

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
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A Call to Act: Witness, Testimony, and Political Renewal in Shakespeare's Plays

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in English

By

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## DEDICATION

To

My family, my committee, and my friends

in gratitude for their great help to me while I pursued my dreams and neglected theirs.

“There is no agony like bearing an untold story inside you.”

Zora Neale Hurston

“The Puritans? The Puritans? I have no respect for them. They left England when Shakespeare was writing for the stage.”

Virginia Berry Cummings

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **A Call to Act: Witness, Testimony, and Renewal in Shakespeare's Plays**

**By**

**Tracy Clare Cummings**

**Doctor of Philosophy in English**

**University of California, Irvine, 2015**

**Julia R. Lupton, Chair**

A phenomenological analysis of Shakespeare's plays suggests that characters who testify after having witnessed intolerable conditions cause significant change by interrupting the actions of other characters and thereby enhancing the possibilities for egalitarian practices in the world of the play. The desire to testify is great enough that when public realms do not permit open disclosures, characters invent methods to give accounts of themselves or to bring their knowledge into discussion, either in soliloquy or through prompts to other characters. When possible, characters offer their personal narratives. With each divulgence, characters create greater access to information and present possibilities for alternate choices to participate in their communities, including deliberation and mutual disclosure, making it possible for others to see and recognize them, strengthening their public realms by rendering them more inclusive, and creating the potential for further disclosures. In *III Henry VI*, King Henry is brought to awareness of his role in England's civil war by the anonymous testimony of two soldiers and attempts to rule wisely thereafter. In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Dogberry employs the speech tools of the disenfranchised to disempower the homosocial and intolerant nobility without calling attention to himself. In *Pericles*, Marina deliberates with her interlocutors so they can understand their



actions from her point of view. When she is prompted to share her personal narrative, she and her father, Pericles, understand that their isolated views of their lives were mistaken; they are characters in a single story that binds them to one another. The characters thereby uncover the meaning-giving nature of narrative: It enables a person to recognize what she or he has never known. The role of Gower augments the performative effect of wonder aroused by the reunion of Marina and Pericles by wielding the tools of narrative, which include imagining, predicting, and wishing.

# INTRODUCTION

## A CALL TO ACT

Consider the following scene: A woman runs to her lord's home to alert him that a murder has occurred. She raps on his door, yells out, and once she is admitted in, discovers another murder. Her lady has been killed. Once she discerns that the very lord she was looking for has killed her lady she sounds an alarm to call everyone to her. She must report what happened, and along with the others, they must expose the events they witnessed and participated in that led to these murders. Even though her lord threatens to kill her, she makes it possible, even necessary, for everyone to speak. Her husband also warns her to be silent and finally does murder her, but she speaks freely and says all that she saw and did that caused her lady to be killed. Emilia was called to act. She risked her life to tell the truth, and she died for speaking it.

This moment from *Othello* emblemizes much that I wish to examine in my dissertation. Emilia's actions capture the promise and peril of speaking in what Hannah Arendt calls the public realm, the sphere of appearances where a person sees others and is likewise seen by them. In this communal space, people come together, speak and, by speaking, gain power.<sup>1</sup> Since the public realm is anywhere people reveal themselves in word and deed, Emilia can transform the private space of Othello and Desdemona's bedroom into a public one when she calls on her fellow Venetians to disclose the actions that led to Desdemona's murder. Before this moment in the play, Emilia had hidden behind her husband, Iago's, will. When she took Desdemona's handkerchief, Emilia had deferred to Iago's wishes: "What he will do with it heaven knows, not

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 176-177.

I; I nothing but to please his fantasy” (3.2.206-208).<sup>2</sup> Now, Emilia creates a space where she empowers herself to speak, brings others to hear her, and cues them to speak. Emilia denounces Iago and Othello and forces Iago to publicly acknowledge he told Othello Desdemona was false (5.2.169-176). Emilia thus upsets the previous power balance to create conditions so that Iago will confess, Cassio testify that he found the handkerchief in his room, and she herself publicly accuse her husband that he “set the murders on” (5.2.184).

Because she responded to the call to act, Emilia disrupts the conditions she witnessed and creates the possibility for a new political reality to exist in the world of the play. Cyprus has become an island whose military and governmental leaders know Iago is not honest and that Othello has succumbed to his lieutenant’s malice. This new world is not born early enough to save the lives of all its characters, but Cassio’s speech and Roderigo’s letter remove the stain attached to Desdemona. Arendt names this ability to alter circumstances “natality,” which she defines as the human ability to act rather than merely preserve what has come before.<sup>3</sup> As Julia Lupton explains, natality arises from the possibility that every living being, despite having been born into a pre-existing world, is nonetheless capable of creating a “fundamentally new beginning” within that world, preserving some of the old and bringing what I call political renewal,<sup>4</sup> circumstances that promote greater opening, mutuality, divulgences, and opportunities to occupy and affect the public realm.

Act five of *Othello* represents an informal trial, but on the phenomenological level that Arendt examines, this moment is an example of the world of appearance, the space where

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<sup>2</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello* (Signet Classics. Ed: Sylvan Barnet. New York: New American Library, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Arendt, “On Violence” (*Crises of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1972), 175.

<sup>4</sup> Julia Lupton, “Arendt in Italy: Or, the Taming of the Shrew” (*Law Culture and the Humanities*. 8.1:2012, 1-16), 13.

people, not individuals, come together. Such gatherings predate all formal constitution of the public realm and forms of government.<sup>5</sup> When people join with others, they exist in plural groups in which it is possible to make public declarations and execute strategies of empowerment and collective action. With a phenomenological perspective, analyzing the appearance of people, groups, and things as opposed to the metaphysical ground of existence, it is possible to ascertain the conditions that give rise to any public sphere and thus many forms of strength possible in a civic realm: Emilia's call to the Venetians creates the ground for power because the human ability to act in concert defines influence.<sup>6</sup> Arendt conceives of power as existing apart from established structures that enhance systems marked by command-obedience or law and punishment. Power is the ability to come together with others, to create, and to embark upon a venture, not an opportunity to enforce obedience.<sup>7</sup>

In my dissertation, I bring Arendt's political theories into conversation with three Shakespeare plays in which characters forsake a previously disempowered status to establish spaces where they speak and prompt others to speak in public. The plays I analyze span three genres and several periods of his writing career: *III Henry VI*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Pericles*. Each portrays prohibitions to public revelation, impediments to self-disclosure, acts of public declaration, and the results when disclosure is finally made. The plays shape themselves around the ways characters insert themselves into inequitable worlds by constructing conditions that will enable them to call a group together and speak. When they do, they often bring political renewal to the world of the play.

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<sup>5</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 234 and 199.

<sup>6</sup> Arendt, "On Violence," 143.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 141.

These disruptions are noteworthy because the stratified public sphere of England in Shakespeare's era obstructed public discourse. The potential for acts of violence in response to disclosure and self-empowerment quashed public speaking. Arendt's theories help analyze conditions that block participation, nullify power, and illuminate how normally disempowered characters create ways in which they can speak.

In her analysis of narrow public spheres for instance, Arendt discerns that isolation and loneliness render propaganda effective because individuals cannot enter the sphere of appearances due to its corruption. Isolated figures nonetheless engage in good or criminal behavior but remain anonymous, with those who would perform good actions able to enact good into the world only so long as they remain anonymous and criminals censoring themselves in order to conceal their criminal behavior.<sup>8</sup> Although the specific conditions Arendt analyzes are different from Shakespeare's era, these conditions exist in *III Henry VI* and shape the second half of the play. It pits King Henry and Richard Gloucester against each other in a traditional conflict of good and evil that occurs because witnesses testifying about the civil war affect their King so powerfully, he forsakes his autarkic relationship to his land in order to attempt to rule more wisely. He fails, having not imagined a sufficiently empowering model, and because his opponent, Richard III, cannot bear the truths Henry utters.

In *Much Ado about Nothing*, the play depicts the manifold problems caused by its city thriving on deception. When its Prince and his knights visit, the conflict between the homosocial military and the town explodes because the excessive loyalty Don Pedro requires enforces

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<sup>8</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180.

obedience and obstructs the possibility of perceiving the truth. Pedro and his men, led on by a malicious lie, publicly denounce a local woman. The play is structured by its constabulary prompting wrongdoers to confess, which defuses the power the Prince abused and creates greater openness in the community without drawing attention to the sway the constabulary holds.

My reading of Dogberry argues that the role of the constable is inspired by Robert Tarlton, the clown who delighted early modern audiences with his antics, some of which depended upon direct address, some of which only signaled self awareness. Since Dogberry has only one example of direct address, today's audiences have not discerned his use of traditional folk practices. Dogberry uses the language tools of the disenfranchised to cue others to act in his stead and allows himself to appear foolish in order to continue his work of engendering justice in a neighborhood saturated with discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, chapter three explores narrative, the form of speech that generates meaning and can reduce the grip of authoritarianism in the public realm. In *Pericles*, characters who share their personal stories learn that their isolated views of themselves are so limited, they are incorrect. Alone, characters either believe they are acting appropriately or understand their lives to be tragic. When they listen to others' narratives, they learn how their lives are knitted together in an interdependent world. The play's structure as a multi-focus narrative facilitates this reading through two contrasts: As Rick Altman has revealed, multi-focus narratives juxtapose two opposing protagonists whose inevitable meaning generates an enlarged point of view.<sup>10</sup> The protagonists in *Pericles* are differentiated by opting to speak diplomatically or forthrightly. Second, the play contrasts the dramatization of these protagonists' journeys with Gower's

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Thomson, "The True Physiognomy of a Man: Richard Tarlton and His Legend" (*Parergon*, 14.2: 1997), 33.

<sup>10</sup> Rick Altman, *Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

narration. In the contrast between Pericles and his daughter, Pericles's unwillingness to share his opinions with a King burdens his conscience, which ultimately results in his inability to speak, whereas Marina takes on all comers and exhorts them to witness their actions from a broader perspective. When Marina and Pericles meet, the play uncovers the healing effect of sharing narratives and enhances the poignancy by contrasting dramatized action with the narration of Gower. Gower's deployment of narrative tools increases the performative effect of the embodied co-witnessing Pericles and Marina achieve when they meet. Finally, the two protagonists, who have never met, recognize each other due to the intrinsic nature of narrative: It makes people capable of recognizing what they have never known by conferring meaning upon a world that otherwise seems haphazard. This capacity also diminishes the power of authoritarian structures by helping to maintain factual truths and their significance in the public realm. This element of *Pericles* resonates with current-day practices of human trafficking and the empowering effects of storytelling.

Although Arendt does not discuss the plays I analyze, she illuminates how theater is distinctly political. In some cases, theater stages political stories by bringing the lives of long-dead individuals into performances in the public realm.<sup>11</sup> In most cases though, politicized content empowers individuals in the relationship-building actions of writing, rehearsing, and performing stories before live audiences, which in turn enhances civic participation. Thus, the practices and content of theater created and depicted relationships.<sup>12</sup>

My inquiry intervenes in previous discussions that assert enfranchisement in the Renaissance was constrained by socioeconomic status and monarchical authority; characters

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 187.

authorize their entry into and influence of the public realm despite the risk because untenable situations prompt them to create public spheres, to illuminate offensive conditions, and to invite disclosure by other characters. Characters thereby alter the foundational conditions of relationships in the play.

Content and performance constitute mutually reinforcing practices between human players and audiences as seen in Paul Yachnin's recent work. He illustrates how plays' revelations reflect early modern participation in the public realm by publicizing controversies that elicited responses, reflection, and debate amongst audience members. Yachnin emphasizes the potential for building relationships within the theater and suggests both that the public sphere is broader than typically thought of, since it includes the viewing public and players who performed for them, and that the theater itself broadened the public sphere. The content of plays prompted audience members to engage intellectually and emotionally in controversies and made Shakespeare's plays one of the greatest tools of change in the public realm in its era.<sup>13</sup>

Lupton characterizes this relationship as the performance's address to people who are expected to set aside their passivity. The audience acts as witnesses and also as "jurors whose responses make a difference to the future of drama."<sup>14</sup> Predicting specific responses from plural audiences is impossible, but it is possible to state that the resulting scene in a theater is a political one in which participants can opt to continue that empowerment and their role as juror. They choose to speak through honest testimony or deception, to remain silent as a witness or as a private judge of actions. In my argument, plays openly invite acts of witnessing and reflection, but the content of the plays also depicts characters enlarging the public sphere by creating

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Yachnin, "Performing Publicity" (*Shakespeare Bulletin*. 28.2: 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Lupton, "Arendt in Italy," 14.



possibilities for participation in it.

Plays publicize controversial content into the public realm, and the contentious issue in the plays I read is their depiction of an enlargement of the public sphere when characters reconfigure power imbalances in favor of greater participation.<sup>15</sup> Paul Kottman, working with Arendt's theories and aligning himself with Adriana Cavarero's theories, locates this faculty in the creation of relationships: Individuals create relationships, which their subsequent recognition of one another reflects. His analysis privileges the "spontaneous, unpredictable, and active" participation of characters that frees speakers from strictures that had impeded their contributions. Spontaneous gatherings disrupt because they are unpredictable and therefore not shaped by power differentials that had obstructed affiliation and mutual, spoken, disclosures.<sup>16</sup> Arendt describes this ability as an interruption of seemingly inexorable laws that make agents victims of mere necessity. When people enact their capacity for action, they interfere with mortality, dislodge what has been, and assert some degree of control in the world. Were it not for their speaking and actions such people would "exist merely within the inexorable automatic course of daily life."<sup>17</sup>

In order to make these arguments, I work with phenomenology, the post-Kantian mode of philosophy that examines the world apart from any transcendent values. Phenomenology arises from 18th century arguments that demonstrated the inaccessibility of the transcendent to factual argumentation. In the so-called invisible world, there is no factual basis on which to agree, but it is possible to agree upon factual experiences. In phenomenology, therefore, an interpreter

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<sup>15</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 246.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Kottman, *A Politics of the Scene* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008) 87, 183.

<sup>17</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 246.

attempts to theorize meanings without reference to ultimate causes and is left without an ideologically based theory. Phenomenology sets aside absolutes but is still able to explore the world, and topics under discussion become pre-theoretical, as Bruce Smith observes when he explains the nature, method, and goals of reading from a phenomenological perspective. He begins his account with a quote from the OED and explains that within the bounds of this school, proof is:

“the action or fact of experiencing or having experience of something” (OED 1989...) as well as “evidence or argument establishing a fact of the truth of anything” (I.1.a). Historical phenomenology embraces “proof” in the first sense, in the belief that it can establish “proof” in the second sense . . . [Phenomenology’s axiom that a person] cannot know anything apart from the way in which you come to know it . . . [makes it] careful about how and when axioms get formulated and acted upon . . . But it also invites an inductive way of proceeding that maintains firmer footing and leads to broader prospects than the deductive methods of most criticism since the linguistic turn.<sup>18</sup>

Ostensibly, this method of reading makes phenomena accessible and resonant to all, regardless of the reader or audience member’s pre-existing beliefs or *ex post-facto* conclusions. Thus, phenomenology does not require agreement on various spheres of contention but intervenes in political interpretations of Shakespeare plays as well as the turn to language in critical theory.

Thus the theoretical foundation of my inquiry is phenomenology in the form of its political manifestation in Hannah Arendt’s works and in the form of its theatrical manifestation in Bert O. States’s conceptions, with the elaboration of these theories by scholars who bring these theories to bear on Shakespeare’s plays, namely Bruce Smith, Julia Lupton, Matthew Smith, and Paul Kottman, the last of whom incorporated Adriana Cavarero’s theories. Arendt accounts for the allure of the public sphere and how practices enhance participants’ sway, while

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<sup>18</sup> Bruce Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Malden, MA: Wiley, Black, 2010), 185-186.

States's phenomenology illuminates the dramaturgical effects of embodied actors portraying characters and their relationship to an audience. I develop my political analysis out of the view of power and politics Arendt develops in *The Human Condition* and "On Violence." Arendt's notions arise from a well-established history of political theory that has been overlooked by models depending on command and obedience. In Arendt's theory, embodied agents who opt to join together are empowering themselves to affect the public realm. Their power is not to command others but for individuals to reveal what they would "suffer passively anyhow" by disclosing the plenitude of their existences with and amongst others who also appear as human subjects.<sup>19</sup> When individuals share their stories in public spheres, they have the potential to decrease the grip of authoritarianism. This possibility entices, but a person who seizes the opportunity risks his or her life and creates a striking vulnerability. Since the danger to self is potentially extreme in Shakespeare's era and would tend to render depictions of overt public speaking ludicrous, characters employ various ruses to illuminate the injustices they discern.

Nonetheless, in the plays I examine, untenable circumstances that characters witness and which prompt testimony include existential threats to a country, a community, and a family. *III Henry VI* features a public realm made treacherous by a civil war. Anonymous soldiers clarify the extent to which their country is destroying its past and future. In *Much Ado about Nothing*, excessive loyalty within a community facilitates belief in a rumor that ruins the reputation of the young bride who could otherwise bridge the divide between groups separated by mutual distrust. In *Pericles*, a family torn apart by a series of traumatic events that produce fear, depression, and isolation is rejuvenated by the inventive speech of a young woman insightful enough to reveal

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<sup>19</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 208.

others' immorality to themselves. She herself is prompted to share her personal narrative with the stranger who is her father and thereby uncover the interdependent and empowering world they inhabit.

Overall, therefore, characters demonstrate they witnessed intolerable scenes because they testify against the system of power that had impeded possibilities for action within the play. Characters formerly barred from participation are called to act, and whether they speak in soliloquy, to other characters through deceit and deflection, or in testimony to the audience and fellow characters, they engender relationships that recuperate human agency by altering the world of the play. These characters, brought to life by actors, foster and maintain the public realm in the play and for the audience. The portrayals of public speaking in fields that customarily inhibit speech represent spontaneous tactics and long-term strategies that agents who occupy marginalized or underrepresented subject positions take to share power. Where previous interpretations read disenfranchisement and foolery, the phenomenology of Arendt and States reveals empowerment. This study will not locate Shakespearean politics in any particular political position; to portray is not to believe. Nonetheless, I suggest that these disruptions reflect and proffer tactics for empowerment by those who abided and abide outside normal power structures. As such, my inquiry emphasizes moments in which characters witness, speak, and bring political renewal rather than those depicting seemingly permanent impediments to creating the public realm.

