actor] may find that he is free to insinuate all kinds of disregard by carefully modifying intonation, pronunciation, pacing, and so forth.” See also Goffman (1969), 9–10. And a ready acquiescence may even help in the preservation of a sense of independence: “By easily showing a regard that he does not have, the actor can feel that he is preserving a kind of inner autonomy, holding off the ceremonial order by the very act of upholding it” ([1967], 58). This view is similar to that set forth by “reactance theory,” as summarized in J. C. Scott (1990), 110: “The greater the force majeure compelling the performance, the less the subordinate considers it representative of his ‘true self’ and the more it seems merely a manipulative tactic having little or no bearing on his self-conception.”

48. This “active manipulation of rituals of subordination” resembles de Certeau's notion of the “tactic,” a form of self-assertion used by the powerless: the tactic “must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power . . . a tactic is an art of the weak . . . determined by the *absence of power*” (de Certeau [1984], 37–38; original emphasis). De Certeau goes on to compare the tactic to “rhetorical strategies like double meanings and misrepresentations, displacements and alliterations, multiple uses of the same material, etc.”—and indeed, doublespeak, which I discuss in Chapter 3, is such a tactic.

49. Tacitus himself is ready to adopt a similar interpretation of the insidious dangers that flattery posed for the powerful when such a view suits his narrative: in the *Histories*, the emperor Galba's adoption-speech to Piso contains the observation, “as for loyalty, freedom, and friendship, those outstanding possessions of the human spirit, *you* will retain them with the same constancy; others, however, will ruin them with servility: adulation, flattery, and self-interest, that foulest poison of true feeling, will force their way in. Even if you and I can speak with complete frankness among ourselves today, others will speak more readily with our rank than with us; for to advise a ruler of what is right takes great

effort, but adulation of any sort of ruler is performed without emotional investment” (*Hist.* 1.15.4). Here we see the other side of the coin and the recognition of the principle that “dominant elites may well not know what lies behind the facade, but it is rare that they merely take what they see and hear at face value” (J. C. Scott [1990], 35). On flattery as a form of control rather than a sign of victimization, see also *Juv. Sat.* 4.69–71 with comments of Ahl (1984b), 198–199, and Chapter 5 of this volume, *passim*.

50. Seneca, writing under Nero himself, advances a similar view of the flatterer's ability to pass off his version as truth. Compare *De Ben.* 3.30.3, where the man in a position of power needs “someone who will tell the truth and rescue him from the unanimous yea-saying of hypocrites, stupefied as he is among liars and reduced to ignorance of the truth through the very habit of hearing flattery instead of what is right.” Compare also *N.Q.* 4a.praef.9. Pliny, in *Ep.* 8.6.3, comments disparagingly on a slew of excessive honors voted by the senate to Claudius' freedman Pallas and asks rhetorically, was the motivating factor in such flattery “ambition, then, and greed for advancement?” I have focused on Nero in my discussion, but the theme of the insidious flatterer crops up in a wide range of classical texts; Barton (1993), 25–29, has some excellent comments on this topos. (Barton's book, which shares many points of interest with mine, unfortunately came out too late for extensive use.)

51. Tacitus shows Nero acting credulously once: he believes the story of Caesellius Bassus that the lost treasure of Dido has been found, and poets and orators at the second Neronia then incorporate suggestions of a second golden age into their pieces to flatter him (*Ann.* 16.1–2). But this is somewhat different, since it is not the kind of performance that alters Nero's relation to his subjects or his grasp on power. Alternately, Woodman (1993), 127–128, suggests in a pendant to his discussion of the Pisonian conspiracy that the lateness of the Dido incident is indicative of Nero's own confusion of the boundaries he has manipulated so well up to now: “After juggling his various roles for more than a decade, he is about to lose the ability to sustain the boundaries between them . . . The first symptom is his comprehensive deception by the story of Dido's gold, which Tacitus describes at the start of the very next book (16.1–3).”

52. Compare Tacitus' version of the same events: After the murder, Nero (as in Dio) lies awake in horror over what he has done, but his fears appear to concern the praetorian guard's acceptance of his act and his pretext. When its officials, at Burrus' instigation, come to him the next morning to offer their congratulations on his escape, he regains confidence, and, as others follow suit, Nero with “*diversa simulatione*,” “a different kind of pretense,” assumes a sad demeanor at his tragic loss (*Ann.* 14.10.1–2). Later he writes the senate a letter outlining the “truth” of what happened and the senators respond with a com-

petition in servile thanksgivings at the local temples (14.10.3–12.1). There is certainly no suggestion of his taking as genuine the acting of those who accept his version (namely, that Agrippina was trying to kill him and had sent her freedman on this errand) or thinking that his crime has gone unnoticed.

53. On allusion and doublespeak in general, see Chapter 3. For an alternate reading of this event, see Plass (1988), 75.

54. See Suet. *Nero* 20.1; 24.1; Dio 62.9.1; 63.26.2; Tac. *Ann.* 16.4.3; also Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7.

55. At Suet. *Nero* 23.3, Nero worries about the judges' disposition toward him; at *Nero* 24.1, he drops his staff while playing a tragic role and a fellow actor has to reassure the distraught emperor, who fears his disqualification. Philostratus at *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7, as if aware of both strands of the tradition, leaves the question open: Nero may or may not be fearful, but in either case the man is a rotten actor and singer.

56. The *artiste* in fear of his audience's judgment appears also at Martial *Epig.* 9.26.9–10, an epigram addressed to Nerva in which Nero is said to have feared Nerva's opinion of his poetry. Also worthy of mention in this context is Dio's observation at 63.26.2: anyone could control Nero when he started shouting by reminding him he had to preserve his voice for the cithara. Plutarch's transformation of Nero into a frog or "singing animal" (*De sera numinis vindicta* 32.567F)—as a punishment for his life, but alleviated in return for the emperor's philhellenism—also suggests a measure of the genuine in his respect for the Greeks and in his own performances.

57. See similarly Dio Chrysostomus 71.9.

58. Dio 63.27.2; Suet. *Nero* 40.2.

59. "Qualis artifex pereo," Suet. *Nero* 49.1; Dio 63.29.2.

60. See otherwise the explanation of Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 161: Suetonius "deliberately trivialises Nero's motive to underline his monstrosity. He thereby plays down the political element: Britannicus was murdered because he had a better voice as well as constituting a threat." Some critics have noted Suetonius' tendency to portray Nero as a consummate performer for whom nothing was more important than the stage; see, e.g., Cizek (1975), 482; others have tended to adopt the Suetonian view themselves, e.g., Warmington (1977), 113. Cizek (1972), 43, suggests that the real purposes of Nero's preoccupation with the stage were to encourage a new hierarchy of values more favorable to hellenic culture and to disseminate imperial propaganda, all to the ends of instituting a Greco-oriental kind of despotism. See also Cazenave and Auguet (1981), 175–189.

61. Suetonius at *Nero* 19.3 divides his account of the emperor's life under the two rubrics of commendable (or at least blameless) acts and reprehensible acts: "Haec partim nulla reprehensione, partim etiam non mediocri laude digna in

unum contuli, ut secernerem a probris ac sceleribus eius, de quibus dehinc dicam." Under the heading of positive or neutral acts he lists such surprising items (from the traditional and upper-class Roman point of view, with its prejudice against the stage) as Nero's recitation of his poetry in the theater; the institution of the Juvenalia and various plays and shows, and the participation in these of old men and women and members of the nobility; gladiatorial shows in which knights fought in the arena; the institution of the Neronia; his acceptance of the poetry prize at the first celebration of this festival (*Nero* 10.2–12.3). Cizek (1977), 113–114, argues rather dubiously that Suetonius only includes such events under the positive rubric only in order to undermine that section from within by later showing up their despicable nature. See similarly Croisille (1970). But Cizek later in the same work concedes that Suetonius "is far from despising games and shows of hellenic origin . . . He is sharply distinct from Tacitus in this regard" ([1977], 175); and in an earlier work he maintained that sections 10–19 of the life were in fact approbative ([1972], 24, 27). See also Aubrion (1990), 208 n.19; Bradley (1978), 81, 119, and 84: "Suetonius does not take an adverse view of the stage appearances of people from the upper levels of Roman society, unlike Dio and Tacitus," with documentation. Tacitus, as Schmidt (1990), 154, notes, further tilts the moral balance against the second Neronia by a pointed use of *scaena* as the site of Nero's recitation (*Ann.* 16.4.2). I believe, with Cizek (1977), 171, that Suetonius' tolerance in this regard comes from his position "at the intersection of the influences exercised by the points of view of the knights and the senators" as well as the influence of Hadrian's own hellenizing and his artistic leanings (182). Bradley (1978), 18 n.25, dismisses the idea that Suetonius borrowed in these sections from the lost positive tradition on Nero's life (advanced by Cizek [1972], 24; and Paratore [1959], 332–334): "What should be stressed again here is the fact of Suetonius' selection of what he considered to be commendable without following tradition haphazardly."

62. See also Suet. *Nero* 14.1, where a fellow actor reassures the emperor that his blunder with the staff was not noticed amid the cheers and approving shouts of the audience.

63. As Bardon (1940), 197, remarks, "The terms *flagitantibus cunctis*, *flagitante vulgo* used by Suetonius and Tacitus to depict the enthusiasm of the audience constitute positive testimonials." Similar is Tacitus' description of the plebs' response not to Nero's theater performances but to his chariot racing: "soon he took the initiative in inviting the city populace, and they praised him to the skies, as is the nature of a mob greedy for pleasure and delighted if their ruler draws them in that direction," *Ann.* 14.14.2.

64. Baldwin (1983), 179, notes the difference between these two authors even as they make the same point: Suetonius "concedes that Nero was long regretted

by some, and states the matter neutrally, with no Tacitean innuendo or epigram about scum regretting scum” (a reference to Tac. *Hist.* 1.16.3 and Galba’s comment “Nero will always be missed by all the worst elements”). Dio, on the other hand, presents us with a picture of mass rejoicing among the Roman plebs upon Nero’s death, 63.29.1. How malleable a thing is history, indeed.

65. The testimonia for Nero’s popularity with (*inter alios*) the common people of Rome are many and varied despite the loss of the favorable tradition on his reign. See, e.g., Suet. *Vit.* 11.2; *Othio* 7.1 with Tac. *Hist.* 1.78.2; Tac. *Hist.* 1.7.3 and 1.16.3; etc. On his popularity with the army, Tac. *Hist.* 1.5.2, 1.8.2, and 1.25.2. Further evidence is supplied by the rise of a number of false Neros after his death (Suet. *Nero* 57.2; Tac. *Hist.* 2.8.1). References to the tradition favorable to Nero are made by Jos. *A.J.* 20.154 and Tac. *Ann.* 1.1.2. See also C. P. Jones (1971), 19, with notes; and Griffin (1984), 15, who notes that the surviving tradition took its origin in historians writing under the Flavians and endorsing official anti-Neronian propaganda. Nero’s performances played a role in this popularity; as Manning (1975), 169, comments, “Nero’s productions and his stage appearances were the result of a certain amount of political calculation. Moreover there is every indication that Nero’s calculations were realistic and that he won the genuine popularity he desired.” Similarly Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 113, on the popular mourning at his death: “This is wholly convincing—Nero’s showmanship had its purpose.”