CHAPTER ONE  
*III HENRY VI AND*  
THE POWER OF SELF-DISCLOSING SPEECH

Late in William Shakespeare's dramatization of the struggle between the Lancasters and Yorks for rule over England, a pair of speeches by anonymous soldiers crystallizes the power of self-disclosing speech to waken a person's conscience and foster relationships based on ethical actions. These newly reconstituted affiliations occur because a witness to the conversation achieves a sudden awareness of the plural nature of the world. In *III Henry VI*, the witness to the soldiers' speeches is King Henry. He allows the soldiers to displace his autarkic perspective in favor of the knowledge that his existence is fundamentally grounded in a collectivity directly affected by his actions. The resulting shift in his character illuminates a recurring process in Shakespearean drama: Revelatory speech in conjunction with ethical action is distinctly political, non-hierarchical, and empowering. Such speech does not depend upon institutional supports, although it can affect society and its organization, nor does the speech require consensus, although it can foster it. Instead, speech of this nature often arises spontaneously, is performed by speakers without specific ends in mind, and empowers the speakers and listeners as a good in itself, creating multiple forms of meaning for participants across numerous boundaries. These effects are amplified by being embodied during performances; an audience to these performances has the potential to join in the process: As observers, they are prompted to think, testify, and create new possibilities.

The particularly broad scope in Shakespearean plays in which witnesses, regardless of rank, create change when they testify to their understanding of their experiences is best understood in light of Hannah Arendt's phenomenological approach to conscience and to speech in the public realm. Arendt argues that agents in the public realm who speak and are heard in reciprocal relationships empower themselves and alter the world. In her analysis of the conscience, Arendt presents a noticeably similar process. When agents are called to conscience, they scrutinize themselves and, if they enter into amicable self-reflexive discourse, are likely to be prompted to act with the well being of others and themselves in mind when they return to the plural world.

In this chapter, I will examine the depiction of public speech in the public realm of *III Henry VI* and how it is enhanced or inhibited by speakers who match words to their deeds by entering into relationship with their inward reality. This play presents a particularly fruitful opportunity to explore the relationship between public speech and the conscience because it contrasts a nobility that poisons the public realm with blood lust against two commoners whose honest testimony is so powerful, it prompts their King to examine his conscience and change his actions. Once this occurs, the play shapes itself around a binary opposition between good and evil: Its second half pits King Henry attempting to atone for his previously ill-considered actions against Richard willfully causing harm. Amidst this contention, the play shines a light on rhetoric through its repeated use of the phrase "play the orator:" The drama begins when Richard throws the decapitated head of his enemy into the throne room and commands it to speak for him (1.1.16). His brother Edward soon demands he be allowed to make a case for treason by asserting that he can better play the orator. In contrast to the Yorks, Henry chides his follower

Clifford for playing at oration rather than speaking the truth. Unfortunately, the public realm offers no ground to talk openly, so Henry and Richard can only soliloquize and speak directly to an audience. The relationships they create in the theater are the sole space for potentially egalitarian engagement with others.

## Overview

In Arendt's view of political and social power, influence depends less on characters holding some form of governmental office, whether inherited, elected, or commissioned, than on their ability to speak in the public realm. As such, her view engenders readings that permit us to argue that anonymous soldiers can be more powerful than lords of the realm.<sup>1</sup> Arendt's notions counter Western political traditions because, as a phenomenologist, she analyzes events apart from their transcendent meaning. Phenomenologists reject a priori theories as starting points for analysis and instead begin their examination with objects, individuals, and groups as they appear. As Bruce Smith explains, the phenomenological position allows an interpretation "in between sense experience and abstract propositions."<sup>2</sup> Julia Lupton expands upon Smith's articulation of this interpretive method by pointing out that as the study of appearances, phenomenology "attends to how the world of things manifests itself in a single flow of emergent and continuous processes that dissolve (human) subjects and (nonhuman) objects in shared fields of causation, movement, ambience, intentionality, and perception."<sup>3</sup> I will show how these perspectives allow a new understanding of the play *III Henry VI* by granting access to the events on the stage, as opposed to interpreting the play through various ideologies.

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, "On Violence" (*Crises of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1972), 179.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 186, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Julia Lupton, "Macbeth's Martlets: Shakespearean Phenomenologies of Hospitality" (*Criticism* 54.3: 2012), 1.

This is possible because Arendt's generous view of politics, especially as it is elaborated by Paul Kottman, Adriana Cavarero, and Lupton, demonstrate that social interactions are political no matter where they occur -- a street, square, palace, or at the foot of a hill. Arendt's insights broaden the range of possible discussions of political action to include many assemblies of individuals performing various kinds of actions. It becomes unnecessary to hold monarchical or aristocratic rule as the cynosure of all analysis; rather than asking if people pass edicts or order executions, we can ask how people speak their minds, make themselves heard, and create relationships.

The phenomenological view of political power creates a space to explore the nature of speeches as they appear, which is an especially probative method for analyzing speaking in Shakespeare. Speech is typically the lifeblood of the theater, but with Shakespeare, dialogue often prompts transformations. Some of Shakespeare's plays depict large-scale alterations in the world of the play, whether the end of a reign in *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard III* or the resurrection of relationships where people come together in novel connections in *Twelfth Night* or *The Tempest*.<sup>4</sup> With the speeches this chapter will examine, the testimony of a son and father unintentionally affect Henry because Henry beholds their suffering, recognizes his responsibility for their plight, and seeks to act with the commonweal of his kingdom uppermost in his mind. The soldiers' testimony launches a trifold witnessing in Henry, one in the social world and two within Henry's internal world. Externally, his experience leads to speech in the public realm.

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<sup>4</sup> Transformation occurs in other playwrights' works, but in city comedies such as Dekker and Marston's *The Roaring Girl*, the alterations are contained within the family, and no change occurs in its most radical character, Moll. Likewise, some of Shakespeare's plays feature little change in the world of the play, including *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.



Internally, Henry has a moment of *synderesis*;<sup>5</sup> he suffers the pangs of conscience. These pangs inspire *synedenai*, internal discourse. When a character in Shakespeare's plays is able to transform self-reflexive discourse into an external process of speaking to injustices, it often leads to new, ethically oriented relationships between a conscientious agent and his world.

When the soldiers' speeches are examined in light of this process, it is possible to uncover their theatrical, affective, and ethical effects, and it accounts for their renowned position in the critical literature. The speeches furthermore establish a continuum for judging the effectiveness of the speeches of various characters, and with this model activated, it becomes possible to discern how the play develops into a contest between good and evil in the characters of Henry and Richard.

I supplement this phenomenological analysis with readings of the play from a trio of schools who interpreted Shakespeare's history plays in terms of their depictions of historical causation. The first school consists of E. M. W. Tillyard and scholars who were influenced by his argument that Shakespeare's histories enact the Tudor myth, which states the deposition of Richard II led to chaos and ruin until Henry Tudor assumed the throne. The second school includes scholars who rebelled against this myth by claiming the plays illustrate the need for a strong king and centralized authority. The third school is the one I am most akin to: It includes scholars who assert that the plays depict a plural world in which no individual voice is ever finally silenced. A contributor to this school is Paula Pugliatti, who argues that Shakespeare's invented characters, as opposed to those characters recorded in the chronicles, speak for commoners in the audience. Since Pugliatti's reading fails to offer a mechanism for the effect she

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<sup>5</sup> See William Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience* and Robert A. Greene, "Synderesis, the Spark of Conscience, In the English Renaissance."

intuits, I incorporate Matthew J. Smith and Bert O. States's analysis of theater to account for the way in which multiple perspectives unify the play's plural lines of vision during performances. With this, it is possible to discern that theatrical gatherings were political assemblies that could encourage reciprocal speaking beyond what is depicted in the play itself.

With these readings established, I examine the interaction between Henry and the anonymous soldiers by comparing and contrasting the 16th century notions of conscience with those of Arendt. Arendt's analysis of conscience and judgment, spurred by 20th century misreadings of her publications on the Eichmann trial, resemble the works of a 16th century Protestant author on the conscience, William Perkins. Perkins and Arendt, both operating in a field of discourse laden with multiple, well-established and largely fixed notions, elucidate conscience by discussing its work as witnessing. However, where Perkins, like his 17th century successors, offers a religious view of the pangs of conscience, affirming that they are the divine within and thus unerring, Arendt prioritizes an amicable internal dialogue that produces judgement on specific, identifiable incidents as a good in itself and, potentially, productive of recognizably superior actions in the world. Nonetheless, since Arendt and Perkins both depend upon what Bruce Smith calls Aristotelian perception, they discuss conscience in similar terms, self-reflexive witnessing and recrimination.

These readings bring me to contrast the soldiers' speeches with the major speeches of York, Margaret, Richard, and Henry. This examination will demonstrate that *III Henry VI* is best read as a series of declarations occurring in a corrupt public realm that range from violent affronts against the truth to reciprocal affirmations between equals, all of which creates an

existential battle between the two isolated figures, Henry and Richard, who subjectivize themselves through speaking in soliloquy or direct address.

*III Henry VI* presents a world fraught with existential threats to rule, conscience, dynasty, and life itself. Naomi Conn Leiber argues that its warring characters treat their activities as though they merely play a game.<sup>6</sup> The result of the war is the destruction of all the most prominent followers, the death of two kings, severed alliances between brothers, and a devastated England. In this field of limitless contention, the play explores speechifying in the public realm. Nobles attempt to persuade through insult. They silence their King, mock their Queen, and entice their army with lies while the two anonymous soldiers' honest declarations disarm a King.

### **Summary of the Play**

*III Henry VI* provides an excellent example of political phenomenology because the play depicts a world freed from domination by an authoritarian monarch. The resulting lateralization liberates characters to speak as they will and thereby reveal themselves to each other and to the attending theatrical audience.<sup>7</sup> Since *III Henry VI* opens with a dramatization of the loss of authority that the 15th century English civil war produced, with York taking the throne and Henry inciting his followers to take revenge, the play presents no ultimate claim to authority. The resulting lack of a clear leader has led scholars to describe the play as episodic. However, the

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<sup>6</sup> Naomi Conn Liebler, "Ritual and Play in *3 Henry VI*" (*Shakespeare's English Histories: A Quest for Form and Genre* Ed. John W. Velz, 1996), 34.

<sup>7</sup> In my subsequent chapters, I will contrast this egalitarian setting with a sphere of appearances that has been affected by hierarchy and excessive homosociality in *Much Ado about Nothing*. In that world, characters do not perceived themselves as free to speak openly or to reveal their power. I will conclude my thesis with an inquiry into the public realm depicted on Mytilene in *Pericles*. There, one character authorizes herself to speak her mind, regardless of her status, in order to save herself and her interlocutors.

play's process of public encounters leading to oral expressions and sporadic attempts to bring relationships into ethical order organizes the play and leads it into its final conflict.

When the play opens, York, having won a battle in *II Henry VI*, takes the throne. Henry asks York to allow him to rule for the remainder of his own lifetime. This is the first of a series of miscalculations each monarch makes. In this case, Henry underestimates Queen Margaret's response to having her son disinherited, the ambition of York's sons, and the desire for revenge in Henry's follower Clifford. In response to Henry's mistake, Margaret gathers an army to fight York. York's sons convince their father to break the truce, and Clifford kills York's youngest son in such a brutal manner, it leads to an intensification of blood lust in the play. The rest of the drama features a series of battles that are particularly merciless: After Clifford kills 12-year-old Rutland, Margaret and Clifford mock York before they kill him, and the York alliance mauls Clifford's corpse. Each skirmish is followed by the installation of a new king and the imprisonment or exile of the other, an exchange that occurs three times.

When York's son Edward IV takes the throne, he errs by wooing and wedding an Englishwoman after having sent his follower Warwick to treat for Edward's marriage to the daughter of the King of France. Edward's inaugural actions are thereby marked by lust, deceit, and affronts to honor. His brothers, Richard and Clarence, disapprove of the marriage, Clarence so much so, he joins the Lancastrian army. Warwick also allies with Lancaster due to Edward's personal insult. The French King joins forces with the larger, Lancastrian army, and Margaret and her son lead them. While Edward's other brother, Richard, secretly seeks his own opportunity to rule and decides his best chance is to remain allied to Edward, the new Lancastrian alliance secures the throne for Henry.

When he is re-enthroned, Henry constructs a more responsible system of rulership. Henry has gained a clear vision, having been forced to conscience by anonymous speeches given by a son and father who killed members of their own family. Henry shares governance with two protectors, arranges for the appropriate, inspiring, allocation of power, and forges an alliance between York and Lancaster.

Henry loses the throne after Richard frees Edward and Clarence rejoins his family. The three united brothers defeat Margaret, kill her son, and re-install Edward on the throne. Only Richard is able to terminate the endless trading of the crown when he storms the Tower where Henry is imprisoned. Richard and Henry confront one another, and Richard kills Henry.

In a realm populated by a nobility who have revealed themselves to be ferocious savages, the only bars to revenge and battles for the sake of power itself occur when the anonymous soldiers reveal the King's errors to him, and Henry galvanizes honorable behavior amongst former enemies. In such a realm, however, his ability to hold sway is inadequate. Thus discourse in the public realm is showcased by his internal conversation with his conscience rather than his ability to sustain peaceful relations. Despite the monumental weight of the historical moment, it is remarkable that revelatory speech in an egalitarian moment when words match deeds is persuasive enough to move a King and improve the world of the play.

### **The Phenomenon of *III Henry VI* in 1590 and the 20th-21st Century**

A pivotal moment in *III Henry VI* occurs when two previously unknown characters carrying dead bodies run onstage. They are soldiers who speak separately, individually, and without reference to one another. Their speeches are choric and awaken the moral imagination of

the man who witnesses them, King Henry VI. Since Henry had chosen to act in ways that helped foster the plight of these soldiers, their speeches awaken pangs of conscience in him.

The soldier-actors are truth speakers who establish a standard against which it is possible to measure other speeches in the play, setting public speech on a rich continuum between revelatory, atelic self-disclosure and violent attacks on the truth meant to rouse soldiers to fight in a battle that will destroy them. These instrumental uses for speech stand in direct contrast to the soldiers' candid soliloquies. The first soldier enters and names his burden:

This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight, may be possessed with some store of crowns; and I, that haply take them from him now, may yet, ere night, yield both my life and them to some man else, as this dead man doth me. Who's this? O God! it is my father's face, whom in this conflict I, unwares, have killed.  
(2.5.55-62)

When this son realizes he has not killed an enemy who might enrich him but the man "at whose hands I received my life," his fear of dying and the coins he stole leave his consciousness. His patricide reduces his world completely; it now consists merely of his crime and his remorse.

With the son killing his father, the moment brings to bear the crucial fact of civil war: In it, sons kill their fathers; brothers, their brothers. With the murder of a father, the son's act metonymically refers to the murder of the past. This implication resonates when another man bursts onstage, carrying his own burden. He too reports on his actions:

Thou that so stoutly hath resisted me, give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold; for I have bought it with an hundred blows. But let me see: is this our foeman's face? Ah, no, no, no! It is mine only son! (2.5.79-83)

With these lines, the play dramatizes civil war as not only a father killing his son but also as the destruction of the future and communities that nurture and give life. The son's and the father's

murders are themselves meaningful as acts of horror and as emblems of internecine conflict in which civil wars destroy the past and devour the future.

Paola Pugliotti argues that these soldiers gave a voice to the original audience members of the play. Some of the audience in the 1590's would have included soldiers, as Fritz Levy claims;<sup>8</sup> wars were fought in Europe throughout Shakespeare's lifetime, with both invasion and conscription a looming possibility for many Englishmen. Ros King and Paul J. C. M. Franssen contend that members of Shakespeare's audience would necessarily have heard, seen, and read about the effects of various wars,<sup>9</sup> and Michael Hattaway reinforces this view by discussing the number of times Englishmen were recruited to fight abroad.<sup>10</sup> However, there was a greater resonance between the play and its original audience than one created between soldiers speaking onstage to soldiers in the audience: The first performances of the play occurred during a tour on the North Road where some of the battles depicted in the play were fought. Stuart Hampton-Reeves demonstrates that the affiliation between the play and its audience would have been intensified because *III Henry VI* was expressly written to take advantage of sites of the tour by featuring scenes that take place in York.<sup>11</sup> It is clear that *III Henry VI* played in London after 1592, since Robert Greene famously punned on the line, "tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide" to comment on "upstart crow" Shakespeare,<sup>12</sup> but the tour of 1593 is the first known performance of *III Henry VI*, and the battle in which the two anonymous soldiers speak takes

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<sup>8</sup> Fritz Levy, "Shakespeare's Early History Plays: From Chronicle to Stage" (*Comparative Drama*: Summer 2004), 329.

<sup>9</sup> Ros King and Paul J. C. M. Franssen, *Shakespeare and War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Hattaway, *The Third Part of King Henry VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 55.

<sup>11</sup> Stuart Hampton-Reeves, "Alarums and Defeats: *Henry VI* on Tour" (*Early Modern Literary Studies* 5.2: 1999), 1, 6.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

place at the village of Towton on the North Road, the site of the English Civil War's worst battle.<sup>13</sup> According to Hampton-Reeves, the congruence between the audience for the tour and its characters is one factor in the play's appeal.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in his 1989 analysis of the depiction of power relations in late 16th century British literature, John D. Cox argues that the play's first performance reflects national anxiety and enervation after the costly Spanish Armada. Cox contends that the audience would have responded to the play's political realism and bleakness because it depicts power struggles as an inherent element of a political order run by "gangs of criminals,"<sup>15</sup> making the resonance between the play and its audience great no matter the performance space.

Although the play may have appealed to audiences, it is impossible to achieve specific knowledge of the nature of the original reception of *III Henry VI*, as Brian Walsh states in his historiographical analysis of the plays performed by the Queen's Men. Walsh believes, however, that it is possible to hypothesize about potential responses by working with Bert O. States's phenomenology of theater, which emphasizes ostensibly unavoidable elements of theatrical performance, namely the stage, its actors, and the attending audience.<sup>16</sup> This framework allows States to veer away from speculative interpretations and instead reflect on meanings that arise

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<sup>13</sup> 50,000 men fought in the battle; 24,000 died at the battle of Towton.

<sup>14</sup> Despite this appeal, Pembroke's Men returned from the tour so impoverished they pawned their apparel, according to Henslowe's diary. See Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (New York: Yale University Press, 2014), 3. Touring caused difficulties: Lord Strange's men claimed it was onerous and caused division and separation between the players (52).

<sup>15</sup> John D. Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 86-88 & 12-13.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, The Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6-7.



from de-symbolizing the world.<sup>17</sup> Without confining his analyses to Shakespeare's work, States explores the theater's use of "language whose words consist to an unusual degree of things that are what they seem to be" and observes that theater brings the world onstage, which enables the world to express its essence within an artificial frame.<sup>18</sup> States also discusses the theater's establishment of a relationship between an actor and audience. Performance is "one long danger," because actors are at once individual human beings and a person performing a character. The actor can therefore always fail, and this facticity enacts a creaturely bond between an actor and each member of the audience. The actor risks catastrophe and makes himself vulnerable to the people before him in order to embody a role and assume another ego.<sup>19</sup> Walsh draws upon States's formulation to interrogate the specific actor-audience interaction and argues that 16th century history plays called upon their audiences to actively imagine history and make ethical judgments.<sup>20</sup>

Walsh prudently refuses to determine whether these prompts succeeded. Precise knowledge of the audience's reception of the play is unknowable because most people did not record their responses and the audience was immeasurably diverse. Paul Yachnin and Paula Pugliatti inquire into the varied nature of the onlookers and postulate the specific relationships between a play and its audience by acknowledging its members differed in age, gender, and socioeconomic status as well as in ways that were particularly important in the 16th century,

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<sup>17</sup> Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 20-23.

<sup>18</sup> States, 20-22.

<sup>19</sup> States, 119-123.

<sup>20</sup> Walsh, 85, 180, 188, 191.

specifically religious affiliation and place of origin.<sup>21</sup> In the relationships created between audience members and actors and amongst each individual, Yachnin and Pugliatti affirm that people perceived themselves as heterogeneous in experience, opinion, and perspective.<sup>22</sup>

Within this plurality, Pugliatti argues, the actor-characters in the 1593 performance of *III Henry VI*, act two scene five lent a voice to many of the audience members. Pugliatti contends that the anonymous son and father present the voice of the commoner, not the general or noblemen, and that these commoners are not recorded in the chronicles. Pugliatti asserts that Shakespeare writes new histories that include and represent the opinions of those who do not lead others. Shakespeare grants the power to speak on behalf of the audience to commoners “at fateful junctions of the story, where they are allowed to have their say about the momentous events at hand” in axiological statements about the actions of the nobility. The effect of such speeches, according to Pugliatti, represents and contributes to the polyphony of a plural world.<sup>23</sup> The son and the father make a powerful indictment against the brutal effects of war to the King of England which, Pugliatti further concludes, both reflects and creates the view of the commoners about war and the nobility.

Unfortunately, Pugliatti offers no account for a mechanism that ensures the play affects the original audience in the way she claims. While Shakespeare’s departure from the chronicles complicates the narrative of history, making him act as an historian by creating a “significant subtext” that gives characters who do not have a place in formal history a voice, and while the

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Yachnin, “Performing Publicity” (*Shakespeare Bulletin*, 28.2: 2010) and Paula Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Pugliatti, 185.

scene does offer multiple perspectives on history,<sup>24</sup> it does not, as Jean Howard explains, necessarily constitute the creation of a subversive history. Howard points out that dissident perspectives can name what must be “controlled and policed.” Subordinate voices expand the audience’s sense of the polity, but they do not alter the polity’s power relations.<sup>25</sup>

Howard is correct: The presence of any speech in a play does not necessarily determine its reception. Hers is the expected response amongst one of the three schools who speculate about causation in Shakespeare’s history plays. Howard’s school rose in response to the followers of E. M. W. Tillyard’s Tudor myth theory. As Phyllis Racklin explains, Howard’s is one of two schools that rebelled against Tillyard’s notions. These two schools see Shakespeare’s history plays as depictions of Machiavellian political theory. Both sets of these more recent scholars reject the notion that there was one “Elizabethan mind.” Of these two schools, new historicists tend to argue that 16th century discourse functioned univocally and was shaped by the interests of the dominant classes. Cultural materialists view the same discourse as polyvocal, with no group ever being fully silenced.<sup>26</sup> Howard’s new historicist rebuff to Pugliatti’s cultural materialist view, however, is only theoretical, which makes it incumbent upon us to review the material ground of the production of the play and its reception. When we turn to the historical record, the glaring lack of original audience members’ responses limits the possibility of determining their reaction. We can, however, turn to States’s notions about the relationships between actor and audience and ask how theater in the round functioned in the 16th century.

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<sup>24</sup> Pugliatti, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Howard, “Review of *Shakespeare the Historian*, by Paola Pugliatti” (*Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30.1: 1998), 98.

<sup>26</sup> Phyllis Racklin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare’s English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 40-42.

And, we can turn to the critical reception of the play and ask what has actually been said in response to the anonymous soldiers. Neither tactic will guarantee access to the responses of people who saw the play on the North Road in the 1590's, but the arguments will be grounded mostly in facts rather than supposition.

Once we turn to the critical response, it is remarkable that however much scholars differ with regard to their schools of thought, all call attention to the speeches of the anonymous father and son. The unselfconscious directness of the speeches renders the soldiers' accounts closer to reportage than poetry and make the truths they speak undeniable. This creates the choral effect Pugliatti alludes to and illuminates that the speeches are pre-theoretical truths-in-themselves.

The performance of the anonymous soldiers' speeches are similar to the work of phenomenology itself, the mode of inquiry that examines the world apart from its transcendent value. In phenomenology, an interpreter attempts to theorize meanings without reference to ultimate causes and is left, for instance, with the soldiers' speeches and not an ideologically based theory regarding the historical cause of the war. This makes it possible to affirm the soldiers' testimony because they discuss factual experiences, whereas with the so-called invisible world, there is no factual basis on which to agree. From this point of view, the son's and father's speeches are direct statements of their experiences, and they resonate because they do not attempt to comment upon the cause of their actions or the war. They are pre-theoretical, as Bruce Smith observes when he explains the nature, method, and goals of reading from a phenomenological perspective.<sup>27</sup> With a method of reading that makes phenomena accessible and denuded of pre-existing beliefs or *ex post-facto* conclusions, phenomenology functions in ways

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<sup>27</sup> Smith, 185-186.

similar to the soldiers' speeches; neither the speeches nor phenomenology require agreement on various spheres of contention. The soldiers appear on stage; their speeches exist. What these men say is powerful and inspires agreement across the broad range of scholarly interpretations.

Since the father and son are so direct, their words lack poetry as well as theories. The former quality concerned Tillyard, who worried some readers would contend that the speeches are dull and primitive. Such a reading would undermine Tillyard's notion that the father and son uncover "the breakdown of violent human action into something humiliated and devitalized."<sup>28</sup> His interpretation of their speeches supports his argument regarding Elizabethan ideology of degree, the touchstone for his subsequent analyses.<sup>29</sup>

Tillyard's concern that the father's and son's speeches would be considered dull was unwarranted.<sup>30</sup> Subsequent critical reception mentions the power and profundity of the soldiers' speeches. In 1964, S. C. Sen Gupta wrote that the scene symbolizes all that is "butcherly, erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural."<sup>31</sup> In 1974 and 1994, Robert B. Pierce and Michael Hattaway argued that the son and the father are key to the play, with Hattaway averring that the scene presents an "emblematic vision of the horrors of internecine conflict."<sup>32</sup> Pierce eventually concludes that the father and son are nameless because "they are England," which makes Henry "the King and Father of a suffering land."<sup>33</sup> Although E. Pearlman's 1992 formalist account

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<sup>28</sup> E. M. W. Tillyard. *Shakespeare's History Plays* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1944), 195.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas A. Pendleton, "Introduction" (*Henry VI: Critical Essays*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 8.

<sup>30</sup> Cox, 87 & Tillyard, 320-321.

<sup>31</sup> S. C. Sen Gupta, *Shakespeare's Historical Plays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 81.

<sup>32</sup> Robert B. Pierce, *Shakespeare's History Plays: The Family and the State* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 68; Hattaway, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Pierce, 73.

complains that the father's speech mirrors "too exactly the son's," he nonetheless states that the speeches compel Henry to accept responsibility for his errors.<sup>34</sup> This power to affect the King is a function of the soldiers' discovery of what they have done and their frank account of their actions in the face of it.<sup>35</sup>

The interpretation that the soldiers' speeches are powerful directly contradicts Tillyard's interpretation, which is the logical conclusion of his interpretation of the place of degree in the Elizabethan worldview: The son and father "hate the part they are forced to play," because within his worldview, they are necessarily "unhappy victims,"<sup>36</sup> being commoners who could never be empowered. Although Tillyard "will not go away," as Alexander Leggatt wrote, explaining that the 1944 work "set the ground" for the critical conversation and represented a nuanced reading,<sup>37</sup> the new historicist and cultural materialist schools have since stressed human agency and plurality.<sup>38</sup> Racklin deems these scholarly battles to be the product of critical attention to either the chorographic or historical element of the chronicles. According to Racklin, chorographic depictions within the chronicles inspire a Machiavellian view of politics, due to their depiction of and loyalty to the land, and they therefore favor the interests of the nobility over the crown.<sup>39</sup> Contrariwise, a focus on the history in the chronicles shapes interpretations that suggest

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<sup>34</sup> E. Pearlman, William Shakespeare: *The History Plays* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992) 43-44.

<sup>35</sup> Although honesty does not necessary prompt such a reaction, it does here, which helps to characterize Henry.

<sup>36</sup> Tillyard, 192. He argues they were cast into their roles by the "cruel authors," Margaret, York, and Clifford; all that is left for the father and son is remorse.

<sup>37</sup> Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Political Drama: The History Plays and the Roman Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1988), viii; Thomas A. Pendleton, 9.

<sup>38</sup> In the 1960's, scholars responded to Tillyard's *Shakespeare's History Plays* by either siding with his general claims (A. L. French, David Frey, J. P. Brockbank, David Riggs, Edward Berry, and, unintentionally, Geoffrey Bullough) or arguing vociferously against him (M. M. Reese, Irving Ribner, and, most notoriously, Robert Ornstein).

<sup>39</sup> Racklin, 24-25.

providence causes change. Racklin asserts that Shakespeare's history plays draw from both the chorographic and providential elements in the chronicles, which results in the deep ambivalence that A. J. Rossiter, like Racklin, discerns in them. This combination of sources furthermore authorizes the legitimacy of multiple readings.<sup>40</sup>

With phenomenology's concern for what is apparent, however, it becomes possible to focus on what occurs on the stage and, without a pre-existing orientation, be fully aware that both providential and Machiavellian interpretations of history were available; as such, various characters voice both interpretations in Shakespeare's histories. Moreover, whether a character espouses providential or Machiavellian beliefs, the character witnesses events onstage and speaks, and subsequent observers to that character's speech respond to what he said. This series of concatenating speeches creates the play, altering its world from the beginning to end in plot and character development.

Thus, while scholars argue that the son and the father emblemize the play's critique of civil war by bringing their schools of thought to the speeches, in a phenomenological point of view, speeches are powerful as such because they are events in the play. In the particular case of these soldiers, however, it also becomes possible to assert that the son and father amass power because they awaken Henry to the fact that he lives in a plural world. Given this sudden broadening of his view, he becomes aware of his complicity in the civil war. The father and son discover the truth of their actions and put them into word. This enables Henry to accomplish what Bonnie Honig offers in her re-envisioning of Bernard Williams's moral theory: Remorse, Honig explains, is morally and politically productive when it clarifies a person's implication in

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<sup>40</sup> A. J. Rossiter, "Ambivalence: The Dialectic of the Histories" in: *Angel with Horns and Other Shakespeare Lectures* (New York: Theater Arts Books, Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1961), 50-51.

historical events.<sup>41</sup> Because he witnesses the son's and father's speeches, Henry is finally able to change his relationship to his country. From the phenomenological point of view, the soldiers are more than victims of providence, the Tudor myth, or a kingdom of criminals. As speakers, they are political beings, and their effects make them the robust center of the play. The choric nature of their words furthermore shapes the course of the play by inspiring Henry to attempt to become a choric speaker himself.

The dramatization of this encircling effect will likewise affect an audience. The responses will be varied, by definition, and some individuals may be inspired like Henry to speak the truth in enlarged ways. Others will not, naturally, but the range of responses is greater than, for instance, either Howard or Pugliatti theorized. The phenomenologist Matthew Smith has offered a mechanism for conceiving of the varied responses to the theatrical experience in the round.

### **Theater in the Round as Theater in the Public Realm**

The tableau created when the son and father are unwittingly overheard by Henry resembles the scene Matthew Smith analyzes in "Phenomenologies of Confession in *Hamlet*." Smith argues that an assembled audience sees some characters witnessing an event unbeknownst to the other characters onstage. When this occurs, the many members of the audience unify the perspective between characters and their own selves. Such unification helps account for Pugliatti's insight that the commoners in Shakespeare's history plays give a voice to the ordinary person and solidifies the possibility that a witness to spontaneous, revelatory speech may testify to his own experience.

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<sup>41</sup> Bonnie Honig, *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011), 9-10.



In Smith's analysis, Claudius's confession in *Hamlet* creates a non-reciprocal perspective that is what early modern drama achieves as it is being presented and as it is being received by a living audience: The non-reciprocal perspective denotes the way an object is perceived and experienced without reference to ideological or empirical notions.<sup>42</sup> In Smith's argument, the presence of an actor performing a role before a diverse and public audience highlights the conditions under which action and speech take place. Specifically, Claudius's confession in a soliloquy allows the viewers to attain a sense of privilege that, amongst other things, complicates the notions of secretiveness, disclosure, and openness.<sup>43</sup> In the scene and its cluster of non-reciprocal perspectives, Claudius is seeing only himself, but Hamlet sees Claudius. This moment's theatricality, with Claudius and Hamlet unable to hear one another and Hamlet's vocal intrusion into Claudius's confession, collapses the distinction between appearance and reality. Further complicating the perspectives of Hamlet and Claudius is the audience in the theater. The result is the scene being perceived intersubjectively in the round: Each element, Claudius, Hamlet, and the audience, constitutes different sets of sensory information, and theater unifies each together.<sup>44</sup>

*Hamlet* presents a particularly noteworthy example of how a play highlights and unifies the necessarily multi-vocal responses to performances because it presents theater-goers with a ghost that is purgatorial for some and devilish for others. Like Smith, Paul Yachnin notes that this would create multidimensional perspectives. Yachnin argues that the diversity of theater-goers highlights the play's ambivalence and would result in a variety of responses and

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<sup>42</sup> Matthew J. Smith "Phenomenologies of Confession in *Hamlet*" (Phenomenology Seminar, University of California, Irvine. Winter Quarter 2014, Pdf.), 4.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, 8, 9, 12.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, 14, 19.

interpretations from an audience of Protestants and recusant Catholics. *Hamlet* publicizes an “affective-critical debate about religious difference and generational guilt.”<sup>45</sup> Its performance created a space where the plural nature of the audience is an inherent consideration.

Smith argues that since the audience realizes that it witnesses the different perspectives of other audience members, as well as the differing perspectives of both Hamlet and Claudius, the performance explores and balances the resulting multiple views. This presentation enacts phenomenological description by creating an experience that exists prior to the sort of ideological or metaphysical interpretations Jean Howard mounts; Smith’s account of the theater strengthens Pugliatti’s notions because the theatrical experience is an event that is self-consciously perceived by a plural, original audience, some members of whom will later interpret the characters’ speeches as examples of the dissident voices Howard suggested must be policed, but others who will, as Pugliatti states, interpret the scene as an expression of their own opinions and experiences of civil war.

In *III Henry VI*, the political nature of the speeches is blatant: Two soldiers speaking to a king invokes a commoner’s audience with his monarch while simultaneously defeating such a meeting since the soldiers do not know they are heard. And yet, the scene retains its political sense because the public realm is where people meet, see one another, and are seen in the space of action, regardless of any pre-existing authority individuals have. In this sphere, Arendt posits three crucial elements: more than one person is in the sphere; people in the space of appearances are seen and heard; and people who speak and perform are taking political action.<sup>46</sup> For Arendt, this variety of people making their beliefs known creates relationships and, through the creation

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<sup>45</sup> Paul Yachnin, “Performing Publicity” (*Shakespeare Bulletin*, 28.2: 2010), 213, 216.

<sup>46</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 8-9.

of these relationships, change what had been. Furthermore, while the grounds for this interaction always exist, the possibility is fragile; conditions can reduce its likelihood. So, while Arendt values human possibilities and argues that change is possible due to the unpredictable and fluctuating nature of relationships, individuals and relationships are not without their limits, nor are they all-powerful.<sup>47</sup> One limitation occurs when onlookers interpret individuals' actions as they will, not as the individual herself intends. Nonetheless, the political is a function of witnessing, testifying, and, naturally, the creation of relationships in this process alters the world, but without guarantees of others' responses.

Arendt's definition of the political counters Western philosophy and traditional political inquiry. Theorists customarily define political activity in terms of governance and rulership, with frameworks of inquiry having to do with states and their conflicts, laws and courts, magistrates and monarchs, means and ends, authority and obedience.<sup>48</sup> Arendt broadens the horizon of the political by pointing out that before there can be any such institutions, there must first be individuals appearing to one another in public.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, the public is not only plural, it is always capable of change and consists only of momentary bonds between individuals. Political action can erupt regardless of location and take a variety of shapes. With the political being words and deeds of agents in the public realm, it includes people forming committees, citizens supporting the laws of their country, individuals embarking in concert to support a common enterprise, and more.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 46

<sup>48</sup> Jerome Kohn, "Introduction" (*The Promise of Politics*, New York: Schocken Books, 2005), xviii.