66. “The seats were probably then, as later, those on the flat semicircle which formed the Roman orchestra, between the stage and the rising wooden tiers of the auditorium; it was only at special types of show that this area had to be kept clear for performers,” Garton (1972), 53. See also Rawson (1987), 107. This senatorial privilege was extended to all public shows by a senatorial decree under Augustus (Suet. *Div. Aug.* 44.1). Subsequent measures to structure the audience at public spectacles appear to have been of particular concern to Claudius, Nero, and Domitian; Claudius set aside senatorial seating at the Circus (Suet. *Claud.* 21.3; Dio 60.7.32–4); Nero reserved fourteen rows there for the knights, a privilege they had held at the theater since Roscius Otho’s measure of 67 B.C. (Tac. *Ann.* 15.32.2; Suet. *Nero* 11.1); Domitian put an end to disregard for these rows at the theater, where the common people had taken to invading the reserved seating areas (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3; Martial *Epig.* 5.8), and enforced wearing of the toga at shows, thereby stressing the civic identity of the spectators (Martial *Epig.* 4.2). As commonly recognized, the outcome of this process was a social order made visible, a literal ordering that could be made to stand for the stability and unity of hierarchy and empire; see, e.g., André (1990), 170. On the development of ranked seating under the empire, see André (1990), 166–167; A. Cameron (1976), 230; Clavel-Lévêque (1986), 2536–57; Griffin (1984), 113; Hopkins (1983), 17–18;

Rawson (1987); further bibliography in Beacham (1992), 176 n.36. Primary source material is in Suet. *Aug.* 44.1; *Claud.* 21.3; *Nero* 11.1; Dio 60.7.3–4; Pliny *N.H.* 8.21; Calp. Sic. 7.26ff.; Tac. *Ann.* 15.32.2; Martial *Epig.* 5.8.

67. For more evidence on the direction of this gaze, see also Suet. *Nero* 32.3, where Nero appears to enforce his sumptuary measures from the very stage: “while he was actually singing, he noticed a woman in the theater dressed in the forbidden purple; he is said to have pointed her out to his agents, and she was dragged off on the spot and stripped not only of her clothing but her property too”; the woman must have been at least wealthy enough to own property worth confiscating. Dio’s account of Nero in Greece, cited earlier in Chapter 1, places emphasis on the senators as a class separate from the rest, as his description of the Juvenalia, where aside from Thrasca “all the others, and especially those of high rank” (61.20.4) shout their insincere acclamations in unison. But the decisive evidence for senatorial discomfort resulting from the position of their seating comes from a later and autobiographical passage in Dio in which he describes a moment of personal danger before the mad emperor Commodus a year before his assassination in 193. Sitting with his peers not in the orchestra of the theater but in the first tiers of the amphitheater, Dio chewed frantically on laurel leaves to conceal an uncontrollable and potentially fatal grin as the emperor, taking a turn as royal gladiator, held up to his senatorial audience the product of his labors, an ostrich head (Dio 73.21.1–2). Dio emphasizes the emperor’s proximity—within sword-range, so close that the senators had to disguise the movement of their mouths in laughter by resorting to chewing. Commodus, like Nero before him, observes his upper-class audience from the performer’s perspective and can see them all too clearly. (For a detailed description of the tiers in the amphitheater, see Auguet ([1972], 34–35.)

68. On the differing potentials for uninhibited speech in the audience, see also A. Cameron (1976), 173, who observes of *licentia theatralis* (unruliness at the theater), “It was scarcely freedom of speech in the true sense, since it did not extend to the upper classes (who had to be much more careful what they said). But the people were not likely to mind if the heads of their betters rolled so long as they felt that they could say what they liked.”

69. See the comments of Veyne (1976), 715, on senatorial reaction to the emperors’ relations with the plebs at the theater; only a tyrant would court the plebs with public festivities. It is worth noting in this connection that Nero built a private theater across the Tiber and an amphitheater on the Campus Marius; these actions suggest that he was well aware of the driving mechanisms of imperial popularity.

70. The masters of ceremony for Nero’s performances were often senators, with no mention of coercion (Seneca’s brother Iunius Gallio at the Juvenalia,



Dio 62.20.2–3; Cluvius Rufus at the second Neronia and in Greece, Suet. *Nero* 21.2; Dio 62.14.3). Lucan participated in the first Neronia and sang Nero's praises, Vacca *Vit. Luc.* 335.21–23 Hosius; Suet. *Vit. Luc.* 332.1–3 Hosius. Vitellius attended Nero as he sang, Tac. *Hist.* 2.71.1 (with condemnation of Vitellius' character appended); he also persuaded Nero to sing at the second Neronia, Suet. *Vit.* 4. Fabius Valens even participated with pleasure as a lowly mime at the Juvenalia, Tac. *Hist.* 3.62.2. On Nero's retinue in Greece, which included members of the nobility, see Bradley (1978), 153ff. On upper-class enthusiasm for the theater in general, see *inter alia* Juv. *Sat.* 8.185ff; Sen. *N.Q.* 7.32.3; Suet. *Titus* 3.2; Tac. *Ann.* 15.65.2; Aubrion (1990), 202; Bradley (1978), 121, 141; Dupont (1985), 123; Friedländer II.17–18; Griffin (1984), 42; Schmidt (1990), 152; Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 180–181 n.7. Cluvius Rufus, a member of Nero's court and one of the sources for his reign under the Flavians (when hostility was politically advisable), even wrote a book on *histriones*; Suetonius authored (now lost) works on Roman and Greek games (cf. C. L. Roth's 1865 edition, 275, 278).

71. Such a connection in his work between tyranny at the theater and tyranny in the political realm is illustrated by Tacitus' treatment of the second Neronia, where both the surveillance associated in Dio and Suetonius with the tour of Greece in 66–67 and the punishment of Vespasian are resituated in Rome, and soldiers strike audience members while anonymous observers note down their names. The alterations in timing and location date this theatrical oppression to immediately after the debacle of the Pisonian conspiracy in early 65 and the mass denunciations that ensued; it was a plot to which Nero reacted with paranoia and suspicion, posting soldiers throughout the city and even, says Tacitus, in private homes (Tac. *Ann.* 15.59.1). Nero's crackdown on the citizens of the city and his tightening of control thus provide the context for his first public performance in Rome, so that tyranny's oppressive surveillance and the forced performances of the theater coincide not only in their thematic concerns but also in their timing.

72. See also Pliny's sordid picture of Domitian's dinner parties, at which, Pliny claims, the emperor would sit threateningly over his banquet guests, watching and marking down their actions (*Paneg.* 49.6).

73. C. E. Murgia (personal communication, May 1992) makes the trenchant observation that the first element of the comparison, i.e., the comment about Nero, is nothing more than a foil for what is being said in the second element; in another context this first element could be given a different weight and analyzed completely differently. In fact it is precisely this openness to manipulation, for rhetorical purposes, of what in other contexts is a "true" representation that interests me here. Theatricality itself depends on rhetorical context and authorial intention.

74. *Agricola* 45.4–5 indicates that Tacitus did not return to Rome until some time after Agricola's death in August of 93, while the individuals named as Domitian's victims in 45.1 perished (Q. Iunius Arulenus Rusticus, Herennius Senecio, Helvidius Priscus) or were exiled (Iunius Mauricus) during that autumn. Syme (1958), 25, comments that "Agricola was dead at the time of these transactions, and Tacitus himself may have still been absent from Rome."

75. Domitian not a monster? See, e.g., Dorey (1960); Waters (1964); also H. U. Pleket, "Domitian, the Senate and the Provinces," *Mnem.* 14 (1961), 296–315; R. S. Rogers, "A Group of Domitianic Treason-Trials," *CP* 55 (1960), 19–23; chap. 1 of Eve D'Ambra, *Private Lives, Imperial Virtues: The Frieze of the Forum Transitorium in Rome* (Princeton, 1993); B. W. Jones, *Domitian and the Senatorial Order: A Prosopographical Study of Domitian's Relationship with the Senate, A.D. 81–96* (Philadelphia, 1979); and bibliography in McDermott and Orentzel (1979), 10 n.3.

## 2. THE INVASION OF THE STAGE

1. Dio 62.16.2; Suet. *Nero* 39.2, with further graffiti along the same lines; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.38. Compare Juv. *Sat.* 8.215ff., discussed in section II.

2. Dio mentions the appearance of the graffiti among the events of 59 A.D. (Suetonius merely includes it in a section on Nero's tolerance for libelous verse); the performances themselves appear to have occurred late in his reign. Nero probably did not appear as a bona fide actor rather than *citharoedus* until the tour of Greece, since neither Dio nor Tacitus (before his narrative breaks off) mentions dramatic performances before 66, while Suetonius' notices cannot be dated. Tacitus attributes to the conspirator Subrius Flavius a speech in which he employs the word *histrion* (actor) of the emperor in 65 A.D. (*Ann.* 15.67.2), but he has just made a pointed contrast between Nero the *citharoedus* and Piso the *tragoedus* (*Ann.* 15.65), and, as Lesky (1949), 397, points out, the term *histrion* is also used of *citharoedi*. Otherwise Tacitus' text shows Nero as *citharoedus* only. Schmidt (1990), 156, suggests that prior to 65 Nero appeared as an actor at the private Juvenalia, these occasions being the referent of Suetonius' comments about Nero's dramatic performances at *Nero* 21.3. But this is hardly tenable: the incident with the naive recruit in this passage (discussed in section II) is dated by Dio to the Greek tour (in any case, we note for our purposes that the Juvenalia postdated the murder of Agrippina). It may also be significant that Nero is said by Dio (63.9.5) to have worn masks fashioned after the dead Poppaea Sabina for all his female roles; Poppaea died in 65 A.D. That Nero acted during and after the Greek tour is not in question; see Suet. *Nero* 24.1, 25.1, 46.3; 63.8.2–4; 63.9.2–6; 63.21.2; 63.22.4–6; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7.

3. See Schmidt (1990), 154–155: until Nero appeared onstage as a bona fide actor and not merely as a *citharoedus*, the identification of the singer with the content of the roles he sang was not forced upon his audience.