<sup>49</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 199.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

In response to Arendt's notions of the political, Adriana Cavarero, Paul Kottman, and Lupton have emphasized the relationship-building potential of the public realm, with Lupton accentuating its civic rather than the legal aspects of it as well as its fragility and subjectivizing potentials,<sup>51</sup> Cavarero affirming the terrible importance of the specific individuals who create that bond,<sup>52</sup> and Kottman discussing the contextual, contingent, and groundless nature of the public realm.<sup>53</sup> Despite their varying emphases, all three agree that Arendt's political, per Kottman, emerges "out of the ontological plurality, reciprocal vulnerability, and interdependence of the human condition, and as taking shape through the interaction of actors and witnesses on the scene and the singular relations they leave behind."<sup>54</sup>

Once we bring Arendt's definition of the political to the public realm created in a theatrical performance, it becomes clear that Matthew Smith's analysis of theater in the round shows the viewing of a play by diverse audiences accomplishes the work of the political. This political work varied; it produced a broad range of responses, whether subversive, as Steven Mullaney argues in his work,<sup>55</sup> conservative, as Cox points out in his analysis of theater,<sup>56</sup> or ideological as Tillyard would point out.<sup>57</sup> But, because the political is transitory and not dependent upon the creation of permanent institutions or successful persuasion but is speaking, acting, being heard, and being seen in public, with the concomitant effect of the creation of

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<sup>51</sup> Lupton, "Arendt in Italy," 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> Adriana Cavarero. "Politicizing Theory" (*What is Political Theory* London: Sage Publications, 2004), 79, 77.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Kottman, 101.

<sup>55</sup> See Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage*.

<sup>56</sup> Or as Stephen Orgel might argue in *The Illusion of Power*.

<sup>57</sup> As Tillyard might have it.

relationships and diverse interpretations of peoples' acts, power exists in the performance itself.<sup>58</sup>

The anonymous soldier at Towton who speaks up, reveals himself, and affects the world by creating new relationships has empowered himself by participating in the good life of the public realm.

Thus, the son and father in *III Henry VI* are powerful political actors, even though they perceive themselves as being alone. People reveal who they are intentionally as well as unintentionally, and a person's vulnerability makes of her more than she controls.<sup>59</sup> With the combination of the soldiers' intentionally speaking and unintentionally being heard, along with Henry's and the audience's witnessing of them and the establishment of relationships, the scene reveals the centrality of the speeches the son and father make. In the theater where this occurs, they have participated in the creation of the public realm. Arendt explains:

The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized. Its peculiarity is that...it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men...but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves.<sup>60</sup>

Even though theater in Shakespeare's era was neither constituted as political nor intended to be a political organization, it was nonetheless a political activity.

The resonance between the political and theatrical reflects Arendt's argument that humans reveal themselves as their own selves in the political world, as speakers of universal truths as the chorus in a play, or as imitations of agents in stories. In these fields, humans show and see what

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<sup>58</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 205.

<sup>59</sup> Lupton, "Arendt in Italy," 4, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 199.

it means to be human and bring themselves to the world by representing the typical rather than unique and by evincing what is great.<sup>61</sup> In theater and politics, the central criterion is not victory but exiting the private world and risking an encounter in a performance of speaking, which allows one to be heard and, for some, to be remembered.<sup>62</sup>

From the phenomenological point of view therefore, act two scene five of *III Henry VI* is political. The play calls attention to its political resonances and dislodges hierarchies by having cleared a space for characters from any quarter to meet, speak, and reveal themselves. In the resulting lateralization of the world, the soldiers' disclosures hold their King accountable for the civil war.

The son and father give honest accounts of how they came to fight, and they judge the consequences of their choices. The honesty of their accounts and their refusal to defend themselves affects Henry profoundly, prompting him out of his self-absorption. The two acknowledge the divisive, historical nature of their strife: The son was "pressed forth;" the father asks "is this our foeman's face" before he turns over the body (2.5.65-66 & 83). The son proclaims his patricide to be a function of the moment in time, "Oh heavy times, begetting such events," and the father begs for pity for the historical moment: "O pity God, this miserable age" and curses the "butcherly, erroneous, mutinous," and "unnatural, deadly quarrel" (2.5.63, 88-91). The characters neither set aside their alliances within the strife nor justify their choices. They both acknowledge familial consequences: the son wonders what his mother will do to him; the

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<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, 187-188.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, 206-207. When Arendt notes resonances between theater and politics, she does not refer to disillusioned assessments that a political figure performs mere theater for show. Arendt explains that power depends on the speaker's words and deeds being bound together. She argues that when a politician engages in theatrical antics, he lacks influence because his actions are detached from his deeds. Arendt explicitly states that power depends on words revealing and deeds lacking all brutality. See *The Human Condition*, 200.

father knows “my wife [will] shed seas of tears and ne’er be satisfied” (2.5.103-5). The son killing the father suggests a desire to murder authority. The father’s struggle with his son allows for prototypical intergenerational conflicts.

The men killed because of a political situation occurring at a historical moment, and they give voice to what an Everyman who killed his son or father in a civil war would say. Their standing as men acting in accordance with fealty is taken away, and they are the thing itself. As such, their speeches, completely consonant with their actions, demonstrate that they could only have performed what they have wrought as these particular individuals. As characters, they disclose their unique identities in their speeches for no other purpose than to show who they are. Their statements are spontaneous and revelatory and occur in response to existential threats not so much to the person's life but to his ability to live with himself freely: If he does not speak now, he will no longer continue to recognize his own self. Such speaking is a good because when a speaker does voice his beliefs, he actualizes his being and calls into fullness the truths of himself, which he would have had to suffer passively anyhow.<sup>63</sup> The son and father speak because they must, not because they need to persuade anyone; they simply state what they have done, why, and how, so they will be able to abide their own selves.

While this moment constitutes power in the Arendtian model, with characters subjectivizing themselves, many scholars interpret the lateralization as anarchic. They concur that the play depicts “chaos,” “disorder,” “a perverted will to power,” and “mere oppugnance.”<sup>64</sup> In the words of Dominique Goy-Blanquet, the scene’s anarchy causes ethical codes to wane and

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 208.

<sup>64</sup> Lieber, 33; Hattaway, 88; Pierce, 36; Cox, 86.

radical individualism to rise, resulting in a thirst for revenge that devolves into horror.<sup>65</sup> This aversion towards the lack of a centralized power makes the play particularly useful to re-interpret through political phenomenology because the play dramatizes one way the space of appearances can rise up and men can speak freely despite the absence of overt, institutional structures created to support unconstrained speech between equals.<sup>66</sup> While the scholars who characterized *III Henry VI's* anarchy as chaotic were correct in their assessment of the nobles' actions, the same situation read from an Arendtian perspective facilitates radical, free communication apart from any institutional support<sup>67</sup> and models a possibility for the effect of speaking: Arousing a response from a monarch. The scene dramatizes that even in the absence of a town hall, constitutional meeting, jury room, parliament, agora, or city square, a person who articulates his response to a terrible situation makes an overtly political speech. Speakers have the potential to exert power because what they say changes the world when their direct, unadorned utterances make others understand them. In this case, they also make the King understand his complicity in the war. To put it theatrically, the father and son prompt the King into action.

### **What the King Hears**

The possibility that some members of the audience would also be prompted to identify with and laud the son's and father's speeches is increased by their being juxtaposed with the King's failure to understand either the extent to which his own future will be determined by the

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<sup>65</sup> Dominique Goy-Blanquet, *Shakespeare's Early Histories: From Chronicle to Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 155-156

<sup>66</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 199-200.

<sup>67</sup> This is relevant for discussions that contrast Habermas and Arendt; the play demonstrates it is not necessary to create structures that facilitate these specific possibilities in order to sustain public realms, however desirable such structures may be. One difficulty is that these types of structures frequently do not exist in particularly recognizable ways in any number of communities and eras in history. See Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 314-315.



battle he witnesses or his responsibility for the civil war. Immediately before the son enters, Henry wishes he could leave the active life to have his hours determined by idealized pastoral concerns. Once he expresses this escapist desire, he is confronted by two men who have killed members of their own family. We can interpret this moment as showing that the King cannot evade his responsibilities, as H. M. Richmond has argued: The father and son show Henry his own “defects of character.”<sup>68</sup> Matthew Smith’s interpretation of early modern theater and Pugliatti’s perspectivism imply that the original audience that perceived Henry would have formed diverse interpretations of the scene and, at later moments, some of these interpretations would have changed. In addition, since the original audience lived close to the site of the battle, this might have tended to intensify the effect. Some audience members would have been aware of the history of the site, the ancestry of various theater-goers, and true or fictitious reputations of those people. Some would dis-identify with the father and son; others would acclaim their indictment of civil war.

This accusation is accentuated by the juxtaposition between the son and father’s speeches and Henry’s autarkic soliloquy: He represents himself as solitary, independent, and disinterested and observes the battle of Towton from a hill he chooses to sit on after having been silenced by Margaret and Clifford. He has removed himself from the public realm. He contemplates the to-and-fro of the battle with objectivity and little concern over which side will win:

This battle fares like to the morning's war,  
When dying clouds contend with growing light,  
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,  
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.  
Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea  
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind;

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<sup>68</sup> H. M. Richmond, *Shakespeare's Political Plays* (New York: Random House, 1967), 57.

Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea  
Forced to retire by fury of the wind:  
Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;  
Now one the better, then another best;  
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,  
Yet neither conqueror nor conquered:  
So is the equal of this fell war. (2.5.1-13)

Henry perceives himself as the King of this land and can easily see each side of the civil war neutrally; each contends against the other, but he is King over all. This belief implies that he cannot choose a side, even though one army's victory will result in his continued leadership of England; the other, his death. This distancing effect renders his observations dismissive of the devastation occurring to individuals on the field.

Henry's speech nonetheless does disclose a dim awareness of the stakes of the battle. His speech, characterized by antinomies of "dying clouds" and "growing light," "day" and "night," "tide" and "wind" "better" and "best," finally crafts a terrible antinomy: "breast" is opposed to "breast" when the battle is one citizen against his fellow.<sup>69</sup> And yet Henry sits, puts the matter in God's hands, wishes he were dead, and contemplates how preferable his life would be if he were a shepherd whose days he imagines being shaped by the exigencies of work and a private life in which he could master his household and animals.<sup>70</sup> The son and father render it impossible for Henry to continue this self-involvement or to ignore the effects of his deeds. They illustrate the

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<sup>69</sup> Adapted from Barry Edelstein, *Thinking Shakespeare* ("Welcome Sponsors," The Old Globe, April 2013, Lecture).

<sup>70</sup> This moment also reveals Henry's dim awareness of the stakes since, as Arendt explains in her essay "Reflections on Violence," it is possible to have sway over others and to control their actions when the rule of society allows a person to be the master of his household. See: Hannah Arendt, "On Violence" (*Crises of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1972), 139.

multi-layered effects of his choices, enlarging Henry's perspective and prompting him to a new resolve because the disruption and potential for destruction is complete.<sup>71</sup>

The play highlights the power of public speech and the limits of isolated thought by contrasting the soldiers' speeches with Henry's pastoral idyll. The combination of Henry's witnessing the speakers followed by his testimony about them is a process that is both external and internal; internally, the soldiers create the possibility for Henry to judge himself and speak to his errors. Externally, the soldiers speak the truth of civil war to Henry; and, as actors, the characters speak the truth about war to an attending audience. This interaction augments the staged quality of the scene, reducing the possibility of interpreting the moment as anything other than a performance, and creating the feeling of a set-piece.

### **Confrontation in a Mind Enlivened by Conscience**

The scene between the anonymous soldiers and Henry suggests the embodiment of the King's conscience onstage, reminiscent of the medieval tradition. Irving Ribner asserts that the father and son are an allegorical symbol of the horror and pathos of civil war.<sup>72</sup> The son and the father suggest abstractions such as Fellowship or Everyman, especially since their individual histories are more sketched in and equivalent only to the necessities of the scene rather than being complex characters. As such, Henry's retreat from the public realm and into isolation facilitates the possibility that his conscience will awaken as he contemplates his situation. As

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<sup>71</sup> See Michael Hicks, *The War of the Roses: 1455-1485* (Westminster: Maryland, Osprey Publishing, 2003). Although the effects of the so-called War of the Roses has recently been debated, Hicks states that this thirty-year long war caused more destruction than the previous century's 100 Years' War. On a dramatic level, between the play's opening salvo, when Richard of York challenges Henry VI's right to the throne, and the end of the war in this play's sequel, *Richard III*, when Henry Tudor defeats Richard, the war effects the end of Plantagenet, Lancastrian, and York rule and ushers in the reign of the Tudors, thus marking the end of a rule that had lasted two centuries.

<sup>72</sup> Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), 107.

Arendt argues, individuals do not encounter their consciences in the sphere of appearances. This kind of thought, and especially the encounter with the conscience, occurs in isolation.<sup>73</sup> The depiction in the play of Henry's call to conscience is unsurprisingly in line with late 16th century beliefs that state the experience is an encounter with the divine within, which allows the play to depict Henry as a person who attempts to sustain his link to God. The play establishes him as a flawed character who tries to become good, as opposed to how the play will depict Richard, a flawed character who will choose to harm others. This renders Henry's call to conscience vital to the play's structure. It furthermore emphasizes the degree to which the soldiers' speeches are held up as a model for effective discourse. Henry's experience is marked by internal witnessing and external testifying that is consistent with early modern notions of the conscience. However, since the depiction also includes Henry's self-reflexive discourse and independent assessment of his subsequent experiences in light of not only his own but others' opinions, the overall effect resembles Arendt's account of conscience and judgment more than the prototypical description of it in the 16th century author on conscience William Perkins.

After Henry contemplates the battle from afar, barely conscious that its outcome will determine his fate, he continues to consider its turmoil and longs for greater solitude and a complete retreat from the world of appearances through absolute disappearance into death: "...Margaret my queen, and Clifford too, have chid me from the battle, swearing both they prosper best of all when I am thence. Would I were dead, if God's good will were so!" (2.5.16-19). Forced from the public realm, Henry wishes to die, but this extreme reaction

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<sup>73</sup> Arendt details this in multiple articles and books, most elaborately in *The Life of the Mind*, volumes 1 and 2, that is, *Thinking* and *Willing*, but I will focus on her elaboration of this notion in essays recently collected by Jerome Cohn in *Responsibility and Judgment*, namely "Collective Responsibility," "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," and "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture."

contradicts his conception of God's will, so Henry contemplates a life removed from the public realm's possibilities for greatness or abasement: "O God! methinks it were a happy life, to be no better than a homely swain; to sit upon a hill, as I do now..." (2.5.21-24). Henry goes on to imagine pastoral life as less chaotic because it is ordered by the exigencies of the calendar: "To carve out dials quaintly, point by point, thereby to see the minutes how they run-- How many makes the hour full complete, how many hours brings about the day, how many days will finish up the year, how many years a mortal man may live . . . . Ah, what a life were this! How sweet! How lovely!" (21-32). Henry constructs an image of an ideal life that lacks diseases, poverty, or drought. The life he extols lacks headstrong wives and political foes and does not feature wolves or envious shepherds who might take a sheep in the night: "Gives not the hawthorn-bush a sweeter shade to shepherds looking on their silly sheep than doth a rich embroidered canopy to kings that ear their subjects' treachery?" (42-45). His naive view is accentuated by his isolation and the absence of factual information that could easily have been offered by actual shepherds' delineations of rural life.

What follows Henry's encounter with the son and father is the depiction of the King's self-reflexive, severe mental anguish, the product of the sudden awareness of moral turpitude that coincides with a torrent of shame, guilt, and remorse. The depiction mirrors the account of the conscience offered by Williams Perkins, Shakespeare's contemporary. Perkins sought to build the English church's understanding of internal life, which he believed was necessary in light of the experiences parishioners had of the pangs of conscience, but since previous interpretations of interior life had been offered by Catholic Church fathers, it was important to recast notions of the conscience within the Church of England's nascent creed. In 1596, Perkins wrote *Discourse on*

*Conscience* as a practical guide to life and based his writings on lived reality, but he kept this ideological orientation in mind. The advice was urgent because the meeting with the conscience produces exquisite internal torture and required pastoral care. The experience is

very forcible and terrible: for they are the compunctions and prickings that be in the heart...they are the strikes as it were, of an iron rod, where with the heart of a man striketh itself...and by reason of them, conscience is compared to a worm<sup>74</sup> that neither dieth but always lies gnawing and grabbling, and pulling at the heart of man...and causeth more pain and anguish than any disease in the world...<sup>75</sup>

The familiar experience had been discussed for centuries, but Perkins differentiates the Church of England's position from Rome's by merging two aspects of the conscience into a single word:

[C]onscience bears witness of our thoughts, of our affections, of our outward actions . . . . [T]here must be two actions of the understanding, the one simple, which barely conceiveth or thinketh this or that: the other is *a reflecting* or doubling of the former, whereby a man conceives and thinks with himself what he thinks . . . .By means of this second action conscience may bear witness even of thoughts...[C]onscience...in giving testimony...observes and takes notice of all things that we do [and] inwardly and secretly within the heart tells us of them all.<sup>76</sup>

Perkins identifies two actions in the conscience: witnessing and testifying in the "heart" but binds them so that one word bears the weight of different processes, where the mind observes its witnessing itself, but where the mind also testifies by giving an internal, verbal, account of the deeds that led to the very experience that produces a layered self-torturing, seeing and recriminating, apprehending again, and silently speaking again to the horror of the act.

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<sup>74</sup> cf. wormwood

<sup>75</sup> William Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience, Wherein is Set Downe the Nature, Properties, and Differences Thereof: as Also the Way to Get and Keepe Good Conscience* (Printed by John Legate, Printer to the University of Cambridge, 1596. Ebook), 85.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, 6-8.

Prior to Perkins's writings, the encounter with the conscience included two separate experiences, *synderesis* and *syneidesis*. We now use the term "conscience" to refer to these separate processes, but in earlier eras, *synderesis* was defined as occurring at a specifiable and singular moment that exists prior to interpretation. This experience is not what Medieval or Renaissance theological scholars named *syneidesis* or *conscientia*. *Conscientia* is the deliberate, content-rich, discursive working-out of what one must do or believe, necessarily subject to language, reasoning, and elaborate argument.<sup>77</sup> The early Church father Jerome had explained that *synderesis* was the spark "by which we discern that we sin, when we are overcome by pleasures or frenzy, and meanwhile are misled by an imitation of reason."<sup>78</sup> In his analysis, Jerome states that the spark besets individuals when they have committed a wrong or enacted a good. The instant is followed by a conscious consideration of the agent's actions. Jerome emphasized the possibility that the agent might err in this discursive process.