4. And possibly before? See note 8. The precise details of these performances remain elusive, since the brief notices in the sources do not always permit us to distinguish Nero's appearances as *citharoedus*, performer of tragic arias to the lyre, from those as *tragoedus*, or tragic actor; nor is it entirely clear to what degree the latter approximated bona fide tragic productions. Beyond a doubt, however, Nero's performance as both *citharoedus* and *tragoedus* involved costume, song, and a subject derived from the tragic plots of Greek myth; as a *citharoedus* performing tragic arias to his own lyre accompaniment, he would mount the stage with lyre and buskins, wearing the special robe of a lyre-player, and sing the woes of a tragic hero or heroine; if he was performing a tragedy, on the other hand, his costume would include a mask and different footwear and would reflect the dramatic persona being portrayed, while the performance itself, consisting of a scene or scenes built around the protagonist rather than an entire play, might involve recitative and the participation of other actors playing supporting roles. See similarly Fabia (1905), 38–39; Friedländer II.99; Kelly (1979), 28, adding spoken dialogue and props on the actor's side; Lesky (1949), 396; Wille (1967), 330–366. Warmington (1977), 78, erroneously merges *citharoedus* and *tragoedus*, claiming the former wore the mask and theatrical costume that properly go with the latter. He ignores the evidence of Vindex's speech in Dio, which makes explicit the difference between the two: Vindex claims he has often seen Nero "in the circle of the theater and in the orchestra, sometimes with lyre and loose robe and buskins, sometimes with half-boots and mask" (Dio 63.22.4). For other passages in which props and costuming are clearly part of the tragic role, see Suet. *Nero* 24.1; Dio 63.9.4–6; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7. Scholars generally agree that these performances consisted of individual scenes rather than whole tragedies, with other actors playing a very subsidiary role if present at all. See Bardon (1940), 197; Beare (1950), 225–226; Friedländer II.98, 351; Lesky (1949), 402–403; Schmidt (1990), 155–156. Lesky (1949), 404ff., puts to rest the theory that the actor remained mute while a *tragoedus* sang his part. For the participation of other actors, see Suet. *Nero* 24.1, where a fellow actor offers Nero reassurance onstage; and Lucian *Nero* 8f., where Nero's troupe of actors murders a rival too talented for his own good. On the likelihood that Nero composed his own tragic *carmina*, see Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.39; Bardon (1936), 340; Friedländer II.403; Lienhart (1934), 65ff.; Schmidt (1990), 156.

5. To these roles Dio adds Canace at 63.10.2.

6. In alphabetical order, we know of: Alcmeon: Dio 63.9.4; 63.22.6; Antigone: Juv. *Sat.* 8.220; Canace: Suet. *Nero* 21.3; Dio 63.10.2; Lucillius *Anth. Gr.* 11.185 (all

references in Lucillius, if to Nero, are allusive, not explicit); Capaneus: Lucillius *Anth. Gr.* 11.185; Creon: Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7; Hercules: Suet. *Nero* 21.3; Dio 63.9.4; Melanippe: Juv. *Sat.* 8.220; Nauplius: Lucillius *Anth. Gr.* 11.185; Suet. *Nero* 39.3; Niobe: Suet. *Nero* 21.3; Oedipus: Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7; Suet. *Nero* 21.3; 46.3; Dio 63.9.4; 63.22.6; Orestes: Suet. *Nero* 21.3; Dio 63.9.4; 63.22.6; Pseudo-Lucian *Nero* 10; Juv. *Sat.* 8.220; Thyestes: Dio 63.9.4; 63.22.6; Juv. *Sat.* 8.228. Note also Suetonius' throwaway phrase "inter cetera," with no further details, at 21.3.

7. Lesky (1949), 401, makes the suggestion that these roles were fastened upon by the tradition precisely because they could make Nero's life seem like his stage performances, so that the direction of the analogy as it appears in the sources (life like stage) is actually the product of the reverse effort on the part of the transmitters.

8. Dio mentions no tragic performances at all before the Greek tour, while the passage in Suet. *Nero* 21.3 on Nero's acting of tragic roles may suggest, by virtue of its position, that he started at Rome after the second Neronia. It is unlikely that we are to understand his singing (*cantare*) of the *Niobe* during the second Neronia as a tragic performance: no such competitive category is assigned to the Neronia by the sources, whose emphasis is all on Nero *citharoedus*. The *Niobe* is most likely just another *kitharodische Nomos*, as Wille (1967), 342, names it.

9. Dawson (1969), 261, suggests that the graffiti appeared after Nero's stage performances and refers only to Nero's roles, not his crime; but she biases the case by not mentioning Dio's temporal ascription and may go too far in thinking that Agrippina's murder at her son's hands was itself the product of a theatricalizing historical imagination: "Suetonius states categorically that *Orestes matricida* was one of Nero's rôles (*Nero* 21). This means that on many occasions Nero . . . did in a special sense kill his mother. All Tacitus had to do was to shift this bit of true history from one area of Nero's life to another" (Dawson [1969], 261).

10. See, e.g., Baldwin (1983), 77, 227ff.; Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 10–15, 128–129, 144ff.

11. This literal translation produces a version almost identical with the Loeb version.

12. Dawson (1969), 262, makes a similar observation (based, however, on Tacitus' portrayal of Agrippina's death at her villa in Bauli): "Few men have been so famous on both sides of the footlights: all that the hostile historians had to do was secretly to remove the footlights so that the two worlds in which Nero moved mingled and flowed together."

13. After all, the matricides Orestes and Alcmeon represent the only dramatic personae whose salient outrage Nero was beyond a doubt supposed to have replicated in his lifetime, since only Vindex in Dio, but none of the three sources

themselves, is ever resolute that Nero actually had Oedipal fun with his mother. See Vindex's speech at Dio 63.22.3.

14. On the development of the word *persona* from its original meaning of "mask" to include that of "character," see Beare (1939), 146; Garton (1972), 11–12. For the use of masks in the Roman dramatic tradition in general, see Beacham (1992), 185–189; Beare (1939) and (1950), 178ff.; Wiles (1991), 132–133.

15. Theater masks appear to have been limited to a fixed number of types. Julius Pollux *Onomasticon* 4.133–54 offers a list of those used in comedy, tragedy, and satyr plays and explains how to identify characters on the basis of their features. Beacham (1992), 185, comments that "such evidence is found in artifacts ranging over several centuries from the early Hellenistic to late imperial period, and, if it indeed reflects actual stage practice, would indicate extraordinary continuity, both in the use of fixed character types and in their theatrical representation." See Beare (1950), 178–179; Garton (1972), 11; Wiles (1991), 69ff., 74ff.; also A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1953), 197. Nicoll (1963), 131, makes the unsubstantiated statement that *cantare tragoediam* as well as *saltare tragoediam* can mean "perform a pantomime" (as opposed to a tragedy); he presumably means this to be true only when the subject is a choral group, since pantomime performers did not sing. This cannot therefore be a translation of Nero 21.3.

16. As it might in Dio's account, although here in fact not only is the soldier's reaction separated from the passage about the masks, but even the dramatic framework is left unspecified: "a certain soldier, seeing him bound, became upset, ran up and released him," Dio 63.10.2. See also Bradley (1978), 135; Lesky (1949), 402.

17. Whereas normally the mask would signal the fictional character and, "above all, perhaps, [ensure] that the identity of the actor is concealed" (Beare [1950], 185).

18. Friedländer II.98 and Garton (1972), 31–33, 39, offer general cautions against too rigorous an application of the modern notion of "suspension of disbelief" to Roman spectators; audiences seem often to have been aware of the identity of the actor, a fact that would have facilitated their grasp of (for example) veiled political comment from the stage.

19. This kind of reaction and the term *Verfremdungseffekt* are features of Brecht's modern "epic theater," in which "the spectator is not made the victim, so to speak, of a hypnotic experience in the theater"; instead, it becomes unavoidable for him or her "to take a critical attitude while he is in the theater (as opposed to a subjective attitude of becoming 'entangled' in what is going on)" (Brecht [1964], 78). See similarly Hornby (1986), 116, on the effect of a play's self-reference (here achieved by Nero's appearance as Nero).

20. For provocative observations on similar features in the frescoes of Nero's *Domus Aurea*, see Picard (1962), 183 and (1982); in Roman wall-paintings of the first century A.D., Beacham (1992), 68–84; and Bryson (1990), 31–59. Beacham argues that the wall-paintings of this period often reproduced theatrical backdrops, which themselves were made of a combination of real and painted architecture. When the *trompe-l'oeil* effect of the original scenery is incorporated into the pictorial representation of theatrical sets, it becomes impossible to discern if the painted architecture belongs to the wall-painting (the medium of representation) or to the scene-painting (the object of representation). Like the portrayals of Nero onstage and off, these paintings merged the theatrical with the "real" and disabled both as a frame for viewing. As Beacham comments, the stage as subject provided "an opportunity to maximize the illusionistic element, while still abiding by fundamental principle of objective accuracy" (p. 71). In Bryson's more nuanced discussion (in which he coins the expression "mimesis squared" to describe this illusionistic effect), a play with the boundaries of the real is attributed to all Four Styles of wall-painting, and class and economic considerations play a role in his analysis. He too concludes, however, that "when [such images] refer most faithfully to the reality of the world, they at once shift away from that world into transitions and thresholds which culminate in the opposite of figuration—irrealisation, artifice, the simulacrum" (p. 59). Finally, and also along these lines, Bryson (1990) and Slater (1990) emphasize the role of frame confusion in Petronius' contemporary *Satyricon*; see Appendix 1.

21. On the reading "Oresten," first suggested in Weidner's 1889 edition, see Braund (1988), 237; Courtney (1980), 417; C. P. Jones (1972); also Diggle (1974) contra, replying to Jones. Rudd (1986), 78, translates using "Oresten." On the figure of Nero here see Fredericks (1971), 128.

22. C. P. Jones (1972), 313, sees the point: "Orestes had more tact than to flaunt his deed by playing a matricide on the stage."

23. Coleman (1990), 44, defines these performances as "the punishment of criminals in a formal public display involving role-play set in a dramatic context"; Auguet (1972), 100, as "theatrical mimes in which the actors really died on the stage, suffering the punishment proper to the plot . . . Some of them were, perhaps, no more than very loose and extremely simple adaptations of theatrical successes. But for the most part they displayed on the stage the adventures of mythical or legendary characters." See also Tandoi (1968), 126–127.

24. See also the comments in Barton (1993), 60–65, with many points relevant for this chapter. In this connection, there is an interesting discussion of public torture and execution in eighteenth-century France in M. Foucault, *Discipline*

and Punish: *The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1979), 32–69. Foucault here notes the theatrical reproduction of the crime in certain executions and analyzes it as a means of pinning the punishment to the crime (see esp. 45).