The disparity between the *synderesis* and *syneidesis* is clarified by Rachel Hoff, who examines depictions of the conscience in Milton's writings. As Hoff explains, in the 17th century, *synderesis* was considered to be a non-cognitive faculty that existed as an innate principle that was the origin of conscience and the divine within.<sup>79</sup> As a part of God, *synderesis* was incapable of error, whereas the ensuing arguments a person made, *syneidesis*, were human and capable of

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<sup>77</sup> Robert A. Greene, "Synderesis, the Spark of Conscience, In the English Renaissance" (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52.2: 1991), 195.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Greene, pages 196-197, who is quoting S. Hieronymi, *Commentarium in Heizechielem*, Corpus Christianorum (Thurnholti, 1954), 75, 11-12.

<sup>79</sup> Rachel Hoff, *'The End of What We Are': Instituting Conscience in the Work of John Milton* (University of California, Irvine, Dissertation, 2010), 4.

misleading the agent. Thus one group of people following their consciences might war against others who also relied on theirs.<sup>80</sup>

Christopher Tilmouth and Brian Cummings note that merging of the two faculties into one word was well received in the theater: The term *synderesis* was disappearing from common parlance and becoming an object of ridicule. In the 1590's, John Marston used the word in his poetry, but Thomas Dekker and Ben Jonson ridiculed Marston for it. Cummings argues that Marston's apostrophe, "Returne, returne, sacred Synderesis / Inspire our trunckes, let not such mud as this / Pollute us still" was so overwrought, it inspired insults, with Dekker's characters swearing by the "*Syntheresis* of my soule" when they are most pompous and Jonson's Clove using the term when he decides to "talk fustian."<sup>81</sup>

Shakespeare avoids Marston's grandiloquence and embodies the experience in his depiction of Henry's call to conscience. The depiction resonates with *synderesis* being the agonizing pain of overwhelming remorse. Henry absorbs the soldiers' agony and weeps with them: "I'll aid thee tear for tear; and let our hearts and eyes, like civil war, be blind with tears, and break o'ercharged with grief" (2.5.76-9). Henry now understands that the very nature of this war created the conditions that led to the men's crimes; its war of England against England, father against son, brother against brothe. Henry blames himself with, "Whiles lions war and battle for their dens, poor harmless lambs abide their enemy" (2.5.74-5). His use of "lambs" erases the pastoral idyll he had imagined earlier, while the return of his wish to die takes on a messianic quality and helps suggest that this is an experience of the divine within. Before, dying

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 34-35, who is quoting Perkins's 1596 work.

<sup>81</sup> John Marson, *The Scourge of Villanie*, Thomas Dekker, *Patient Grissel*, Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humour*, quoted in Greene, 208-209.



would relieve him of pain; now he would offer himself up if it could alter the situation: “O that my death would stay these ruthless deeds!” (2.5.95). He cries out for God’s pity for the men and fully acknowledges the civil war marked them: “The red rose and the white are on his face, the fatal colors of our striving houses: The one his purple blood right well resembles; the other his pale checks, methinks, presenteth...” (2.5.97-101). Henry had seen the battle of Towton from afar and had not sided with one army or the other, but now he gives language to the contention between the Yorks and Lancasters, with the roses he reads into the men’s cheeks referring both to the heraldic badges of York and Lancaster and also the origin story of the war: In *1 Henry VI*, York [Plantagenet] urges the lords to choose sides between Houses. York’s is the white rose; Somerset’s, the red.<sup>82</sup> The colors now imbue the bodies of the son and father, manifesting the allegiances that destroyed their own moral standing.

In Henry’s concluding lines of the scene, he signals his conflicting response to the war: “Whither one rose, and let the other flourish! If you contend, a thousand lives must wither” (2.5.102-103). Henry longs for one side to flourish, but he does not adopt a war-like stance; he recognizes that the war will lead to massive numbers of deaths. Neither here nor in his description of the son’s and father’s countenances is he able to side with one family or the other; Henry instead remains King over all of England, not the embattled Lancaster King, even while he accepts the blame for the conflict and the fact that he will be blamed for it: “How will the country for these woeful chances misthink the King and not be satisfied” he asks, and his remorse rises: “Was ever king so grieved for his subject’s woe? / Much is your sorrow; mine ten

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<sup>82</sup> *Plantagenet*: Since you are tongue-tied and so loath to speak, / In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts: / Let him that is a true-born gentleman / And stands upon the honor of his birth, / If he suppose that I have pleaded truth, / From off this brier pluck a white rose with me. / *Somerset*: Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer, / But dare maintain the party of the truth, / Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me. (*1 Henry VI* 2.4.23-31)

times so much...Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care, / Here sits a king more woful than you are” (2.5.111-113 and 123-125). Henry’s response is of a man who has encountered the accusations of his conscience and been struck down by the ramifications of his own choices. The soldiers “murdered where they should not kill” in ignorance. Henry’s decisions intentionally created the conditions where these men and thousands of others killed where they should not.

When Henry blames himself in his awareness of his role as King, he reverses his previous disavowal of responsibility for a particular battle and for Margaret’s murder of York. In act two, scene two, when Margaret points to York’s decapitated head and asks Henry if such a sight cheers him, he responds: “To see this sight, it irks my very soul. Withhold revenge, dear God! ‘Tis not my fault, nor wittingly have I infringed my vow” (2.2.6-9). This rejoinder lacks reverence and denies reality. Henry had acted in ways likely to result in revenge killings amidst a civil war when he asked to rule England until he died. Although in act two scene two, Henry does acknowledge that Margaret has risked God’s wrath by killing York, and his refusal to accept blame affords members of the nobility the dignity of their full agency in their actions, it overlooks his own statements in the first scene of the play when his acts precipitate war.

When the play opens and Henry calls on his followers to enact revenge: “My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits, even in the chair of state . . . . you both have vowed revenge on him, his sons, his favorites, and his friends” (1.1.49-56). By casting a net of vengeance over all York’s family and associates, the King authorizes a blood feud. He also promises devastating war: “Think’st thou that I will leave my kingly throne...No: first shall war unpeople this my realm” (1.1.124-126). Henry only relents after York asks Henry to explain why he should rule, and Henry acknowledges in an aside that his claim to the throne is weak (1.1.134, 151, 175).

Henry faced tyranny, but his own choices led to the battlefield where he had abnegated responsibility. His remorse signals his recognition of his error.

Henry's judgments have led scholars to state that his weakness "allows the factions at his court to explode into civil war."<sup>83</sup> Henry lacks the fiery will to rule,<sup>84</sup> they say, and the "power of action."<sup>85</sup> Cox argues that when the play opens and York sits on the throne, it invokes Lucifer's attempt to overthrow God, and Henry must overtly and vigorously orchestrate York's fall.<sup>86</sup> But the play is ambivalent on this account. The argument that the play supports the strong king theory in which good rulers create centralized power and destroy foes has as its chief voice Clifford, who authorizes such strong arm tactics by comparing them to the natural order of things in the animal world;<sup>87</sup> Clifford also performs "the most brutal act of the play."<sup>88</sup> Clifford's method of naturalization of revenge argues against it; it is inhuman and makes a human into a beast.<sup>89</sup> Henry may be too gentle for some scholars' sense of majesty, but what Reese calls his saintly serenity provides a precise and direct contrast to Richard.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Cox, 87.

<sup>84</sup> Richmond, 66.

<sup>85</sup> M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty* (London: Edward Arnold [Publishers] Ltd., 1961 ), 205.

<sup>86</sup> Cox, 94.

<sup>87</sup> To whom do lions cast their gentle looks? / Not to the beast that would usurp their den. / Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick? / Not his that spoils her young before her face. / Who 'scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting? / Not he that sets his foot upon her back (2.2.11-16)

<sup>88</sup> Pierce, 79.

<sup>89</sup> Miguel Vatter's analysis of biopolitics in Arendt states that totalitarian governments attempt to achieve complete control over life and thereby render humans into beasts; but, as Vatter has it, Arendt's occasional overemphasis on humanism creates a separation between animals and people (*Revista de Cienia Politica, Santiago*, 26.2: 2006), 10.

<sup>90</sup> Reese, 205.

As Reese points out, the second half of the play is organized around a conflict between good and evil, with Richard's and Henry's paths running parallel to one another.<sup>91</sup> Donald G. Watson argues that in this contrast, Henry's response of Christian faith and resignation to his nihilistic world is contrasted with Richard's Machiavellian opportunism.<sup>92</sup> Act two scene five marks the transition into this new organizing principle. Henry's awakening to his conscience shifts the play out of its all-out war between equal foes and begins the play's distillation of a conflict between Henry as moral man versus Richard as immoral, Henry as truth-teller, Richard as deceiver, Henry as serene choral voice, Richard as viciousness given voice.

The paramount importance of this scene is affirmed by the fact that Henry is the only character who has witnessed the consequences of his own experiences and felt self-recrimination. Don Ricks's analysis of the moment, while wholeheartedly accepting Tillyard's argument regarding the histories' articulation of the Tudor myth, creates a bridge to the New Historicist school by analyzing the moment as a function of the unscrupulous actions of the aristocracy in the three plays. Ricks explains that in *III Henry VI* characters "dare not face the truth about themselves or their actions," so the play uses the scene to stage its own meaning in the father's words, "I have murdered where I should not kill" (5.2.122). According to Ricks, Henry is "audience and chorus" in the morality play the scene creates. As the subject of a play-within-a-play, Henry therefore participates in the singular moment when *III Henry VI* restores values and resolves tensions.<sup>93</sup> This movement becomes central to Henry becoming a subject to his own self.

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<sup>91</sup> Reese, 203.

<sup>92</sup> Donald G. Watson, *Shakespeare's Early History Plays* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 86.

<sup>93</sup> Don M. Ricks, *Shakespeare's Emergent Form: A Study of the Structures of the Henry VI Plays* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1968), 93-94.

Before Henry can enter the process of subjectivizing himself, he must move beyond witnessing his own grave errors. Timothy C. Potts's work on conscience clarifies the function of remorse in Shakespeare, the emphatic description in Perkins, and Henry's experience: However miserable guilt feels, it is more terrible to have the certain, supposedly divine, knowledge of having committed a wrong that is compounded with self-reflexive, self-generating remorse. It creates an endless loop of seeing one's own self watching oneself suffering awareness of having caused a horrid wrong which is then re-experienced through self-recrimination. So long as Henry experiences the pangs of conscience, he cannot atone for his actions. The movement away from self-reflexive torture and into atonement is not accounted for in Perkins's observations. It can be found in the phenomenological account of conscience given by Arendt.

An Arendtian orientation towards conscience could be suspected of being at odds with Perkins's notions. Arendt, as a secularist, mistrusts *synderesis*; she would disagree with Perkins that "God alone by an absolute and sovereign power binds conscience."<sup>94</sup> Arendt's description of *syneidenai* furthermore illustrates how its self-reflexive expression can produce fruitful change. Arendt was also unwilling to establish definitive rules for behavior, unlike 16th and 17th century casuists, who applied pre-existing moral principles, whether the laws of the state,<sup>95</sup> or the religious principles, to specific situations,<sup>96</sup> thus establishing relatively fixed ideological orientations towards moral choices. But, the similarity between Arendt's secular formulation of

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<sup>94</sup> Perkins, 12.

<sup>95</sup> Margaret Sampson, "Laxity and Liberty" (*Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, Ed. Edmund Leites. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 98.

<sup>96</sup> Ian Breward states that "Perkins had no doubts that the Church of England was "anything other than 'a true and holy form of serving God..." Breward states that Perkins believed a good conscience was "kept by implicit obedience to the Word of God written in Scripture" ("William Perkins and the Origins of Reformed Casuistry" *The Evangelical Quarterly* 40.1: 1968), 10, 14.

conscience and Perkins's religious discussion of its duties is the result of their mutual reliance on Aristotelian perception, their need to break with previous thinkers on the topic, and their desire to create practical companions to conscience.

Bruce Smith explains that 16th century notions of perception, including the content of the stories laymen told themselves about what and how they were perceiving, reflected their dependence on Aristotelian formulations regarding perception;<sup>97</sup> these formulations also provide foundational elements of Arendt's notions.<sup>98</sup> Along with this shared dependence, Perkins and Arendt wrote in light of their finding that previous thinkers on the topic had lost their authority; Perkins needed to differentiate his work from the Church fathers, and Arendt had to re-think the conscience as a result of her personal experience with seemingly moral individuals becoming willing to support totalitarianism. Moreover, Perkins observes the conscience by grounding his examples and observations, like Arendt; they discuss the lived reality of the call to conscience. However, Arendt offers a way to prevent the torment of the pangs of conscience and explains the central importance of doing so. Agents who observe themselves and enter into dialogue with themselves amend their actions in the world because if they do not, the torment they experience interferes with their ability to accompany themselves in the witnessing of themselves and the dialogue that results from it, and self-reflexive discourse is so richly rewarding, it must be preserved.

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<sup>97</sup> Bruce R. Smith "Afterward: "Phenomophobia, or Who's Afraid of Merleau-Ponty?" (*Criticism*, 54.3: 2012), 483.

<sup>98</sup> Suzanne Duvall Jacobitti, "The Public, the Private, the Moral: Hannah Arendt and Political Morality" (*International Political Science Review / Revue internationale de science politique*. 12.4: 1991), 291.

Early in Arendt's work, she describes the conscience in terms similar to Perkins. The moment occurs in an unpublished essay, "Basic Moral Propositions:"<sup>99</sup>

I can testify about myself. The first time we find *conscientia* in terminological use in Cicero it has this meaning (*De officiis* 2.33): when I am under oath for something that is hidden from all men, I should remember that I have a god as witness. According to Cicero this means that "my mind is my witness" and "the god himself has bestowed upon man nothing more divine." (In this sense we find in Egypt, 1500 years before Christ, a royal servant recounting his services and saying, "My heart told me to do all this. It was an excellent witness.") *The point is witness for what is hidden* [emphasis Arendt's]. Thus in the new Testament, Rom. 2.14 ff., regarding the secrets of man, Paul speaks of conscience bearing witness and of thoughts which are in conflict with each other, deliberating in man, which "accuse and excuse one another" as in a courtroom. In 2 Cor. 1.12 *syneidesis* is testimony . . . .<sup>100</sup>

Arendt illuminates and draws attention to the causal links between observing and speaking, experiencing and discussing, knowing and deliberating as internal processes similar to the effects of speaking in the public realm.<sup>101</sup>

In Arendt's subsequent essay "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," she argues that the traditional understanding of conscience makes reliance on it unhelpful during crises.<sup>102</sup> In her

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<sup>99</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Basic Moral Propositions," unpublished essay, 1966. Excerpted in "Notes" (*Responsibility and Judgment*, Ed. Jerome Kohn, Schocken Books, 2005), 280. The note itself was created by the book's editor, specifically for "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy."

<sup>100</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Note 14," *Responsibility and Judgment*, 208.

<sup>101</sup> Jacobitti, 281 and 290.

<sup>102</sup> Arendt refers to World War II Germany. She writes several essays on conscience, thinking, and moral issues after her essay "Eichmann in Jerusalem" was subject to what Arendt perceived as strange misreadings. She began to analyze the experiences of conscience, thinking, and morality because she had written that Eichmann did not think. Arendt re-considered this proposition since she found that others who had been well known for their thinking, including her teacher Martin Heidegger, failed in acts of conscience, although differently from Eichmann and his fellow bureaucrats. In these essays, which include "Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship," "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," "Thinking and Moral Considerations," and "Collective Responsibility," (all collected by Jerome Kohn in *Responsibility and Judgment*. New York: Schocken Books, 2003), Arendt discusses morality actually resembling *morés*, since a whole nation was able to give up its morality as though they were exchanging one set of table manners for another. Morality and thinking had to be entirely different from that, and Arendt's careful, nuanced, and evocative arguments about these faculties took up much of her writing efforts in the second half of the 1960's. Unfortunately, her essays were only recently gathered and so represent little of the outside materials on her work.

work, the so-called divine within is no guarantor of right or wrong action. Arendt posits that the experience is a sentiment that arises when an agent obeys or disobeys social rules, and it has little to do with moral acts.<sup>103</sup> In order to explain this, Arendt relies on the self-recrimination Richard experiences in act five of *Richard III* when he accuses himself of being a villain. Richard shows little interest in performing moral actions afterwards, so the experience cannot be linked to morality. In order for a person to opt to perform a moral act, she must be unwilling to commit a wrong that would prompt a condemnation of herself that rendered herself into an enemy, which would thereby negate her ability to accompany herself in self-reflexive discourse.<sup>104</sup>

Arendt explains that when a person does refuse to perform what he perceives to be an immoral action, then he can experience internal peace. This is particularly desirable because it is productive of the sense of being one's own friend and therefore fosters an ability to accompany one's self through life. Arendt sometimes labels such peace "conscience," much as Perkins does, but she more often discusses conscience as a warning to not perform specific, identifiable, worldly actions.<sup>105</sup> Arendt offers three models for this inhibition: Socrates, who called this alarm his *daimon*, Hamlet, whose conscience "makes cowards of us all," and the Second Murderer in *Richard III* who complains that conscience "fills a man full of obstacles."<sup>106</sup>

As is clear from the name of the third example, the internal warning of *synderesis* does not prevent a person from performing the action she has been warned against. It is partly this failure to heed the warning that led to Arendt's notions. She herself had experienced emergency

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<sup>103</sup> Arendt, "Some Questions," 107.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 107-108, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," 187.

<sup>105</sup> Arendt, "Some Questions," 108 and 98.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, 108, 106, 101 and "Thinking and Moral Considerations," 181-186.



situations in which members of society exchanged one morality for its opposite, making peoples' so-called morality into *morés* rather than injunctions against particular actions.<sup>107</sup> This lack of reverence, combined with the tendency for a person to adhere to particular, pre-existing rules, makes such rules easily negated, given external circumstances. Instead, a person needs to be able to make judgements on a case-by-case basis, and to do so while referencing an exemplary individual.<sup>108</sup> If a person does not do this, then she is subject to severe recrimination by her own self. Arendt terms the activity that enables a person to make individual judgments “thinking.”

Although thinking as self-reflexive witnessing and testifying also does not guarantee being able to make such judgments, it is essential to creating its possibility; self-awareness of the discursive process enables a person to become his own unique self. The experience is inherently pleasurable and a good.<sup>109</sup> Causing an obstruction to one's own ability to enjoy the experience would result in not being able to enact the process that gives life meaning, creates “the highest state of being alive,” and makes, famously, “the unexamined life not worth living.” The performance of such thinking itself is the primary concern and reward in life.<sup>110</sup> Thus, it becomes important to preserve the capacity, which entails remaining in honest, direct, conversation with one's own self, that is, observing and offering incontrovertible testimony of one's self. Arendt calls this the two-in-one's silent dialogue:

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<sup>107</sup> Arendt, “Some Questions,” 54, 75. Arendt frequently described this exchange as an entire society changing its table manners.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, 137, 45.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>110</sup> Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” 175, 183, and 180.

...all men are two-in-one, not only in the sense of consciousness and self-consciousness (that whatever I do I am at the same time somehow aware of doing it), but in the very specific and active sense of this silent dialogue, of having constant intercourse, of being on speaking terms with themselves. If they only knew what they were doing...they would understand how important it was for them to do nothing that could spoil it. If the faculty of speech distinguishes man from other animal species...then it is this silent dialogue of myself with myself in which my specifically human quality is proved... In other words...men are not merely rational animals but thinking beings, and...they would rather give up all other ambitions and even suffer injury and insult than to forfeit this faculty.<sup>111</sup>

With this self-aware dialogue, the individual sees himself speaking to himself about his actions, beliefs, thoughts, and speech. The conjunction of the activities has “certain moral results, namely that he who thinks constitutes himself into somebody, a person or personality” who will commit no action that would shackle his mind in recriminations.<sup>112</sup> The process is empty of content, and it is not taken up in order to perform moral deeds, but it has enabled individuals of distinction to act morally “when the chips are down.”<sup>113</sup>

In Shakespeare’s tetralogy, this process occurs in Henry and Richard, and the two distinct characters demonstrate that the process does not necessarily lead to good or evil actions, unlike Perkins’s notions of *synderesis*, and regardless of errors in *syneidesis*, unlike 17th century casuists maintained. Instead, moral action, for Arendt, depends upon whether a person wants to remain in honest dialogue with himself and to perform actions that will not make the journey inward into torture.

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<sup>111</sup> Arendt, “Some Questions,” 92. Arendt refers to Socrates.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, 104-107.

<sup>113</sup> Arendt often refers to these moments as when “the chips are down.” See: Arendt, “Prologue” 4, “Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship,” 18 and 40, “Some Questions of Moral Philosophy,” 78, “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” 189 (All in *Responsibility and Judgment*).

Thus, Henry, who, like Richard, had not voiced any inhibition against his own actions that led to civil war is, in act two scene five, granted an awareness of the consequences of his actions and experiences torment. He has condemned himself to live “with a wrongdoer in an unbearable intimacy.”<sup>114</sup> For Arendt, Shakespeare, and Perkins, the experience is overwhelming. For Arendt, it impedes contemplation. Thus, Henry does not testify in act two scene five, nor does he alter his choice of actions, but he will. He will develop into his own unique self, as Reese and Frey note.<sup>115</sup> As I will show, Henry accomplishes the work of becoming a person through his attempts to perform good deeds in the world; what failures he endures are a function of relying on a generic model of good actions in the world rather than a fully embodied humane person.

The anonymous son and father elicit Henry’s emotional and ethical response. In *Richard III*, the actors portraying the ghosts of Richard’s victims walk across the stage, cursing him and blessing Richmond; Henry’s encounter with the son and father creates a more concrete manifestation of the effects of his choices. In *III Henry VI*, they are alive, present, speaking and being heard by Henry and the audience. The son and father carry dead bodies; they are not ghosts. Richard’s encounter happens the night before his fateful battle; Henry’s encounter occurs before it is too late for him to rectify his wrongs. Before, Henry found it possible to ask York to allow him to hold his title until he, Henry, dies. The worst effect seemed to be Margaret’s anger over his disinheriting their son; it was a familial choice. Now the son and father force Henry to behold the profound harm he has committed. Henry now mourns his actions, and theirs, and understands who he is as a function of what he has done. In the moment, Henry becomes enveloped in his own woe and recognizes that at the war will kill men and “wither” thousands of

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<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 91.

<sup>115</sup> Reese, 201; Frey, 62.

people. When Richard wakes up, it is too late for him to atone for his wrongdoing ; he dies the following day.

In *III Henry VI*, the son and father are characters and prompters. As States's insights indicate, the actors convey the essence of civil war. The performance creates a reality that is necessarily realized before an audience, which establishes relationships between the characters, the actors, and the actors and the audience.<sup>116</sup> In this relationship, according to Pugliatti, the son and father speak as soldiers who fought for England to members of an audience who suffered war. The actors play men who invoke political stand-ins for England's acts during its civil war. They embody England and become the voice of civil war, warriors destroying their own selves. They create the ultimate political self-referentiality, subject to their own self-destruction, completing their own sentences as an England that did this to herself. The moment calls into being civil war as the ultimate self-destructive mentality. The effect of witnesses in a theater observing a witness in a play who becomes his own witness to his conscience brings the theatricality of the moment to bear while simultaneously capturing reality.<sup>117</sup>

These performances are the thing itself, necessarily meaningful, not only because they dramatize politics but also because performance is meaningful as performance.<sup>118</sup> Performance achieves nothing besides itself and achieves this richness in being precisely its own self. The speeches are their own achievement on these multiple levels because the performance motivates them. The scene is tremulous with the awareness of the life of the other.

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<sup>116</sup> Pugliatti, 50 and Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 8-9.

<sup>117</sup> States, 37.

<sup>118</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 207.

Some members of the original audience would have recognized aspects of themselves on stage, as Pugliatti argues.<sup>119</sup> The speeches create a possibility for any variety of audience members, whether descendent of the Yorkist rebellion or Lancastrian conscripted footman, to recognize himself and perceive others around him perceiving him or herself onstage as well, voiding out the factionalism of civil war. Smith's argument implies that the performance of the play becomes an event individuals witness as a performance of their history as recorded in the chronicles and a performance of their history as these soldiers' fellows. Pugliatti asserts that this event creates a new history that takes on the status of truth.

Moreover, as Pugliatti notes, this particular moment is not only performed before an audience of London playgoers. It is also witnessed by the King: And,

more importantly, the presence of the king as a grieving witness...connects the anonymous characters and the imaginary incident to the core of true and great history [and] shows the kind of political and moral relevance that historical events assume when seen from below.<sup>120</sup>

Thus, although the characters are caught within a factional battle, the moment is freed from its partisan elements because characters are forced to recognize the consequences of their deeds apart from any fealty. The speeches do not participate in war propaganda because both characters speak anonymously and solely from the point of view of their consciences. The multiple layers of meaning in their speeches, and their principled accounts, disarm Henry, thus their recognition of what they have chosen to do is witnessed by a King who does not champion their triumphs in battle; he mourns with them.

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<sup>119</sup> Pugliatti, 72.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, 186.

Of course, the father and son also must speak because they are actors. Their presence on stage is not as specific, historical personages but to dramatize a reality of civil war. With the King's and soldiers' words being witnessed by a living, present, audience, the scene creates two public realms: The world of the play where these men meet and speak, and in the theater where the performance takes place. It is readily apparent that the specific words cannot attach themselves to the specific men: The moment onstage is not the 14th century, King Henry did not hear these two men speak. As such, perhaps this is merely a potentially political moment, not one that is necessarily civic. And yet, it is precisely the theatricality of the scene that emphasizes the degree to which the words are true: On a dramatic and metaphoric level, the scene embodies the truth that civil war destroys the past and the future; civil war destroys what a state has inherited through its people, killing men, our fathers, the stories they could tell and future actions they could take, and civil war destroys the future as well, killing our sons, what children they will never sire, and what would have been had they only lived.

Through both the literal characters' speeches and the metaphorical quality of their words, the play dramatizes commoners proving to Henry that he has abnegated his duties as both King and human and has caused great harm he had not anticipated or realized before they spoke; the son and father perform the vial function of stating that civil war is too destructive to entertain, that petty rivalries and personal concerns cannot justify the mighty losses of such a war, and that the effect of the war on the people and the realm are too devastating to allow oneself to merely lapse into it.<sup>121</sup> Henry sees this only because of the son and father's speeches. Instead of the scene being depleted, humiliated, or defeated, it is the living, breathing moment of the play

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<sup>121</sup> Arendt, "On Violence," 139.

because the son and father speak their own truths, as Henry will, and because they affect Henry, who himself had been silenced by his closest allies. In this way, the play broadcasts the power of speech in the public realm. Honest public speaking that awakens moral awareness is political in itself and furthermore motivates human action in the plural world. In this sense, the play dramatizes a process whereby one character's witnessing of testimony awakens his conscience and leads to the possibility of improved relationships in the world of the play.

## II

### Overview

The speeches by the son and the father create a standard against which all the other speeches of the plays can be measured. These speeches present an instance of what Jacques Derrida named a universalizable singularity: Each of the two characters states precisely what his experience was, which is also what any other person in his position would say; the army conscripted the son to fight in the civil war, and he killed the man who was his father, while the father killed a man whom he discovers is his son. For Derrida, writing at a moment when the South African Truth and Reconciliation hearings were taking place, the stakes of testimony were high enough to establish stringent expectations for individuals' public utterances: The person's words had to accord with what occurred and would therefore be singular. However, the person also had to speak in such a way that anyone else, given the exact same circumstances, would say the same thing, thus making the testimony universalizable.<sup>122</sup>

The son and the father meet Derrida's exacting standards because the experiences depicted in the play are limited enough to make it is easy to meet Derrida's requirements. For

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<sup>122</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demeure* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 41, 94.

other characters, a relative richness of experience or nuanced situation might make it more difficult to offer testimony that is both singular and universal. However, other characters' failures to speak directly, fully, and completely to their experiences is not a function of a desire to speak honestly that they flounder in but is, instead, a lack of interest in speaking directly.

This unwillingness is thematized by the play's repeated use of the phrase "play the orator." The phrase reveals an anxiety over instrumental uses of speech, but each character's inclination to play at speechifying participates in the collapse of the public realm. The effect, especially in contrast to the soldiers' speeches, suggests that deceitful, inadequate, or self-serving speeches in the space of appearance cause speakers to lose sway and ruin the possibility of constituting a fully engaged public realm. Overall, when characters' orations fail to account for the reality depicted in the plays, they neither witness, testify, nor improve the world, and they embody a public realm that is hostile to those who would speak to their experiences.

Thus, in contrast to the speeches by the son and father, other public speeches in *III Henry VI* fail to persuade either allies or enemies because the speakers fail to embody their experiences. In Margaret's speech to the army in act five, she means to persuade the soldiers to become a tool on her behalf. If she succeeds, she will win the civil war and install her son on the throne. Her words fail when she negates the value of individual generals and informs her men that they have no choice but to fight, which is false in this civil war; the opposing side is composed of Englishmen, and the previous battle featured a prominent soldier who had fought alongside his enemies. So too, York's speech to Margaret before she and Clifford kill him does not empower himself as an agent in the world of the play because it does not link words and deeds, even though the speech is imaginative, memorable, and inspires pathos amongst some members of his



audience.<sup>123</sup> York insults Margaret when he attempts to contrast her with an ideal, but he sputters with imprecision because he cannot identify what Margaret represents. It is only when he speaks of his sorrow over the murder of his son that he is able to devise the phrase that captures enough attention to move his enemy and establish the critical discourse on Margaret: He claims she possesses a tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide (1.4.137).<sup>124</sup> Since the performance of the play, even in the originating references to it, responses refer to this image.

When Arendt analyzes situations that resemble the civil war depicted in *III Henry VI*, she frames them in terms of the fragility of the public realms, its citizens, and the loneliness that arises out of a sordid space of appearances. In order for people to be willing to disclose themselves, "action needs for its full appearance the shining brightness we once called glory, and which is possible only in the public realm,"<sup>125</sup> but if that realm is filled with leaders like York or Margaret, there is no glory. Instead, it creates the objectivization, not subjectivizing, of individuals. Arendt describes this as:

Without the disclosure of the agent in the act, action loses its specific character and becomes one form of achievement among others. It is then indeed no less a means to an end than making is a means to produce an object. This happens whenever human togetherness is lost, that is, when people are only for or against other people, as for instance in modern warfare, where men go into action and use means of violence in order to achieve certain objectives for their own side and against the enemy. In these instances, which of course have always existed, speech becomes indeed "mere talk," simply one more means toward the end, whether it serves to deceive the enemy or to dazzle everybody with propaganda; here words reveal nothing, disclosure comes only from the

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<sup>123</sup> This qualifies it as war propaganda. See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 200.

<sup>124</sup> The line inspired Robert Greene's "tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide" characterization of Shakespeare in Greene's *Groat's Worth of Witte*.

<sup>125</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180.

deed itself, and this achievement, like all others achievements, cannot disclose the “who,” the unique and distinct identity of the agent.<sup>126</sup>

It is in this way that York cannot reveal the fullness of his life or Margaret’s nature, and Margaret fails to reveal herself or see the men who died for her army or the men who will fight. The lack of power in York’s and Margaret’s speeches are a function of their inability to create stories in which their opponents or followers can become figures worthy of remark, whether heroic or villainous. The two speakers would rid the world of the humans the play depicts in far more of their complexity. As such, *III Henry VI* achieves a robust rendering of the effects of war on the public realm. In the play, two of the most important characters hold forth for specific ends apart from any deeds they have otherwise accomplished. Their words do not disclose themselves, only their actions do.<sup>127</sup> Their bloviation creates a venal realm where characters, despite their blind self-interest, claim privileges apart from the common welfare.

However, Henry and Richard affirm their experiences and desires, but they accomplish this only outside the world of the play where war, usurpation, and enmity have rendered the world of appearances exceedingly dangerous for individuals to speak directly. Henry and Richard employ soliloquy and direct address in departures that reveal the lure of speaking that empowers. The characters desire to disclose themselves to such a degree that they burst from the world of the play and speak to the audience. Richard and Henry subjectivize themselves when they bear witness to their personal experiences to an audience who attends on them.

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<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

## A Hapless Father's Tears

Parts of York's fiery speech are among the most memorable in Shakespeare's works. His speech occurs after Northumberland, Clifford, and Margaret have captured him during the battle of Wakefield. The three Lancastrians taunt York, with Margaret showing him a napkin she dipped in his son's blood. Margaret orders York to be put on a hill and has him crowned with paper, hoping that her provocations will make him "stamp, rave, and fret" (1.4.91).

Scholarly reception to the scene has referred to the mocking as an invocation of the crucifixion. John D. Cox asserts that the resemblances spur pity for York.<sup>128</sup> Michael Hattaway acknowledges that the BBC televised production first shows York's body laid out as a kind of pieta, but when the camera zooms out, there are so many corpses, the scene becomes a holocaust.<sup>129</sup> H. M. Richmond comments that the scene is "as double-edged as Shakespeare's greatest," and that York is a "brutally ambitious man who is now meeting his just deserts for having broken his oath to King Henry."<sup>130</sup> Although Cox believes that it is not possible to detect irony in the scene,<sup>131</sup> it is possible that some audience members between 1590 and the present, like these scholars, may have discerned the the scene's multiple layers and ambivalent evocation of the torture of Jesus by Roman soldiers. In the phenomenology of the theater, Margaret's provocations, while consistent with Holingshed's account of the murder in the chronicles,<sup>132</sup> function as a drum roll, introducing York's speech and alerting the audience to listen and witness: She has provoked him, what will he say? She prompts him to offer her his worst.

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<sup>128</sup> Cox, 95.

<sup>129</sup> Hattaway, 1.

<sup>130</sup> Richmond, 61.

<sup>131</sup> Cox, *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

Unfortunately, during most of the speech, York sputters. He attempts to insult Margaret's heritage and family status and her departures from gender norms, but these moments are marked by his inability to actually name Margaret. Instead, he shows what she is not and thereby fails to uncover her nature. Only when York collapses into a storm of tears does he define Margaret.

York begins by calling attention to Margaret's status as an outsider: "She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France, whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth! How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex to triumph, like an Amazonian trull, upon their woes whom fortune captivates!" (1.4.110-114). As a Frenchwoman, Margaret is a foreigner in England, and York simultaneously casts her as an outsider and also as not the outsider he means; she is not identical to any of her own kind: She is not a Frenchwoman but a wolf, and yet not a wolf from France. Instead of evoking any single thing that Margaret is, she is not French, not female, not a wolf, not an adder, not an Amazon since she is a trull, and not a trull either, being an Amazon. All that is true of her is that she triumphs over someone who has fallen, and this is not suited to whatever sex it is that Margaret is supposed to be.

York also attempts to measure Margaret solely by the actions that define her: "But that thy face is, vizard-like, unchanging, made impudent with use of evil deeds..." (115-116). Even here, he emblemizes her face through a lack: Her face has been marked by her horrid behaviors, but as a mask, it expresses nothing. York likewise fails when he attempts to insult Margaret's background because the titles her father holds, despite his lack of wealth, had provided ample reasons to marry her earlier in the tetralogy (1.4.117-121). Finally, York's attempts to batter Margaret by invoking qualities according to the gender ideology of the day fail. His accusation that her share of beauty is small, lack of virtue makes others wonder at her,

and lack of government makes her abominable does create a series of deficiencies that contrast Margaret with an idealized woman. The difficulty is that no female character in the play resembles the one he envisages (1.4.122-130). York's phrases posit a standard for women that is somewhat humorous when taken out of context and might invoke Marian imagery, since the scene alludes to the sufferings of Christ, but Margaret's history in the plays originates in her adulterous affair with Somerset, proceeds to her holding his decapitated head, and culminates in her defense of her son and condemnation of Henry. These deeds neutralize the comparison to Mary. York relies on ideology and a paucity of examples for the beautiful, virtuous, well-governed woman he refers to; there is none in evidence in the *Henry VI* plays yet.<sup>133</sup>

York transcends the failure of these insults when he remembers his son's death. York cries and asks a question that grounds his railings in an arresting image:

O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide!  
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,  
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,  
And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?  
Women are soft, mild, pitiful and flexible;  
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.  
Bids't thou me rage? Why, now thou hast thy wish:  
Wouldst have me weep? Why, now thou hast thy will:  
For raging wind blows up incessant showers,  
And when the rage allays, the rain begins.  
These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies:  
And every drop cries vengeance for his death,  
'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false  
Frenchwoman. (137-149)

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<sup>133</sup> Naomi C. Liebler and Lisa Scancella Shea argue that only Lady Grey, who becomes the Duchess of York through her marriage to Edward IV later in this play, supplies the tetralogy with its first ideal female character and that Margaret consistently opposes patriarchal images of women. Liebler and Shea furthermore point out that in the scene with York, Margaret feminizes her opponent, by making him cry and piercing him with her sword. Margaret thereby projects onto York the qualities he assigns her ("Shakespeare's Queen Margaret: Unruly or Unruled?" *Henry VI: Critical Essays*, Ed. Thomas A. Pendleton, New York: Routledge, 2001, 79).