25. Wiles (1991), 14, likewise emphasizes, as a kind of psychological axiom, the pleasure felt by spectators at the incorporation of a real element from the outside world into the make-believe of the theater. His points are based on the well-known anecdote in Aulus Gellius 6.5 in which the author relates how the late fourth-century actor Polus once played the role of Electra and carried his real son's ashes in the urn, so that "cum agi fabula videretur, dolor actus est" (6.5.8); as Wiles remarks, this account "calls the status of the sign into an uncertainty that is in the end impenetrable . . . The anecdote plays upon the delight which any audience takes in its double awareness of actor and role. It is not the actor's power to disappear, but the actor's power to be simultaneously himself—a flesh-and-blood human being—and Electra—a fictional sufferer—which generates theatrical pleasure." If we are to think of such pleasure as extending also to the literary representation of an actor's joint occupation of his role and his identity, we have one way of understanding the eagerness with which Nero is so portrayed in the historical tradition.

26. *Calig.* 57.4. See also Jos. *A.J.* 19.94; Juv. *Sat.* 8.187; Tertullian *In Valentinianos* 14 (cited in Nicoll [1963], 110 n.7); Dupont (1985), 398; D. F. Sutton, *Seneca on the Stage*, Mnem. Suppl. 96 (Leiden, 1986), 63–67. Sutton and Nicoll mistakenly think Mart. *Lib. Spect.* 7 also refers to the mime, and thus show some confusion in their discussion; Nicoll (1963), 11, comments that "On some occasions . . . fiction passed into reality. The part of the robber-leader was taken by some criminal already condemned to death, and the crucifixion at the end of the play made the stage run, not with artificial blood, but with the true blood of the tortured wretch."

27. On this mime, see Bardon (1956), 128–129; Coleman (1990), 64–65 with bibliography in n. 179; Duret (1986), 3223; Nicoll (1963), 110–111; Tandoi (1968), 126; Weinreich (1928), 38–39; E. Wüst in *RE* s.v. "Mimos," 15.1751. Josephus in his discussion of two mimes at *A.J.* 19.94 uses the words *crucified* and *died* in the sense of what happened only theatrically, as his comment about artificial blood makes clear (*A.J.* 19.94). As Duret (1986), 3223, points out, "Before 80 A.D., the representation of his punishment was never the occasion of a public execution. Martial is very clear on this point, as is Flavius Josephus, who tells us of the floods of artificial blood shed at the denouement." See also the scholiast to Juvenal 8.187–188.

28. As Weinreich already pointed out in (1928), 38: the epigram's point consists in showing that a myth is "simultaneously realized and surpassed" in an actual event. Weinreich's interpretation in both this case and others, however,

is rather that Martial thinks of the present punishment as *outdoing* the mythical one, whose status as having really occurred at some point in the past is a dubious one. See (1928), 39.

29. I have included here Schneidewin's supplement in his 1842 edition <*dignum tulit; ille parentis*>.

30. See the rather technical discussion in Coleman (1990), 64.

31. Mucius Scaevola is the only other figure from Roman history (in Martial *Epig.* 8.30 and 10.25). Otherwise the roles listed in Martial *Lib. Spect.* 5, 8, 21A, and Lucilius *Anth. Pal.* 11.184 are from Greek drama and myth. Coleman (1990), 65–66, would add Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 6:2, who seems to be describing Christian women martyred like the Danaids and Dirce.

32. Laureolus' fatal charade as Martial describes it is complicated by the introduction of the bear. Coleman (1990), 64, notes that the passages in Josephus and Juvenal suggest that the mime Laureolus, like the historical one, died by crucifixion; in the amphitheater, the story was made more appealing "by disturbing a traditional narrative pattern by the introduction of a maverick factor . . . because the slow agony of crucifixion was relatively lacking in spectacular appeal, it could be combined with a more spectacular mode of execution, thus effectively doubling the realism."

33. With Housman's conjecture *par' historian* for 21A.8: on the *manner* of death of "Orpheus," Martial writes, "this alone was contrary to the story." See the discussion in Carratello (1965), 135–138. On all of these, see the invaluable analyses of Coleman (1990), 60ff.; see also Carratello (1965); Weinreich (1928), 33–34, 38–39, 39–45 (on *Lib. Spect.* 5, 7, 21, and *Anth. Pal.* 184). Weinreich (pp. 44–45) points out that Lucilius' epigrams date from the reign of Nero, and so *Anth. Pal.* 11.184 on the criminal cremated for theft provides the first appearance of this particular epigram type stressing the dramatic reenactment of a story from myth and drama; Martial's inspiration may then come in part from a literary conceit of Nero's era.

34. Coleman (1990), 70, 52–53; Calpurnius Siculus *Ecl.* 7.69–72, cited in Coleman, p. 52 n.70. On the realist special effects of the amphitheater, see also Beacham (1992), 178–183. Calpurnius' Neronian dating is based on the argument of Townend (1980) and contradicts the third-century date of E. Champlin in *JRS* 68 (1978), 95–110, and of Champlin and Armstrong (1986); see Coleman's brief survey of the bibliography at p. 52 n.69, to which should be added, in support of Champlin, the article of E. Courtney in *REL* 65 (1987), 148–157, and, contra, R. Verdière in *CRDAC* 12 (1982–83), 125–138. Coleman also suggests as reasons for the popularity of fatal charades during this period the growing taste for realism in the theater itself (including the revival of Afranius' *Incendium* with a real conflagration), the psychological appeal of scapegoat ritual, and the pub-

licized role of the emperor and games-giver as the “supreme purveyor of justice” (68–73).

35. Coleman (1990), 62. For example, how to tell if the epigram on Meniscus “describes a real event and is not just a product of Lucillius’ sadistic imagination,” or a simple cremation embellished by a comparison that is purely Lucil- lius? (60–61). Coleman eventually concludes that what the poems say *could* be true.

36. Fascinating evidence along these lines is provided by the “Cena” section of Petronius’ *Satyricon*, itself incorporating elements that suggest a spoof on the contemporary Neronian court. See Appendix 1.

37. With less justification, Malissard (1990) includes here the death of Galba at *Hist.* 1.40–44.

38. See on this the comments of Borzsák (1973), 64–67.

39. Malissard (1990), 220, on the other hand, sees the theatricalizing per- spective as a trait of the urban population itself: in 69 A.D. “everything became *simulacrum* for a people definitively corrupted by the theatricalization of its empire, and, in disguise for the Bacchanalia, they regarded as gladiators the Flavian and Vitellian troops who were murdering each other for possession of the streets of Rome.” In fact it is impossible to know this; the only certainty about perspective is the one already once-removed onto the level of represen- tation.

40. On the question of authorship, see J. Korver, *Mnem.* ser. 4.3 (1950), 319–329; and F. Solmsen, *TAPA* 71 (1940), 556–572, who argue for the first and second Philostrati, Verus and Flavius, respectively. There is also a useful overview of the problem in the introduction to the dialogue in A. M. Harmon’s Loeb edition of Lucian, vol. 8. Flavius Philostratus, of course, was the author of the *Life of Apollonius*; if the ascription of the *Nero* to him is correct, the contrast between the anecdote related above and others in which Nero’s appearance onstage entails a confusion of interpretive frames for his audience conforms well to the attitude adopted by Apollonius at *Vit. Apoll.* 5.7.

41. See note 25 above.

42. As Coleman (1990), 68, notes.

43. Coleman (1990), 68, supports such an interpretation: “Credulous spec- tators thought that the bull was performing intercourse with a real woman inside the wooden heifer.”

44. Suetonius puns here with the verb for kill, *conficio*, which apparently also means “bring to orgasm” (said of a male) and conceivably describes a need felt by the emperor after so much in the way of groin-mastication—so that the same term simultaneously refers to the theatrical event (kill) and the literal (satisfy sexually), a nice touch in the narration of such a performance. See Dio 63.13.2

on the same Neronian habit, where the lust factor motivating his behavior is clearer. On *conficio*, see J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, 1982), 159.

45. Gyles (1962), 200, assumes the reference is to Nero, while Sullivan (1985), 22–23, interprets the epigram as mockery of “those actors who did three of Nero’s roles badly, a delicate intimation that Nero had performed them well”; and Toynbee (1942), 88, makes the odd suggestion that Nero “chose these very parts . . . just to show how he could surpass the bad performers mentioned in Lucillius’ epigrams.” See also Weinreich (1928), 43, who believes with Courad Cichorius, *Römische Studien* (Stuttgart, 1922), 373, that the coincidence of these roles with Nero’s must indicate a time of composition before the emperor’s performances, since otherwise offense would be inescapable.

46. And Juvenal *Sat.* 8.187–188 makes the same comment of the senatorial actor (not a criminal) in a performance of the *mime* about Laureolus: “Speedy Lentulus actually performed Laureolus *well* / thus deserving (in my opinion) a real crucifixion.”

47. See Carratello (1965), 135–138; Coleman (1990), 62 n.163; Weinreich (1928), 40–43. Weinreich, comparing the phrase τοῦτο παρ’ ἱστορίην to Mar- tial’s “haec tantum res est facta παρ’ ἱστορίων” at *Lib. Spect.* 21A.8, uses the similarity to bolster the argument summarized above, note 33.

48. Plutarch also provides evidence for contemporary fascination with “fatal charades” that took place literally on the stage and not in the amphitheater, although the cases he takes such interest in actually date back to the Republic (when no one else seems to have considered them worthy of report). In his *Life of Crassus* he describes how Crassus’ actual dismembered head was used as a stage-prop by the actor Jason of Tralles in a production of the *Bacchae* at the court of the Parthian king. At the climax of the play, the head was suddenly grabbed by Crassus’ murderer Pomaxathres, who uttered over it Agave’s verse “mine is the prize” (*Crass.* 33.2–4). Similarly, the tragic actor Aesop, in a *Thyestes* or *Atreus* dating to Cicero’s day, was supposedly so carried away by his own portrayal of Atreus plotting revenge that he killed a fellow performer right onstage (Plut. *Cic.* 5.5). See in general the discussion of Garton (1972), 23–40. The mix of death and theater is taken to its extreme in Ps.-Lucian *Nero* 8ff. (see my discussion in Chapter 3, section 1), where the emperor, competing at the Isthmus during the tour of Greece, is said to have sent his troupe to kill a rival actor as he performed onstage: they mount it “as if they belonged to the per- formance” (9) and cut the man’s throat with their writing tablets. Crazy as this invention may be, it well illustrates the direction in which the tradition on Nero travels through time. There may not even have been a tragic performance at the Isthmus at all; see M. D. MacLeod in the Loeb edition, 517 n.1.

49. Consider the comments of Burns (1972), 15, in a general discussion of dramatic illusion: “there is an agreement between all those who take part in the performance, either as actors or as spectators, that the two kinds of real event inside and outside the theater [the former being the actual gestures and speeches of the actors] are not causally connected. Dislocation is ensured both because nobody really believes the actors to be the people they represent and *because action that significantly alters the state of the situation, such as murder, death by other causes, copulation and birth, is always simulated*” (my emphasis).

50. See Woodman (1993), 108–109, for an interesting discussion along similar lines but without the focus on violence; Barton (1993) is interesting on the connections between death and performance in gladiatorial games.

51. In this they reproduce explicitly not only the obvious theatricalizing procedures discussed in section I above but also, perhaps, the more subtle tendencies of the historiographical tradition. Most notably, the portrayal in Dio (61.13.5) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.8.5) of the manner of Agrippina’s death (in both accounts Agrippina asks that the assassins strike at her belly) recalls the description of her death in the earlier drama *Octavia* and Jocasta’s death in Seneca’s *Oedipus*. Is history here showing the influence of the theater, and not vice versa, as most scholars have tended to assume? The usual reaction to the similarities in these accounts is to plot a sequence of influence that travels from reality and history to (allusive) drama; I would suggest that the classical reflex was more consistently to incorporate drama into history. For a well-balanced consideration of this unanswerable question, see Hind (1972) and the sensitive comments of Plass (1988), 11: “The account of Nero’s murder of his mother has been read both as sheer fiction patterned on Clytemnestra/Orestes and partly as real-life fiction staged by Nero in the role of Agave with Pentheus. In the first case, the story is false and material for malicious wit about Nero the actor; in the second, it is true and a mad gesture by Nero the actor. Particular interpretations are at best speculative. What is certain is that fact on one side, fiction on the other are frequently mediated by a miragelike, witty indeterminate region that offers multiple, unresolved perception [*sic*] of political reality.” On the question of Seneca’s *Oedipus*, see also Bishop (1977) and (1985), 69–130; Calder (1976); Lefèvre (1985); and R. S. Pathmanathan, “The Parable in Seneca’s *Oedipus*,” *Nigeria and the Classics* 10 (1967), 13–20.

52. *Theater* is used for amphitheater in both Greek and Latin; see *LSJ* s.v. and Rawson (1987), 86–87 with n.18.

53. Griffin (1984), 164 and also 109; this work has been of much assistance to me in other respects. See likewise Sandy (1974), 34: “Of no other [*princeps*] can it be said that the methods chosen for the first attempt to murder his mother were taken directly from the stage!”

54. Likewise for the burning of Rome, but this time with more support from the sources themselves: Dio (62.16.1) claims that Nero set the fire in his desire to relive the experience of Priam, and both Dio and Suetonius show him singing of the fall of Troy even as he gazes on the flames of Rome. In Dio, he mounts to the roof of the palace in the costume of a *citharoedus*, where “he sang ‘The Fall of Troy,’ as he himself said, but ‘The Fall of Rome,’ as it rather appeared” (62.18.1); Suetonius changes the venue to the tower of Maecenas, but here again Nero, in a *scaenicus habitus*, or stage costume, gazes from his height upon the flames of Rome and sings “The Fall of Troy” (*Nero* 38.2). Tacitus tell the same story but identifies it more cautiously as rumor, *Ann.* 15.39.3. On this point, see Bradley (1978), 234; Griffin (1984), 132 with n.57. (Tacitus, as we have seen, is for the most part more interested in reconstituting the truth behind all acting than in questioning the boundaries between the real and the representational.) Nero even produces an impromptu modification of a tragic verse in anticipation of the inferno: when someone quotes the line “when I am dead, let earth be mingled with fire,” he responds with “On the contrary, while I’m alive,” Suet. *Nero* 38.1; see on this Bradley (1978), 228; Heinz (1948), 43. These descriptions have been a popular source for those who would argue that the emperor was in fact a perverse dramatizer of the real: most recently, Néraudau (1985), 2043, has commented at some length on Nero’s habit of dramatizing all his crimes and notes of the fire that Nero did his best to turn this, too, into theater. As I have noted, Frazer (1966), 17–18, is likewise inclined to believe Nero was really trying to emulate Priam and so set the fire and concludes that “our analysis of Nero’s character confirms the picture we have of an artist-arsonist.” But the whole story of Nero’s performance during the fire of Rome is almost certainly, as generally realized, the fabrication of a tradition determined to portray the emperor as an inveterate dramatizer of his environment (for other modern critics who accept the story as literally true, see Bradley [1978], 234). The fabrication may have been sparked by Nero’s early readings of his “Troica,” eventually performed in public at the second Neronia (Dio 62.29.1). See Griffin (1984), 132; Morelli (1914), 134; and especially Scheda (1967), 111, who hypothesizes that Tacitus represents a midpoint in the development of the story, with the readings changed into a performance during the fire, but the location left within the palace. On the *domestica scaena* (domestic stage) mentioned in Tacitus, see Bradley (1978), 234; Scheda (1967), 114; Schmidt (1990), 151–152.

55. For an alternate explanation of Isidorus’ taunt, not linked to Nero’s dramatizing tendencies, see Rogers (1945–46).

56. See also Wooten (1987), 72, who confesses himself “tempted to speculate about how many people there were in the highly literate court of Nero who were constantly engaging in play-acting based on literary models.”

## 3. OPPOSITIONAL INNUENDO

1. On Arrionilla and Modestus, both obscure figures, see Sherwin-White (1966), 97; he suggests that the *sententia* here referred to “concerned a provincial property which had come under the jurisdiction of Modestus as legate in Lycia” and that Modestus’ later exile was probably for *maiestas minuta*. On Regulus’ possible role in the fall of Arulenus Rusticus see Pliny *Ep.* 1.5.1–2 and Winterbottom (1964), 93.

2. It is how Pliny describes this interaction that is of interest here, but the historical truth of his representation is another matter. If we assume his transcript is accurate, had he in fact been trying to say two things at once? Domitian, under whom he enjoyed an ever more successful career until the emperor’s assassination in 96 A.D., certainly could not have taken offense. But for a former high official under a hated emperor to portray himself as a quondam perpetrator of doublespeak would be a convenient posture in later years and under a new régime, where the claim itself rather than its truth might be considered the appropriate gesture.

3. Sherwin-White (1966), 96, correctly explains Regulus’ purpose here: “Regulus avoids initiating accusations, but provides the materials of a treason charge for others to exploit: ‘periculum foverat.’”

4. On the rare occasions of such linguistic slipperiness recorded in Tacitus’ work, the underdog never gets to crow over his success. In *Annals* 11.34.1 Vitellius, riding in the same litter as the emperor Claudius, his freedman Narcissus, and Caecina Largus as they travel to Rome to punish Claudius’ adulterous wife Messalina, will say only, “What a crime! What an outrage!” Narcissus presses him to clarify this ambiguous statement, but Vitellius, unsure of Claudius’ intentions, makes only vague comments that go in whatever direction their interpreter takes them. The senate’s conduct before Otho at *Hist.* 1.85.3 is similarly motivated, since no one knows whether Otho or Vitellius will ultimately triumph in the civil war, and all are aware that their words could be used against them later—a contingency they try to guard against by making themselves unintelligible. Finally, P. Cornelius Scipio, asked in the senate for his opinion of his condemned wife, carefully equivocates that he thinks the same thing about Poppaea’s crimes as everyone, and would say the same too—to which Tacitus appends the comment “[spoken] with graceful compromise between conjugal love and senatorial necessity” (*Ann.* 11.4.3). This is a good example of how doublespeak engages public and private truth with the same words—as Tacitus himself observes. See also *Ann.* 15.74.3, and further on this topic Plass (1988), 42–43.

5. As J. C. Scott (1990), 17ff., 136ff., and *passim*, repeatedly emphasizes. Through “verbal facility” vulnerable groups are enabled “not only to control

their anger but to conduct what amounts to a veiled discourse of dignity and self-assertion within the public transcript” (p. 137). Similarly, “a partly sanitized, ambiguous, and coded version of the hidden transcript is always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups . . . Ignoring [this discourse], however, reduces us to an understanding of historical subordination that rests either on those rare moments of open rebellion or on the hidden transcript itself, which is not just evasive but often altogether inaccessible” (p. 19). Scott’s notion of public and hidden transcripts is an illuminating way of thinking about discourse under absolute rule and has much influenced sections of this chapter (as indeed of the first). If “every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a ‘hidden transcript’ that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant” (p. xii), while “virtually all ordinarily observed relations between dominant and subordinate represent the encounter of the *public* transcript of the dominant with the *public* transcript of the subordinate” (p. 13), then all allusion that is conveyed in a public statement, like that of Pliny’s anecdote above, voices the hidden transcript and the public one *at the same time*.

6. See Beare (1950), 225: “Long before the end of the Republic the supply of new plays for the stage had practically ceased . . . [With rare exceptions], such few performances of literary tragedy or comedy as are recorded are revivals of old plays”; also pp. 229–230.

7. Pliny also discusses doublespeak in explicit terms in the *Panegyricus*, esp. 3.4; see Chapter 5. On Pliny’s retrospective reshaping of his autobiography in the *Letters*, see Shelton (1987).

8. The *lex Iulia maiestatis*, *Dig.* 48.4; see also Suet. *Div. Aug.* 55; Tac. *Ann.* 1.72.2–73.1; Dio 57.22.5; and discussion in L. Robinson, *Freedom of Speech in the Roman Republic* (Baltimore, 1940), 58ff. Also of relevance is R. A. Bauman, *The Crimen Maiestatis in the Roman Republic and Augustan Principate* (Johannesburg, 1967), which I was unable to obtain.

9. Fantham (1989), 288, suggests that Quintilian’s discussion of several tropes in terms of their potential for innuendo is a reflection of his times: “In Quintilian’s analysis of tropes and figures of thought and speech, it is worth isolating the elements that are peculiar to his own ‘Silver’ age. Many are tied to the new cult of irony, innuendo, and suggestion, such as *emphasis* . . . (8.3.86); or *noema* . . . (8.5.12); or *ironia* and the whole concept of the *figurata controversia*, a discourse which carries its true reference below the surface.”

10. It is possible (but, given the parallel clause structure, not probable), that we should understand the eager waiters as Quintilian’s own readers; even so the figure would remain one “which we use extremely often today” and “which occurs very frequently”—and just why would his readers be so eager to hear about it anyhow, unless they were fascinated by its application?

11. He continues his list with, “secondly, if it is improper to speak openly, and a third usage which is applied for the sake of charm alone and pleases by its very novelty and variety more than if it were a straightforward narration,” 9.2.66. I discuss this passage and its implications later.