With these words, York triumphs. Margaret's desire to torment York has revealed her savagery. York wonders at her difference from idealized women, and now does generate an enduring image: Margaret has the heart of a wild beast and only covers herself in the dead skin of what had once been a woman. The phrase offered future scholars an entry-point into their analyses of Margaret; ferocity inevitably finds its way into analyses of her, from David Rigg's assertion that she is an "inexplicable deviation from nature;"<sup>134</sup> to Phyllis Racklin's claim that she is a "virago" who defies her husband and gloats at the death of an innocent child,<sup>135</sup> to Nina S. Levine's argument that Margaret's aggressions are used to criticize unruly women everywhere.<sup>136</sup> By way of contrast, Liebler and Shea claim Margaret acts as a powerful mother in the play, but scholars typically begin an analysis of Margaret with York's description of her.<sup>137</sup>

York's words accompany his torrent of emotion. Ironically, his loss of control creates his victory by energizing his speech into a striking image and producing a response from Northumberland, who weeps and does not stab York. York fails, though, to stop Clifford and Margaret from killing him and desecrating his body. They decapitate him and set his head on the gates of York so that he can "overlook the town" (1.4.175-180), an example of the "grisly comedy" of the play.<sup>138</sup> While York does affect Northumberland, (169-171), he cannot deter against vengeance. Clifford and Margaret remain armed with self-righteousness. Margaret chides

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<sup>134</sup> David Riggs, *Shakespeare's Heroical Heroes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 133.

<sup>135</sup> Racklin, 157.

<sup>136</sup> Nina S. Levine, *Women's Matters: Politics, Gender, and Nation in Shakespeare's Early History Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 79-80.

<sup>137</sup> Liebler and Shea, 79.

<sup>138</sup> Watson, 90.

her ally: “What, weeping-ripe, my Lord Northumberland? Think but upon the wrong he did us all, and that will quickly dry thy melting tears” (172-174).

However brutal Margaret’s actions, she illustrates why York fails: His denunciation fails to account for his participation in the creation of this scene. York’s desire for power endangered himself, his family, and the country as a whole.<sup>139</sup> In *II Henry VI*, York killed Clifford’s father when he attempted to dethrone Henry. *III Henry VI* opens with York’s reckless pursuit of civil war. Yet, his speech omits his role in the events that led to his murder. The torture makes him pitiable, but his lapses disempower him. York is instead an arrogant aristocrat, and his hubris gives the play its original title: *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, and the Death of Good King Henrie the Sixt*. York had created relationships through secretive political intrigue, treason, and murder, and the characters before him are those he harmed directly. York’s oversights negate the possibility of forgiveness, and the other characters willingly violate a ritual to wreak vengeance.<sup>140</sup>

York’s final moments in the play close with his bdelymia, curse, and wish for death, with the final desire arising from the notion that his demise will empower his curse:

...[Yo]u are more inhuman, more inexorable,  
O ten times more, than tigers of Hyrcania.  
See, ruthless queen, a hapless father’s tears:  
This cloth thou dipp’ d’st in blood of my sweet boy,

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<sup>139</sup> The gallows humor in the play, as noted by Watson, makes it possible for this scene to evoke the well established theatrical device wherein the purchase of an entrance fee implies acceptance of future dire possibilities, thereby legitimizing indifference by individuals who would normally be responsible for the wellbeing of those people who made the purchase. In this device, the officials experience a distressing callousness when the foreseeable events take place; theatrically, the reception of the apathy is humor. See the collected works of David Zucker, Jim Abrahams, and Jerry Zucker.

<sup>140</sup> The same problem mars the death speeches of Clifford and Warwick. Clifford spends the bulk of his words harping on Henry’s need to have bludgeoned York (2.6.1-20). Warwick, like Clifford, does offer a glorious scree but limits its effects when he exults in the power he had by asking what king lived that he could not kill (5.2.21-22). Neither speech is well represented in the critical literature despite the straightforward accounts of the deaths of these two noblemen.

Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this  
And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,  
Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears,  
Yea, even my foes will shed fast-falling tears  
And say, "Alas, it was a piteous deed!"  
There, take the crown, and, with the crown, my curse;  
And in thy need such comfort come to thee  
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!  
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world.  
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads! (1.4.153-168)

Although Clifford killed Rutland, and now York, York does not curse him; instead, he lays a hex on the woman who taunted him and rounds out his diatribe with a narrative: he imagines his chief foe's demise. York fails to stop Margaret from killing him, but he does teach her something: In *Richard III*, her own curses are powerful. Unlike York's, they are effective; almost every one she utters comes true.<sup>141</sup>

### **What of that?**

Margaret's survival from Shakespeare's *I Henry 6* through *Richard III* is unique and makes it impossible for her to give a thorough account of her actions in any single oration; however, her speech to her army in *III Henry VI* reveals her predisposition to use propaganda. In Margaret's speechifying, she purposely draws a picture that fails to accord with the reality of the world. Her only desire is to cozen her men into battle, which renders her words into contrivances and reveals her relationship to the soldiers: The men are a means to her own purposes, not ends in themselves. Margaret's actions lend credibility to York's characterization of her, but York's speech also strays far from the truth. Instead, in the world of the play, his words are meant to

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<sup>141</sup> In a comparative article between Senecan tragedy and *Richard III*, Harold F. Brooks reports in a footnote that "It is often said that Margaret's curses are all fulfilled. But Elizabeth does not die childless..." That child is the next Elizabeth, the Queen who marries Henry VII ("*Richard III*, Unhistorical Amplifications: The Women's Scenes and Seneca." *The Modern Language Review*, 75.4: 1980), 727.



insult Margaret, achieve the final word about her character, encourage others to attack her, and persuade Margaret to refrain from killing him. Margaret's and York's deceptions are the work of members of the nobility who willfully lead ordinary people like the anonymous father and son to commit unbearable wrongs.

Before Margaret is undone politically by the enemy's army and emotionally by the Yorkist rebellion, she calls on her soldiers to stand with her in battle. Her speech is remarkable for its lack of rousing imagery or veritable claims. Most important are her two missteps: She negates the value of the men who have lost their lives battling on her behalf, and she lies to her army when she says they have no option but to fight with her.

Margaret begins with an extended metaphor of a sinking ship with "the mast be now blown overboard, the cable broke, the holding-anchor lost, and half our sailors swallow'd in the flood" (5.4.1-5). Her army has entered a dire situation because the three York brothers have reunited, and her own prominent followers have been killed. Margaret draws on images of doom and amplifies her speech with the thought of ruin. The metaphors are overly familiar, though, and she proceeds to make her first fatal error: "Say Warwick was our anchor; what of that? And Montague our topmost; what of him? Our slaughter'd friends the tackles; what of these?" (5.4.13-15) With these lines, she negates the value of these men. Soldiers know they may not survive a battle but might hope for courage meeting their deaths and often fight to be remembered. When she diminishes their accomplishments with a derogatory "what of it?" Margaret jettisons her followers, even the man who gave up his allegiance to York to fight for her. Such an affront is anathema to men who risk their lives to fight or to enter the public realm.

The metaphors she employs furthermore cannot clarify the stakes of the battle; the images could refer to any battle at any time. But, this army faces a specific situation, one that Margaret might want to avoid specifying too precisely: Margaret and all who are on the battlefield know that their “pilot,” Edward, her son, would be a young king, much as his father had been, and it was during Henry’s minority that England lost France. Edward is no rousing pilot. He has never been king and what shepherding in battle he has received has been by the men who have died. Thus, Margaret’s speech reminds her auditors of the weakness of their plight, their lack of a leader, and the possibility their deaths will mean nothing.

Margaret does suggest that those who are alive have value: “Why, is not Oxford here another anchor? And Somerset another goodly mast? The friends of France our shrouds and tacklings?” (5.4.16-18). Her praise is kind but insufficient to overcome her previous negations since Montague and Somerset are merely “another” and “goodly.” Without acknowledging them as individuals with unique capabilities with particular and recognizable valor, her words demonstrate that these men are replacements like the inanimate parts of a ship she references. All but her son are tools for her purposes. She reinforces this view with, “And, though unskilful, why not Ned and I for once allow'd the skillful pilot's charge?” (5.4.19-20). The others who fought for her are interchangeable, but she and Edward will have the chance to prove their abilities, and they will be able to do so regardless of her followers’ objectives or the shared purposes of her men. Margaret fights to secure the throne for herself and her son, not England, and not to ensure her husband rules; she hopes for glory -- a potentially noble cause, but it is only her own glory, and she hoards it.

Margaret makes her second fatal error by lying directly and unconvincingly when she tells the soldiers they have no choice but to fight for the Lancastrians: “This speak I, lords, to let you understand, if case some one of you would fly from us, that there's no hoped-for mercy with the brothers” (5.4.24-38). This is blatantly untrue; the soldiers on both sides are Englishmen and would be welcomed by their erstwhile opponents, which the play proved when Clarence and Warwick changed sides, with Clarence switching twice and being ardently welcomed both times. While Margaret’s lines do take advantage of the previous imagery she had established by comparing the former images of ruin with isolation and wreckage at sea and shore, creating images that allow her listeners to imagine drowning and crashing against rocks, it does not stimulate the men towards their own fame. The result could be a desultory attitude: Each soldier has to fight, else he will be killed. Watson claims that Margaret’s description of the York brothers as sea, quicksand, and rock transforms them into elemental forces that cannot be defeated while the storm-tossed ship of her army represents its groundlessness.<sup>142</sup> Margaret’s battle speech does resemble one Machiavelli recommends in Book Four of *The Art of War*. He claims soldiers will become obstinate when generals “have constrained [their men] to fight from necessity, by removing from their paths all hope of saving themselves, except through victory.”<sup>143</sup> Machiavelli asserts that this strategy is the most successful one to employ, but it depends upon the soldiers’ love of their captain or country. The soldiers have evinced no love for Margaret, and they will be fighting men from their own country.

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<sup>142</sup> Watson, 81.

<sup>143</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Art of War* (Trans: Henry Neville. *The Constitution Society*. Online document), Book Four, paragraph 12.

The soldiers standing before Margaret, both in the world of the play and in the theater, know war: Men die fighting, must be replaced, the nobility charges forward regardless of its losses, and leaders replace all who die. If she were speaking to fellow leaders only, perhaps it would be appropriate to remind them that they have more warriors to take the place of the dead. But a footman could dread being swapped out so facilely, and successful battlefield oration draws on narrative and myth to persuade people that the murders war entails are justified. Myths and narratives assure soldiers that defeating, murdering, and destroying an enemy is the optimal choice even though their enemy is much like their own selves. The phenomenologically-oriented psychologist Rollo May explains that stories told in the lead-up to war must create a devil out of the enemy so soldiers can fight “without asking ourselves all the troublesome and spiritual questions that the war arouses.”<sup>144</sup> Other options include: fighting for one’s fellows-in-arms, the nihilism that drives some men into war, or the sense that they will fight to the end and that the end contains nothing but they will be brave. But, Margaret only tells her soldiers that if they do not fight, they will be killed.

Shakespeare later writes successful battleground speeches that lead to victory. Margaret’s men, unlike Henry V’s, are not told that they will compare scars they won with their “band of brothers” on St. Crispin’s day (4.3.45-49, 56). They are not reminded, as Richmond tells his warriors who destroy Richard III, that the enemy is a tyrant who “spoil’d your summer fields and fruitful vines” and that defeating him will mean reaping “the harvest of perpetual peace” (5.2.8, 13). Margaret’s men are reminded of the danger they face and the fact that they will not be remembered. Yet, if they flee, they will be slaughtered by their fellow Englishmen. The result is

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<sup>144</sup> Rollo May, *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.), 166.

the creation of a box canyon: There is nothing to do but fight, but there is no good reason to. She confronts the soldiers with the staring face of the enemy and the punishing voice of their Queen. Ultimately, Margaret's speech fails and her army loses. This suggests that in Shakespeare's plays, a powerful speech is the greatest power a character can have. A stage is a battlefield in competition with other theaters, diversions, or the boredom that it itself creates. Success is defined in terms of powerful public speaking.

Success on the Shakespearean stage also demands characters be able to speak. Since war eradicates a fruitful sphere of appearances where players can show themselves, Shakespeare's response to the conundrum of having created a public realm where it is not possible to disclose oneself is to create a method that allows characters to shine despite impossible conditions: He lets them leave the shared world of the play to speak to the audience. In theater, as in politics, the attraction of self-disclosure is so great, if the world does not create an opportunity for an individual to reveal himself, he will invent a method.

### III

Shakespeare uses direct address and soliloquy on the *platea* of *III Henry VI* to dramatize the contrast between Henry and Richard. In Robert Weimann's foundational study of the confrontation and cooperation between literary texts and performance in Elizabethan England, he explains that the actor's performance on the *platea*, where players highlight performance and speak to the audience in direct address, can create an oscillation between the player's role and player's self.<sup>145</sup> States discusses this doubleness in terms that highlight the vulnerability it creates

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<sup>145</sup> Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Writer's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6, 193.

for the actor, regardless of the time in which the play is performed, while Weimann discusses the degree to which the *platea* challenged the world of the play, its *locus*, in the Elizabethan era.<sup>146</sup> At that time, Weimann claims, the *locus* functioned as the realm of verisimilitude, rhetoric, and decorum, and the *platea* was the marginal, visceral, liminal, and otherwise unrepresentable.

Key to the differentiation between the *locus* and the *platea* is the potential for closure the *locus* allows, which contrasts to the openings created by the *platea*. The *platea*'s various openings include one to the audience: A performer downstage speaks in relatively informal language, relies on his 'mother wits,' is deeply aware of the everyday, and, as in political phenomenology, is oriented towards relationships between people. The *platea* thus foregrounds the animality of the human, the earthiness and creatureliness of one who dies, eats, fornicates, and gives birth. Weimann states the second opening of the *platea* was historically constituted: It opened to that part of London where the Globe was built, and its neighborhood with its "scandalous licentiousness and incontinent forms of pleasure."<sup>147</sup> This opening, however, is still apropos in the current moment, although the "neighborhood" as Weimann conceives of it includes the one created by the gathering of an audience within the theater in a variety of possible areas, not just London's intoxicating panoply of potential recreations. The third opening Weimann discusses is to the world of work, as opposed to the world of play, and therefore highlights the disparity between role and actor, the ludic and travail.<sup>148</sup> Overall, though, Weimann argues that the *platea* is *a fortiori* the interaction between performer and audience, a relationship States also illuminates as one that is constituted by mutuality, with the actor risking

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<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, 193-194.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*, 195-196.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, 194-196.

all and the audience able to laud, rebuke, or praise. With *III Henry VI*'s sole fruitful relationships being between the player and the audience, Richard recognizes he can seduce his attending public by offering them the chance to be the privileged auditors to his truths. He nonetheless challenges the audience to make ethical choices regarding their own stance in relationship to their community, since Richard reveals his desires to destroy the public realm. Henry continues his insights from act two scene five and enters into dialogue with himself in soliloquy, allowing his audience to overhear him. His time outside the *locus* allows him to develop an oracular voice and ability to prophecy. Henry's ability illuminates a fourth opening Weimann did not list, one to time itself, since he transcends the temporal limits of the *locus* of this play and envisions its sequel.

### **Battles in the Public Realm**

After Henry awakens to the fact that he lives in a plural world where his choices have devastated the people of his realm, he attains a relatively disinterested stance towards the events of the play. Having achieved greater perspective, he soliloquizes truthfully, continues his self-reflexive observations and ultimately gains an oracular voice; he predicts England's hope lies in Richmond (Henry VII) and that Richard's continued survival will result in thousands regretting Richard's birth (5.6.37-43). Henry thus invigorates himself as a character not so much by loosening the grip the play has on the unity of time but by charging the space of the *platea* with his ability to transcend time's limits. By way of contrast, Richard's ambitions to become king are intense enough to force him into secretiveness; his willingness to commit any harm in order to obtain the crown requires he inform no one of his character. Like Henry, however, he leaves the world of the play to share his feelings, motivations, and plans with his audience in the theater.

Henry's and Richard's moves to the *platea* could have shaped the play into a series of bravura speeches, the traditional form for plays featuring war, and certainly true of the first half of the play,<sup>149</sup> but the conflict the two characters enter into pits one man's thoughtfulness, generosity, and interest in constructing a lively public realm against the other's selfishness and unwillingness to participate in the creation of shared power. Both men learn from the time they spend on the *platea*: Richard that he can transform his talent for speaking into histrionic skills that will manipulate his brothers into serving his own narrow interests, Henry, the perspective a reader of the chronicles has, including the actions of a wise king. Readers who do not discern this structure claim the play shuffles episodically between the rise of Lancaster and York. Racklin describes the play as a jungle where two families vie with one another in atrocities, power is an end in itself, and the crown is tossed from one head to another at the whim of fortune.<sup>150</sup> Contrariwise, those analyses, such as Reese's, that take into account the conflict between the two men see the play as depicting a "more satisfactory explanation of human affairs," which can be found in moral accountability rather than the *lex talionis* of the chronicles.<sup>151</sup> The conflict sharpens the plot until it climaxes in their confrontation when both reveal themselves to one another. Here, Henry, who has become his own self, sees through Richard and time and foresees his own murder and the horrors of Richard's reign. Richard cannot bear these truths and murders Henry not to advance his cause or end the limitless game of exchanging the crown but to silence Henry's piercing insights: Richard cannot bear to be seen unless he controls the view.

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<sup>149</sup> David Bevington, "Introductory Notes" (*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, New York: Longman Publishing Group, 2012), 599.

<sup>150</sup> Racklin, 63.

<sup>151</sup> Reese, 204-205.