12. See also Whigham (1984), 12, on a similar phenomenon in Elizabethan court poetry: “Nuance and oblique subtlety of manner . . . become goals. And as this subtilization takes place, the role of audience ratification increases in importance. Although logical criteria can seem to transcend group ratification, with magical criteria the group reasserts its power. In the absence of clear theoretical frames one can test performance only by reference to the collective arbitrator.”

13. See, e.g., on the *carmina Einsiedlensia*, Korzeniewski (1966). For Lucan, ironic readings of the poem are offered by the scholiasts (*Adnotationes super Lucan, Commenta Bernensia*) along with, e.g., Ahl (1984b), Due (1967), B. Marti in *AJP* 66 (1945), 375; contra, see Grimal (1960) and Paratore (1982); a good summary of the scholarship in Ahl (1976), 47–48 n.54. On Martial, see Heuvel (1937), Szelest (1974), with Thiele (1916) contra; on Persius, the scholiasts, Probus’ *Life* §10; Bardon (1936); Sullivan (1978) and (1985), 100–106; with Bramble (1974), 126, and Morelli (1914) contra; on Senecan tragedy, Bishop (1977) and (1985); Boissier (1875), 83–88; Lefèvre (1985); on Statius, Ahl (1984b), with Hartman (1916) fervently contra. For Juvenal, see Chapter 4.

14. The whole of Bishop (1985) constitutes a detailed exposition of such a code in the choral odes of Senecan tragedy. Bishop introduces his study with some excellent theoretical points, although his orientation is toward reading rather than performance. Of the actual workings of the code, he notes that “since the materials were the same as what one sees in all of imperial poetry, the idea of code rather than of rhetorical decoration in a given work arose in the reader from the occasion and the subject, from the community of thought between reader and writer, and doubtless at times from an express oral statement by the author” (p. 2). See his introduction for a history of allusive catchphrases, e.g., in Cicero’s correspondence with Atticus. The difference in pre-imperial practice is that “Cicero obviously felt no need to disguise his code; from this we conclude that concealment of this type—substituted names, indirect and allusive writing, use of an amanuensis, use of a different seal—was not feared by the government or society and was probably common practice, especially in business deals and political planning” (pp. 13–14).

15. See the good point of Patterson (1984), 47, lamenting the critics “who have argued against the presence of topical allusion [in early modern England] on the grounds that one-to-one correspondences cannot be found. Often, it was the very inexactness of the analogies so produced that made them useful, by

providing writers with an escape route if . . . ‘exception were taken.’” Bishop (1977), 289–290, notes the use of coded language based on the common educational experience of the Roman audience and cites MacMullen (1966), 36, who anticipated him in making the point that “Given the audience to which [criticism] was primarily addressed, an upper class of men all sharers in the same traditions, culture and education, there was a good deal one could say without seeming to say anything at all.” On the use of code, often mythological in nature, see also MacMullen, p. 41; and Lefèvre (1985), 1252. Due (1967), 95–96, offers perceptive comments on the situation under Nero. See also Whigham (1984), 14, who coins the term “fictional fictiveness” to describe this use of literature.

16. Patterson (1984), 11, suggests that ambiguous language can be governed by conventions accepted by both sides, author and powerholder, as to how a writer “could encode his opinions so that nobody would be *required* to make an example of him.”

17. Suspension of disbelief, to whatever degree it occurred, does not seem to have acted as an impediment to political interpretations of what transpired in the theater. Garton (1972), 39–40, argues that this term itself is too one-sided a description of the ancient stance before the theater, inasmuch as there was always engaged “the waking critical sense, which remains extra-illusory in its working, together with a genuine involvement with the actual personalities of the theater.” See similarly earlier at Garton, pp. 32–33; and Dupont (1985), 121–122.

18. See also *Ad Fam.* 7.11.12.

19. See Beacham (1992), 125ff., with n.24 on the evidence for sporadic later performances of new tragedies and comedies; Reynolds (1943), 41–42. Reynolds further observes a decline in the topicality of the mime under the empire and ponders, “Is it only due to chance that no critical voice of [the mimographs] has been preserved between the time of Augustus and that of Marcus Aurelius? Or is one rather to suppose that, as the mimodrama increased its size and scope during this period, until it became almost like a new type of comedy, so its preoccupation with the topicalities of the day decreased?” (He acknowledges, however, that the *scenicum exodium*, or stage farce, of Helvidius Priscus, in which, Suetonius claims, Domitian saw allusions to his divorce, may have been either mime or Atellan.) Note that staged, as opposed to recited, tragedy by a contemporary playwright appears in Suet. *Div. Iul.* 84.2; see my discussion later. On the whole issue of the recitation of tragedy in the empire, see Barnes (1986), 244; Beare (1950), 225–229; Sherwin-White (1966), 381; D. F. Sutton, *Seneca on the Stage*, Mnem. Suppl. 96 (Leiden, 1986), 4–5, with bibliography at 1 n.2. Barnes (1986), 244, while noting that G. Williams (1978), 40, has antedated the end of the recitation drama, which continued into the reigns of Domitian, Trajan, and Hadrian, adds: “A decline in the popularity of the genre undoubtedly set in,



perhaps suddenly, with the advent of a régime when you could feel what you wished and express what you felt (*Hist.* 1.1.4), without needing to disguise your own sentiments as those of Domitius or Cato, Medea or Thyestes.” He is perhaps overly optimistic about the new régime, but makes nonetheless an important link.

20. See discussion in Abbot (1907), 53–54; Reynolds (1943), 38–40. E. Gruen, in *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden and New York, 1990), 92–106, has recently questioned the traditional view of Naevius as a dramatist who “utilized literature for partisan politics, prompted official reaction, and felt the heavy hand of political censorship” (p. 97), but after a meticulous and balanced consideration of the issue still concludes that “one ought not rule out the possibility that Naevius took pleasure in indirect allusion of current import” (p. 101). Compare the quotations from Charisius in H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini* vol. 1, pp. 210 and 216, and Cic. *De Sen.* 20, cited with cautions by Gruen (1990), 95 nn. 65–68. See also Gruen’s comments on Plautus in (1990), 124–157. It may be that the distinction that exists between innuendo and direct attack should be adduced to explain the testimony of Scipio Aemilianus in Cicero’s *De Republica* 4.10.11, a passage that implies that Plautus and Naevius did not assault prominent political figures from the stage (on which see again Gruen, p. 98).

21. Macrobius 2.7. In the prologue to the mime, Laberius’ attack on Caesar is direct. The nature of his attack in the mime itself is more difficult to characterize; although it is represented by Macrobius as deliberate—“in the actual performance too he repeatedly avenged himself wherever he could” (2.7.4)—and all the audience understands that Caesar is the target of his words, the question of whether his statements are allusive (i.e., referring to another subject in the context of the mime) or outright cannot be answered from the account as we have it. It is worth noting that the audience reacts by turning to stare at the dictator (2.7.5), a response similar to that in the anecdotes by Dio and Suetonius (I quote these later) but with the important distinction that what they react to is the known intention of the actor/author; see in corroboration Cicero *Ad Fam.* 12.18. Seneca recounts the Laberius incident in *De Ira* 2.11.3 with the same audience reaction but no hints as to intention. According to Macrobius the attack annoyed Caesar enough that he transferred his patronage from Laberius to Publius Syrus.

22. See discussion in Beacham (1992), 134; Reynolds (1943), 39. As Reynolds remarks, mime included covert as well as open political commentary.

23. Cic. *Ad Att.* 14.3.3; Suet. *Vesp.* 19.2.

24. See also Cic. *Ad Att.* 14.2.1; *Ad Fam.* 12.18.2. The *archimimus* Favor at Suet. *Vesp.* 19.2 is not engaging in allusion, although Friedländer II.94 includes this passage in his list of innuendoes in mime and Atellan farce.

25. As Abbott (1907), 55, concludes, “All the extant categories in which playwrights refer to contemporary politics are to be found in the lighter form of the drama. On the other hand, the verses which actors apply to politicians or public events of their own time occur mainly in tragedy.”

26. *Pro Sest.* 118. The verse cited here is corrupt; I have followed, as does the OCT, the emendation of Halm.

27. Pointing at the audience: Cic. *Pro Sest.* 120 and 122; floods of tears: *Pro Sest.* 121 and 123. Cicero also attributes to Aesopus without comment a line from Ennius’ *Andromache*, “Haec omnia vidi inflammari,” *Pro Sest.* 121; for the suggestion that the actor added other lines besides this one to the Accian tragedy, see R. Gardner in the Loeb edition, p. 200, note a.

28. Cicero’s use here of the term *significatio* is suggestive, since (as an anonymous reader pointed out to me) at *Ad Herem.* 4.67 it is defined as a kind of allusion: “*Significatio* is a figure that leaves more to be suspected than is laid out in the speech. It occurs through exaggeration, ambiguity, inference, aposiopesis, comparison.”

29. Revivals of earlier plays were not particularly common under the empire, but Beare (1950), 229, cannot be right when he points out that “the only *togata* we know to have been performed under the empire is the *Incendium* of Afranius, and this was revived merely to give a spectacular display of a stage fire.” Beacham (1992), 127, collects other evidence for imperial performances that must have involved revivals.

30. The second line is from Menander’s *Epitrepontes*, 116 (cited in the Loeb edition of E. Cary); the first is unknown, but necessarily also from a play by Menander.

31. The Atellan actor Datus is described as making clear his intentions in this way when he targeted Nero as the butt of his verse, an imperial case in which it is clearly the performer who is responsible for the allusion: “Datus, an actor of Atellan farces, accompanied the words *good health, father, good health, mother* in some recitative with gestures appropriate for imitating someone drinking and swimming, alluding of course to the deaths of Claudius and Agrippina, and in the last verse, ‘Orcus leads your way,’ he indicated the senate by a gesture” (Suet. *Nero* 39.3).

32. Carney (1968), 9 n.10, points out that “Suetonius repeatedly remarks on the alertness to allusion of Roman audiences—and Emperors!” and provides a comprehensive list of passages, including those discussed both above and later in this chapter.

33. *Div. Aug.* 53.1. Suetonius comments that Augustus in principle refused to be addressed as “dominus”; here it would no doubt have been offensive to other elements in the audience and bad publicity for his stance as *princeps*.

34. Tengström (1977), 47, who notes in passing the Roman audience's eagerness to find allusion where it could, cites this passage as an illustration of this phenomenon, commenting that "The actually political character [sc. of the theater] became obvious . . . in the reactions of the public. A theater audience usually expresses itself with approval or disfavor at a performance. Such expressions could become a political indication in imperial Rome, namely at times when the play could be interpreted in one way or another as a reference to actual conditions."

35. On the nature of Atellan farce, see the most recent discussion in Beacham (1992), 128–129.

36. Of course, the song is not familiar to us and so the point of this repetition is largely lost; as the preceding paragraph in Suetonius makes clear, it was Galba's reputed miserliness that was at issue, but who Onesimus was nobody knows, and even the text here is the result of emendation and the subject of speculation. See the useful discussion in Reynolds (1943), 41, although I am unsure what degree of intention he ascribes to the actors themselves when he comments that "the opinions of the man in the street were crystallized by actors in farce." On political satire in Atellan farce see also Nicoll (1963), 76.

37. Reynolds (1943), 42, comments of Helvidius that he "seems to have withdrawn from political life, and possibly had no intention of satirizing Domitian in this *exodum*; it will be observed that Suetonius does not state it as a fact."

38. See also André (1990), 170 (referring to Atellan as well as mime): "The mimic genre offered welcome opportunity to take action against the powerful in at least an indirect way. In all cases the audience clapped their approval and thus represented public opinion." André attributes the vogue of allusion not only to the *lex maiestatis* but also to a law of the Twelve Tables which seemingly forbids personal attacks from the stage; see Cic. *De Rep.* 4.12. However, despite the implications of Cicero, to set this law in a theatrical context is probably mistaken (as A. Riggsby points out to me). See A. Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 1968), 8–10, where Lintott discusses *occentatio*, verse attacks on personal enemies that were delivered to their face and not from the stage.

39. Pliny remarks on this in the context, not of an audience's response to allusion, but of their response to the quality of the work being recited (*Epist.* 7.17.10): "Isn't it true that if you feel the first things you say meet with disapproval, you falter and lose heart? I believe this is because there is a certain weighty and collective intelligence simply in numbers, and although the judgment of individuals may be weak, as a group their judgment is sound."

40. See J. C. Scott (1990), 202–212, and similarly, but with more general reference to the nature of "truth" under absolutism, Arendt (1958), 435.

41. As G. Williams (1978), 303, comments, "All [post-Augustan] poets recited

their works publicly, and so did historians, orators and philosophers. In fact, all later writers ought to be viewed as having written their works with this form of live performance in mind as their immediate aim." Williams, however, expressly denies any political significance to this fact. See also Carcopino (1940), 193–201; Funaioli in *RE* s.v. "Recitationes," cols. 435–446; Sherwin-White (1966), 115.

42. The origin of this phenomenon is attributed by Seneca the Elder to Asinius Pollio in *Contr.* 4.praef.2. This passage, as correctly understood by Herwig (1864), 8, attests to the beginning of the large audience for literary rather than declamatory recitation in about 38 B.C. See also Dalzell (1955), who however is not clear on the difference between Augustan and post-Augustan conditions. The popularity of the recitations under the empire is demonstrated by the copious evidence of Martial's *Epigrams* and Pliny's *Epistles*; see also Cizek (1972), 55ff. and (1989); Colton (1966), 81; Courtney (1980), 84; Mayor (1872), 175ff.; Quinn (1982); Sherwin-White (1966), 421; G. Williams (1978), 303–306. On recitation in the late republic and early principate, when the audience was smaller and select, often consisting of other professionals or the imperial family itself, and the readings were held by professional poets, not ranking members of imperial society, see Herwig (1864), 4ff., Quinn (1982), esp. 145: "The usual thing seems to have been a private reading by the author to a small group. A reading at court, for example, to the Emperor and his family"; larger groups involved "readings to friends, or to a group of fellow-poets and critics." Later recitations included, but were not confined to, this type. Most modern critics see in the literary recitation an excuse for vanity on the author's part, e.g., Carcopino (1940), 200—and to different degrees and in different cases it was, as is indicated by the large number of passages attesting to the pressure on the auditor to display an appreciation he may not have felt; see, e.g., Juv. *Sat.* 7.36ff.; Martial 8.76, 10.10, 12.40; Petr. *Satyricon* 5.1.7–8; also Quinn (1982), 161–162. Other passages describe attendance as a duty: Juv. *Sat.* 1.1ff., Martial 5.78, 11.52; Pliny *Epist.* 9.8; see also Saller (1982), 27–29.

43. See, e.g., Boissier (1875), 80, 82; and D. Timpe on allusions in recitation in his response to K. A. Raaflaub in *Opposition et résistances à l'Empire d'Auguste à Trajan* (Geneva, 1987), 62: "The lack of a space for public opinion offered literature the possibility of giving voice to political opinions, independent ideas, and perhaps criticism, through hints and metaphors." Cizek (1989), 19, discusses the issue in terms of groups linked by common literary and political interests.

44. These receptions and banquets provided a ready context for recitations that mocked the emperor openly as well, the public nature of which was perceived as grounds for retribution even as the host or guests denied having heard anything. The first *maiestas* trial under Nero, an emperor known for his tolerance of libelous verse, was for satiric verse recited at a dinner party: the reciter,

the praetor Antistius Sosianus, was charged with treason by Cossutianus Capito, and although the host testified that he had heard nothing, execution was proposed (but not passed; *Ann.* 14.48.1–2). Tacitus' account is highly uncomplimentary to Nero, who seems to have exerted his usual tolerance; but the historian's portrayal of the incident is based on an understanding of the criteria that came into play on such occasions.

45. Antistius Sosianus (see the preceding note) performed at a dinner party; the orator Carrinas Secundus was banished for reciting a declamation against tyrants in a school (Dio 59.20.6); Curiatius Maternus in Tacitus' *Dialogus* (see my later discussion); and the sources on the poet Lucan suggest that it was the recitation of the potentially allusive *Pharsalia* to which Nero objected, walking out on one performance and banning all other recitations in the future; see Suet. *Vita Lucani* 332.11–13 Hosius, where Nero walks out of a recitation to chill the response to Lucan; on the ban, Suet. and Tac. *Ann.* 15.49.3 (but not Dio 62.29.4); similarly Ahl (1971), 18: "The recitation of the *Pharsalia* (whatever books may have been involved) could have been the turning point in the relationship of Lucan and Nero, the moment of rupture."

46. For example, the history written by Hermogenes of Tarsus, who was put to death for "quasdam figuras" in his work. Note too that Seneca the Elder at *Contr.* 2.4.12–13 criticizes the public declaimers of fictional *controversiae* who deliberately make allusions and think it worth giving up their lives for a bon mot (presumably in the interests of the audience's entertainment, given the context of Seneca's comments about Maecenas and Latro; see section II).

47. The passage is worth citing in further detail: Britannicus "steadfastly began a song that hinted at his exclusion from his hereditary home and the helm of the state. This gave rise to an all-too-clear display of sympathy, since night and revelry had done away with dissimulation. Nero, seeing their ill will, whetted his hatred," (Tac. *Ann.* 13.15.2–3; my emphases).

48. Even at the theater and during the republic these considerations could play a role; Garton (1972), 145, remarking that tragedy and dictators do not mix well, notes that "Pompey was not there to hear the obtreaction of himself" (i.e., Diphilus' line "at our cost are you great," cited in Cic. *ad Att.* 2.19.3); presumably Diphilus might have restrained himself had Pompey been in the audience. As already observed in note 21, the presence of Caesar as Laberius delivered his insults from the stage in Macrobius 2.7 had no deterrent effect on the performer, but he subsequently lost Caesar's favor.

49. This is, of course, a principle that has applications beyond literary or declamatory allusion. It is discussed by Goffman (1967), 87 ("the practice of defiling the recipient but in such a way and from such an angle that he retains the right to act as if he has not received the profaning message"); and by Pitt-

Rivers (1966), 27–28: "Given that a man's honour is committed by his estimation of the intention of others, everything depends upon how an action is interpreted . . . The victim of an affront is dishonored only at the point where he is forced to recognize that he has been." As Seneca the Younger himself remarks in the *De Ira*, 3.11.1, "It is not useful to see and hear everything . . . Certain insults seem so only as the result of interpretation; so some must be put aside, others laughed at, still others forgiven." See also Pliny *Epist.* 1.5.12.

50. Tac. *Ann.* 4.34. In fact, as Syme (1958), 337 n.10, remarks, "Crenutius' writings were not the sole, or even the main charge against him." He cites evidence from Seneca the Younger and refers to R. S. Rogers, *Criminal Trials and Criminal Legislation under Tiberius* (Middletown, Conn., 1935), 86f.

51. Tacitus himself adds a comment on the folly of those who think they can extinguish the memory of the men whose works they ban: the influence of such authors is all the greater, the punishers merely winning infamy for themselves and glory for their victims (*Ann.* 4.35.5).

52. See similarly Suet. *Tib.* 56, where Tiberius asks his Greek dinner guest Xeno what dialect he is using; Xeno replies "Doric," and Tiberius exiles him to the island of Cnaria, "thinking he was being reproached with his former retirement at Rhodes, because the Rhodians speak Doric."

53. Tragedies on the topic of Atreus and Thyestes were frequent in the early empire and were sometimes intended as allusive and sometimes not—a good example of how it was incumbent on audiences and emperors to decide. L. Varius Rufus presented a *Thyestes* in 29 B.C. at Augustus' triumph after Actium that was evidently not hostile to Augustus, but the *Atreus* of Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus, probably the same poet as Suetonius' above, was interpreted by Tiberius (though not Augustus) as containing allusions to himself; and Maternus, in Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 3.3, is planning to write an anti-imperial *Thyestes*. As far back as Sulla's dictatorship, Accius wrote an *Atreus* from which Seneca cites the line "Let them hate, so long as they fear," and comments: "one can tell it was written in the time of Sulla" (*De Ira* 1.20.4). Noting that Seneca himself wrote a *Thyestes*, Ahl (1976), 27, observes, "Men of letters and *principes* alike were well aware that Accius' drama was not merely a reworking of the tale of the house of Atreus: it bore the mark of the terror under Sulla and continued to be recognized as a comment on the tyrannical mind for years to come. In making his observation about this remark in Accius' play, Seneca invites us to look at his own tragedies in a similar light." On the *Thyestes*, see further Bishop (1985), 345–394; MacMullen (1966), 36–37. Lefèvre (1985), 1248, points out an actual usage of "Atrides" for "the emperor" in a manner designed to insult the (safely dead) Domitian at Juv. *Sat.* 4.65. See Boissier (1875), 84: "The tyrant was kept on in the tragedy of the empire, and the authors continued to abuse him:

it was a tradition. The rulers could, if necessary, refuse to apply to themselves the idiocies which people spoke, since it was taken for granted that ‘the principate and the tyranny did not resemble each other.’” The point is that imperial reactions to variations on the Atreus story were often understood as comments on the self-same emperor as well as the play. On the use of mythological tyrants’ names for real people, see also Bishop (1985), 16–23.

54. For a different interpretation of this passage in Suetonius and also Tacitus’ rendition of the Crenutius Cordus case, see Bishop (1985), 16–17.

55. On Aemilius Scaurus, see also Sen. *Suas.* 2.22; on the identification of this man with Suetonius’ unnamed poet, see the works cited in Lefèvre (1985), 1248 n.24. It is not a crucial point for the discussion.

56. On the trial, see R. S. Rogers, *Criminal Trials and Criminal Legislation under Tiberius* (Middletown, Conn., 1935), 151–154. Bishop (1985), 19, is cautious about how specific the allusions in this play really could have been.

57. Henderson (1989), 177, remarks of this kind of representation: “it is a matter of the tyrant’s (however benign) perception of how threatened he feels . . . power as power over meaning, *Wor(l)d-Power*. The misnomer *maiestas* destabilizes Roman discourse.” Tiberius engages in similar acts of construal at *Ann.* 1.7.7.

58. Maternus eventually has recourse to another kind of precaution, fulsome praise of the present régime. See Chapter 4.

59. On Phaedrus, and for bibliography, see Currie (1984). It may come as a surprise to find a similar point made by Tacitus in the *Annals*, where, ostensibly in reference to now-dead nobles who are the subject of unflattering comment in his work, he warns that even if their families have died out, “you will find people to think they are being charged with other people’s crimes because of the similarity to their own character” (4.33.4). See the comments of R. Martin (1981), 38: “Tacitus writes of a political society in which he himself played an active part; he needed no reminding of the dangers that threatened anyone who gave offense to those in high places. The fact that as a historian he dealt with an early period of the principate afforded no defense . . . [*Ann.* 4.33.4] might fit both Tacitus’ senatorial colleagues and the emperor himself.”

60. The mss. readings are split between “deducit” (but what is the subject?) and “deducis”; see Courtney (1980), 116–117, who reads with the OCT and the better ms. tradition “deducit” and follows Housman in supposing the loss of a line after 156 “with a subject like *cadaver*.”

61. Similarly Courtney (1980), 117, on “*hic est*”: “If you say ‘this is the man’ (i.e., about whom we were talking), it is taken for granted that the remarks made about him have been unfavourable. Of course to a man with a clear conscience it is flattering to know that people have been talking about him.”

62. Correctly identified by Lutz (1950), 118, as a statement belonging to the “category of the so-called ‘hedge-clause.’” She notes the similarity to Phaedrus’ precautionary statement cited in text above.

63. As Highet (1954), 56, well emphasizes: “Juvenal says that, in writing satire, he will speak of the dead: the rich and noble dead. This is a new invention of his. Satire in Rome had always prided itself on being contemporary, on hitting at living people, the more powerful the better. No Roman satirist known to us had undertaken to write exclusively about the dead.” Courtney (1980), 119, notes that some—but not all—of Horace’s victims were dead, and that Juvenal mentions—but does not attack—contemporaries.

64. See, e.g., Gianotti (1979), 72; and Ahl (1976), 28: “These observations on the impossibility of writing true satire, however, constitute a form of direct criticism. Even to remind one’s readers of the inadvisability of free speech in view of the political reprisals is a slashing political comment.”

65. Courtney (1980), 90, 116, and Gérard (1976), 26, make the same point. See also s.v. in J. Ferguson, *A Prosopography to the Poems of Juvenal*, Collection Latomus 200 (Brussels, 1987).

66. Pliny makes the sarcastic observation of Domitian that “I suppose he, who avenged Nero’s death, would allow Nero’s reputation and his life to be criticized; I suppose he would refrain from interpreting what was being said about a man so similar to himself as being directed against himself” (*Pan.* 53.4). And upon Domitian’s death writers openly referred to him as a Nero *redivivus*: Juvenal himself called him “the bald Nero” in *Sat.* 4.38; and Martial *Epig.* 11.33 uses “Nero” for “Domitian.” Bardson (1940), 283–284, 287, argues that Domitian was anxious to avoid the association with Nero, hence his loss of interest in composing poetry after his accession; but his public made the connection anyhow, thanks to the emperor’s literary patronage and institution of the Capitoline and Alban games (pp. 287–288). In any case it appears from Pliny that *after* Domitian’s death, people made the claim that to have associated Domitian with Nero was an action fraught with risk—a notion that need not have been current while Domitian was actually alive; e.g., Coffey (1979) argues from the fragments of the satirist Turnus, who was active at Domitian’s court, that a target of his satire may have been Nero, and there are comments critical of Nero in Martial 7.21, 44, 45; and Statius (*Silv.* 2.7.58, 60–61, 100). Or perhaps this evidence suggests, not the fictitious nature of the association, but that it was not openly acknowledged, and was used, like *schema*, to hint at something the audience was to fill out. This is perhaps the most reasonable view. See also Chapter 5, note 23 and accompanying text.

67. Gérard (1976), 24 n.1, comes to similar conclusions, asking, “Was all risk averted after the death of Domitian?” and suggesting a negative answer on the

strength of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*. He further hypothesizes, as did already L. A. MacKay in *CP* 53 (1958), 234–240, that the “Cluvenius” Juvenal mentions at 1.80 as the kind of poet he himself might be is an allusion to the younger Helvidius Priscus, who came originally from Cluviae and wrote a farce under Domitian for which he was forced to commit suicide. See also Boissier (1875), 328; Helmbold (1951), 57; and Griffith (1970), 62–63, who thinks that “experiar” may retain its legal connotations, so that the last line means: “If pressed, I shall rely on the defense that I shall test by legal process how far liberties may be taken against the dead.” Griffith further comments that this precaution “sets out to disarm opposition, but would scarcely have been, by itself, a sufficient defence in a legal emergency” (p. 64). Courtney (1980), 90, noting the setting of the satire and the fact that, e.g., Juvenal’s probable target in 1.24–25 was already in exile by 92 A.D., offers a similar interpretation of the relation of the final lines to the body of the satire, but from a different perspective. He suggests that “the problem which Juvenal does not raise until 151 sqq. affects all the earlier parts of the poem too, and before he enunciates his solution (170–71) he applies it.” On the *Dialogus*, see Chapter 4.

68. Hight (1954) makes the same point even as he suggests that Juvenal’s apprehension was unfounded: “since this satire was to be recited and this book of satires was to be published under the liberal emperor Trajan, it might have been tactful to cry, ‘No, no, impossible’” (rather than “woe to the critic”); but he then observes that “Juvenal’s apprehensions tell us as much as he himself could put into an entire poem” (pp. 55, 57).

69. On the identity of Curiatius Maternus, see Chapter 4, notes 8–11 and 68.

70. The bracketed word is Ahl’s. I have found his whole analysis of this passage in Quintilian, as well as the citations he adduces from Demetrius, extremely helpful, and my discussion above owes much to his article (although I would not agree with certain of his key points, particularly his interpretation of ancient usage of the word *apertum* to mean loaded speech ([1984b], 192–196, and [1984a], 82).

71. As Ahl (1984b), 190, comments of Quintilian’s entire treatment of this figure, one cannot argue that if he was referring to court circles he should have so specified. “Obviously, to make such a statement bluntly would have been political lunacy. Historians and poets who were Quintilian’s contemporaries in Flavian Rome bear out with almost unanimous voice the dangers of direct criticism. Naming the Caesars outright would also undercut Quintilian’s own point about the need to use *emphasis* and ambiguity. And Quintilian, like most rhetoricians, likes to make the text in which he explains a particular phenomenon an example of its use as well.”

72. On Quintilian’s need for caution as the reason for the flattery of Domi-

tian in other passages, see George Kennedy, “An Estimate of Quintilian,” *AJP* 83 (1962), 133. Coleman (1986), 3110, does not agree that extravagant praise of the emperor was felt to be compulsory; McDermott and Orentzel (1979) consider Quintilian’s praise sincere.

73. *Inst. Or.* 9.1.14. On *schema* and Zoilus see Ahl (1984b), 188–189, and his bibliography in 188, nn. 20 and 21.

74. On the dating of *On Style*, which has been set at different points between the third century B.C. and the mid-second century A.D., see Goold (1961), 178–189; G. M. A. Grube, *A Greek Critic: Demetrius on Style* (Toronto, 1961), 22–23, 39–56, with a survey of the bibliography, 22–23, n.26; W. R. Roberts in the introduction to his translation in the Loeb edition, 257–281. Goold argues for a date near 1 A.D.; Grube, for 270 A.D.; Roberts, for the second half of the first century A.D., identifying the author with the scholar Demetrius of Tarsus of Plutarch’s dialogue “On the Cessation of the Oracles.” If indeed the Greek Demetrius produced his treatise in the time of Domitian, soon before or soon after Quintilian’s magnum opus, the tact of the Roman rhetorician in his uncomfortable position close to the emperor stands out in all the greater relief.

75. According to Ahl (1984b), 189 ff., Quintilian’s list of the conditions for using allusive speech is an elaboration of those mentioned by Demetrius, at *On Style* 287, where he writes: *alēthinon de schēma est logou meta duoīn toutoīn legomenōn, euprepeias kai asphaleias*. Ahl translates this passage “But genuine figured speech has these two goals in mind: good taste and the speaker’s safety.” He is alone, however, in rendering *asphaleia* as “the speaker’s safety”; the term is commonly understood to refer to a kind of restraint. G. M. A. Grube renders it “discretion”; W. Rhys Roberts and *LSJ* s.v. (where this passage is cited) translate it as “circumspection.” Given Demetrius’ use of *epi sphales* in *On Style* 294, Ahl may well be correct in his more emphatic translation.

76. I must therefore disagree with both Bardon (1940), 312, and his refutation in Coleman (1986), 3111, who observes, “Quintilian is also able to allude to tyrants as subjects for declamation (*Inst. Or.* 7.2.25, 7.7.3ff., 7.8.3, 9.2.8iff.); this is interpreted by Bardon as evidence that Domitian permitted freedom of speech, but the determining factor must be the context: the topos of the tyrant was condoned in declamation, but it was recognized to be dangerous subject-matter for tragedy.”

#### 4. PRAISE AND DOUBLESPEAK

1. On the dramatic date of the *Dialogus*, calculated on the basis of internal evidence at *Dialogus* 17.3 to 74–75 A.D., see Syme (1958), 670–671. For a discussion of the discrepancy that yields either 77–78 or 74–75, see Heubner in Güngerich

chosen to focus on these two, which share an emphasis on the distorting effect of power on the nature of communication itself. It should likewise go without saying that neither theatricality nor doublespeak is unique to the late first and early second centuries, nor do I offer a history of these paradigms in audience-emperor interaction, but rather a discussion of their workings at a time when their explanatory appeal is particularly in evidence.

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