The play depicts evil's success in its war against good and no reciprocal bonds in the *locus* because the world of the play is steeped in treachery. The *locus* offers no process besides murder to settle disagreements. Arendt postulates that such a loss engenders lonely figures who must remain anonymous because one, being a person who performs good actions, must act selflessly and not broadcast his actions. The other is a criminal who must hide:

Both are lonely figures, the one being for, the other against; all men; they, therefore, remain outside the pale of human intercourse and are, politically, marginal figures who usually enter the historical scene in times of corruption, disintegration, and political bankruptcy.<sup>152</sup>

Arendt's interpretation of the disintegration of the world of men characterizes the appearance of Richard and Henry on the *platea*. With disclosure overly risky and also futile but with the requirement for disclosure in a play, the *platea* creates the only space for Henry and Richard to speak honestly of themselves. Richard becomes a secretive criminal; Henry, in order to remain good, must not reveal his intentions. By these terms, the play does not depict Henry as purely good, and he does allow himself to be seen in the *locus*. Instead, he searches for a model for moral judgments and lands on images consistent with a philosopher king, albeit a generic one.

Richard is isolated, not merely solitary. Phenomenologically, loneliness is more severe than solitude because it signifies the loss of a political world. In isolation, no individual is known in his singularity. In such a situation, people lose meaning; their superstitions and gullibility grow in the absence of a shared world that tests assumptions, and life becomes reduced to mere labor and work.<sup>153</sup> Cavarero indicates that isolation on this level is the death of a political space in which people bring their unique qualities to the world in relationships that allow them to

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<sup>152</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, 180, 209.

create something new.<sup>154</sup> Henry and Richard create what newness they can in the world in which they can be heard: They speak in the theater. Richard makes his audience complicit while he toys with codes of a shared world and reveals himself to be an individualist *par excellence*, concerned with his effect on those in on his secret but unconcerned with little else beside the power he can wield in the play. His successful seduction is a form of power, but it becomes clear that the power Richard wants is exclusionary. Only Richard can shine; all others must abide by his rules, the most important of which is to let him put himself on display and shine in the light of his theatrical talents. In opposition to this, Henry's solitude allows an audience to overhear his individualization, which is shaped by his attempts to inculcate into himself the actions that a good king would undertake. Henry's achievements are limited in the *locus*: He speaks but does not persuade, lectures but does not teach, and encourages but does not inspire all his followers. On the *platea*, even though he transcends time, he achieves partial success: in the critical literature, some scholars see him as saintly, but many deem him weak. In either case, Richard and Henry bring something new to the world of the theater through these saving actions of subjectivization in the set of relationships they create and foster, and the two characters, who must endure their own existences, snatch at honor and risk being heard on the *platea*. However, the possibility of a revitalized engagement in a political world that they bring is limited to their relationship to their audience in the theater.

### **An Unlicked Bear-Whelp**

Richard announces his desire for the crown after Edward inaugurates his kingdom on lust, faulty judgment, and poor treatment of the noblemen who support him. Pearlman shows

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<sup>154</sup> Cavarero, "Politicizing Theory," 54, 55,62.

Richard is catalyzed by these mistakes.<sup>155</sup> Richard's ambition might be traced to act one, scene two when he tells his father: "How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown; within whose circuit is Elysium and all that poets feign of bliss and joy" (1.2.29-31). In act one scene four, York also reports that during battle, Richard cried: "A crown, or else a glorious tomb! A scepter, or an earthly sepulcher!" (1.4.15-18).

If Richard made provisions for the crown, he did not voice them. His speech in act three demonstrates they had been contained in his inner world: "I do but dream on sovereignty; like one that stands upon a promontory, and spies a far-off shore where he would tread" (3.2.134-135). "Promontory" signals his sudden awareness of a realm in which he can achieve greatness: This theater where he speaks. With the public realm governed by his brother, whose mistreatment of noblemen offers no possibility to participate in its politics, Richard's only other option as a member of the gentry would be familial life, an especially galling prospect for Richard, who perceives himself as a wholly rejected lover:

What... pleasure can the world afford?  
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap . . . .  
O miserable . . . . love forswore me in my mother's womb...  
She did corrupt frail nature...To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub  
To make an envious mountain on my back  
Where sits deformity to mock my body;  
Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp (3.2.46-62).

Richard imagines isolation stretching into the future and surrounding him all through his past since before his own birth, rendering him into a figure of desolation.

In response to perceiving himself thrust into a world without worth, he seeks autarkic power masochistically: "I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown, / And, whiles I live, to

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<sup>155</sup> Pearlman, 45.

account this world but hell / Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head / Be round impaled with a glorious crown” (3.2.134-171). Richard circumscribes his possibilities encircled in a tiny circlet and projects himself into a feminine presence being pierced by his desire.<sup>156</sup> Political phenomenology elucidates how the space of appearances, finally freed from war, has now been denuded by Edward, leaving Richard without possibilities for participating in various forms of power, whether unifying the realm after the civil war or fostering activities that would allow members of the society to perform deeds, speak, or devise systems of governance. His brother has failed to perform any action but satisfy his own erotic urges.<sup>157</sup>

The set of metaphors Richard deploys derive from the theater, the one world where he does have power. Racklin explains that the vibrancy of Richard’s self-disclosure comes from his linking of two figures whose ambiguity were pronounced and intriguing in the era -- the Machiavellian deceiver and the protean actor -- but it is on the *platea* that Richard develops, conceives, cultivates, and engenders his theatrical skills while simultaneously enacting them. He will import these skills back into the *locus* to put his plan in place:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,  
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,  
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,  
And frame my face to all occasions . . . .  
I can add colors to the chameleon,  
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,  
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

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<sup>156</sup> In their psychoanalytic readings, Meredith Skura and Janet Adelman have characterized this response as narcissistic. Skura emphasizes Richard’s displacement of desire into histrionic actions; Adelman names it a desperate move to link political power to freedom from dependence on women. Meredith Anne Skura, *Shakespeare the Actor and the Purposes of Playing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 79 and Janet Adelman (“Fantasies of Maternal Power in *Macbeth*,” in *Cannibals, Witches and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, Papers from the English Institute, n.s. 11 Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), quoted in Skura, *ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> As a result, Richard attempts to secure the throne for Edward, which is his surest route to the crown. He frees Edward from prison and encourages him to deceive the men of York and take over the city. Edward regains the throne because Richard pushes him to. The continuation of the civil war means Warwick dies in battle and Clarence rejoins Edward. These two actions change the power balance of the battle and guarantee Edward’s victory.

Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?  
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down. (3.2.183-196)

Richard's successful embodiment of bravado before a captivated audience makes him certain of himself enough to transform the formerly impaling crown into one he can easily pluck.

Richard's confidence derives from his ingenious speech and ostentatious courting of the audience, which he flatters and intrigues by honestly admitting he will deceive others. In his words, he charms by knitting opposites together. His plan ties political and theatrical success to the medieval figure of Vice.<sup>158</sup> Intellectual delight arises from his juxtaposition of a multitude of items not previously combined: A Machiavelli for a politician is familiar, but Richard combines it with an actor. His body is a trunk, a tree that wears a crown, which resonates with Christology and his father's murder, and yet the image is energized by its radical displacement of its referents: there is nothing messianic about Richard. He invokes and amplifies unrequited love: He is so unloved, he is a chaos bred from wildness because he is an unlicked bear whelp whose mother did not clean the blood of birth from him. Her absence frees Richard from his relationship to the sow that would have raised him into the confines of productive relationships. He has become individual, unique, a heroic seeker for ambition as ambition, a furious creature whose rhetoric is great and performance of it is brilliant.

The speech is so seductive, Pearlman praises it for its creation of dominance as the over-reaching Marlovian avenger with theatrical, comic, wicked, angry, and ironic speeches. Pearlman claims that Richard's parody of Petrarchan language springs to life by combining medieval morality plays with individual isolation motivated by personal needs, all of which allows Richard

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<sup>158</sup> See Bernard Spivak, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to his Major Characters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

to repudiate the love of man and God. As a vivid character with marvelously condensed speech, Pearlman claims Richard is more interesting than Henry.<sup>159</sup>

Here Pearlman falls victim to the charm of the Vice character: Richard tempts an audience with the allure of an infantilized relationship to the civic world. The depiction offered is of a man who will take what he wants without offering anything. Instead of moderating views by listening to others and making oneself vulnerable to reciprocal disclosures inherent in more egalitarian pluralities, Richard depicts the possibility of being the sole star in the realm and in the theater. Richard speaks to people who are only supposed to watch and listen, and he therefore fails to risk mutuality, in which others can cripple with rejection, cajole with underestimations, or intimidate with exalted expectations. As Benjamin R. Barber discusses in analysis of the qualities that shape participatory governance, without mutual disclosure, there is no debate or empathy. Richard sets the terms for what occurs by failing to reveal his plans in the *locus* and only displaying himself on the *platea*.<sup>160</sup> Richard clenches all the power like it is a rattle.

Racklin asserts that Richard's dominance arises from his character's blending of controversial content from the era: actor, politician, and commercial adventurer and contradictions the theater and this play depend on: since, as she argues, English history plays favor patriotic piety over political scheming, the play presents a confluence of antinomies that lend support to the anti-theatrical tradition.<sup>161</sup> Walsh, however, argues that Shakespeare's history plays demand members of the audience consider their own sense of morality when confronted

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<sup>159</sup> Pearlman, 44-47.

<sup>160</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 173-180.

<sup>161</sup> Racklin, 72 who references Philip Stubbs's *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), quoted in Racklin, 82.

with moments like the orations of Richard;<sup>162</sup> Pugliatti posits that characters like Richard stand in opposition to the moral sense of the audience. This variety of responses demonstrates that however little Richard can accomplish in the world of the play, he is seen in the theater: Here, he can honestly reveal he will lie, promise future performances, and exult in his virtuosity. He revels at playing an evil character who might win the crown and has definitely won the audience's attention; he is King during his soliloquies.

Richard's rule ends when he exits; his departure launches an egalitarian space in which power can be shared by an audience that will make of him what they will. In the meantime, there is only this performance and its ironies of the honest liar, the meta-dramatic actor, the rejected object who is nonetheless the theater's beloved, Vice. As a historical personage in 1590, Richard is the man who subjectivizes himself before an audience and sparkles while he does so.

Whatever emotion he evokes between love and hatred, his revelations are the employment of a method that allows himself to be seen. It is heroic, regardless of whether audience members reject the relationship he creates in the *locus* or in the theater, and his boldness may inspire.

This energy is directly traceable to Richard's move from the *locus* to the *platea*, the space that sets aside literary conventions of the play and grounds itself on the rules of performance. Richard's ostentatious display and alluring figure demonstrate that the nature of the *platea* impinges directly on the world of the play by establishing a series of interactions: between player and audience, wherein the player presents the audience with moral decisions; between player and the world of the play, which tests the ability of the player to maintain his competing roles; and, in the case of *III Henry VI*, between the two characters who launch themselves onto the *platea*.

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<sup>162</sup> Walsh, 180.

Since the contrast between Richard and Henry tends to render Henry lacking in boldness in the critical literature, audiences members often favor Richard. Racklin testifies to this and Richard's power when she states that he "erupts" onstage,<sup>163</sup> and Pearlman's complaint that Henry is static and only delivers good lines when he is about to die reveals that the audience is being challenged to take sides. In a previous era, some members of the audience thought their response to his performance reflected whether their souls were doomed.<sup>164</sup> In a phenomenological reading, the vitality of Richard's performance arises from his willingness to hazard honesty and the disparity between his revelations and his self-censorship.

### **That the People of this Blessed Land May Not Be Punished**

Richard's dishonesty contrasts with Henry's introspective demeanor, a decisive difference between the two. They do, however share similarities in form: They both shift to the *platea* in back-to-back scenes after establishing a liminal space between the *platea* and *locus*, during which time they create the possibility of drawing the learning they gained on the *platea* into the world of the play. Specifically, while other characters speak, Henry and Richard gesture towards the *platea*. Henry's shift appears during the dialogue between Keepers who capture him; Richard's is preceded by his dialogue with Clarence while Edward seduces Lady Grey. After the transitional moments, Henry can move downstage, and Richard can refer to himself standing on a promontory. Once on the *platea*, both take a stance against the world of the play and are self-directed, self-empowered, and relatively free. Unlike Richard, however, Henry attempts to bring his resolve to improve the public realm to the world of the play.

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<sup>163</sup> Racklin, 63.

<sup>164</sup> Pearlman, 44.



Following his encounter with the anonymous soldiers, Henry transitions onto the *platea* as a figure of mixed identities caught in the dangerous zone of limbo: He carries a Bible but voices stoical notions, embracing “sour Adversity” (3.1.24), and he deliberates on the realpolitik considerations of 15th century Franco-Anglo relations within a framework provided by his knowledge of rhetoric and diplomacy: he sees Margaret will “make battry in [the King’s] breast,” but is in competition with Warwick, who is “a subtle orator” (37, 33). When the Keepers who eavesdrop on him capture him, he debates them like a Socratic instructor who has a command of biblical metaphors: “Look, as I blow this feather from my face, and as the air blows it to me again, obeying with my wind when I do blow, and yielding to another when it blows, commanded always by the greater gust -- such is the lightness of you common men” (84-89). The effect of this conglomeration of stoic and Christian images is confused: Henry displays his education and learning, but at first is seeking a model for his actions. He ranges amongst options: Cesar, Nero, his forefathers. Only when he settles into a series of phrases that align him with a spiritual perspective does he reveal his insights and growing maturity. He embraces his reduced state because men “say it is the wisest course” (24-25) and recognizes the supposed divine right to the throne can be washed free of him: “No, Harry, Harry, ‘tis no land of thine; thy place is fill’d, thy scepter wrung from thee, thy balm wash’d off wherewith those wast anointed...No, not a man comes for redress of thee; for how can I help them, and not myself?” (15-21). This opinion is shaped by a plural, relationship-oriented framework. Henry realizes that rulership and realm are perfectly intertwined; his role is not to rule but to help others. His combination of stoicism, a generic spirituality, and acknowledgement of his obligation to help others in order to be king

aligns his thinking with models of the good ruler, a thin sketch of a philosopher king inflected with Christian teachings.

He is imperfect, though. In his dialogue with the Keepers, Henry struggles between his former habits familiar to a particularly entitled member of the gentry and his new-found decision to refrain from causing harm. This conflict is represented in his mixture of disdain and benevolence when the men mock Henry with sophistry. Henry responds by chiding them, obeying them, and giving voice to his decision to safeguard others: “do not break your oaths; for of that sin my mild entreaty shall not make you guilty. Go where you will, the king shall be commanded; and be you kings, command, and I’ll obey” (83-93). Henry forbears from fighting or forcing the men to disobey an oath. He complies with them but fails to teach or persuade them and recalls, with some wit, the egalitarianism of act two scene five.

While adherents to the strong king theory would critique Henry’s unwillingness to take up arms against these men, the scene, which takes place in the north with a man in exile from London, recalls Jack Cade’s defeat against Iden in *II Henry VI*; fighting seems foolish. More importantly, Henry retains the horror of his previous judgments, and he will not repeat his lack of prescience. Henry gains knowledge of history when he spends time on the *platea*, and this awareness affects him, but he will not learn to wield his knowledge till after his imprisonment, when he can state that he forgot his loss of liberty because the time was a pleasure (4.6.10-15). For now, he limits his actions to a light scolding. David L. Frey, in an early attack against the Tudor Myth, says that Henry debates the Keepers, commands the flow and direction of the scene, uses the words of his captors to help persuade them, and points out the men’s paradoxes and

moral emptiness.<sup>165</sup> However, Henry achieves limited success. His verbal jousting does not insult the Keepers; he attempts to educate them. Their casual allegiances make them “light,” and if lightness becomes a habit, it could feed on itself. Henry sets this potential problem aside and deals with reality: He is their prisoner and will be Edward’s. Without a specific individual in mind to formulate a reference to good actions of a ruler, Henry cannot ground his speaking in consistent ways. He carries a Bible and speaks like a stoic; he remembers his schooling in rhetoric and real-world politics. His models are a blur until he finds his central metaphor.

When the Keepers ask where Henry’s crown is, he speaks of having internalized it: “My crown is in my heart, not on my head, not decked with diamonds and Indian stones, nor to be seen: my crown is called content: A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy” (62-65). Henry’s images resonate once he imagines life apart from his role as King. Without a physical crown, he can set aside the burden of ruling a realm severed by civil war, making him appear more enlightened than elsewhere in the scene.<sup>166</sup> His loss of status in the external world is measured against his gains in the realm of the spirit: His self awareness allows him access to contentment despite his disempowerment and voids out his need to define himself through his ability to command obedience from others, reminiscent of a Marcus Aurelius in Book Six of the *Meditations*. Henry recalls Antonius as a model for reflective judgment: “Remember his constancy...and his evenness in all things, and his piety, and the serenity of his countenance, and his sweetness, and his disregard of empty fame...he tolerated freedom of speech in those who opposed his

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<sup>165</sup> David L. Frey, *The First Tetralogy: Shakespeare’s Scrutiny of the Tudor Myth* (The Hague: Mouton & Co. B. V., 1976), 62, 64.

<sup>166</sup> This quote, referred to as “the crown of content” is frequently associated with 1 Timothy 6.6: “...Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

opinions...”<sup>167</sup> Henry’s new orientation towards the world allows Frey to comment that his development marks his spiritual deepening and coming into possession of himself.<sup>168</sup> Reese concludes that Henry has found his own self and a new discipline: Suffering has hallowed him, and his “calm acceptance of his worldly lot” means no one can harm him. He is free because he has self-knowledge.<sup>169</sup>

Frey’s and Reese’s interpretations resonate with Arendt’s notions of becoming a person. The *platea* and self-reflexive discourse have delivered him from customary morés to such a degree, the Keepers cannot understand him. Henry has not have solidified his picture of an individual to model his actions on; they circle around a set of customary images derived from notions that circulated early in the common era and fail to embody a fully human model. As a result, Henry does not achieve success. However, Henry does develop skills beyond the normal limits, and this other perspective is shaped by the *platea*: He has knowledge outside the world of the play.

After Henry is freed from prison, he demonstrates far-reaching powers of intelligence and perceptiveness and transcends the temporal limits of the play. When he cedes his kingdom to new protectors to free them from his taint of bad fortune, demonstrative of his interest in continued self-rule and his self-sacrificing nature, he journeys backwards in time because sharing rule of the kingdom with Warwick and Clarence recalls the protectorship that administered government before his majority, as depicted in *I and II Henry VI*. However, his temporal voyages are not nostalgic: Henry foresees that Richmond will be a better King than he has been,

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<sup>167</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (Trans. George Long. Web document), Book Six, paragraph 26.

<sup>168</sup> Frey, 62.

<sup>169</sup> Reese, 201.

according to Reese, and at the end of the play, he predicts the disgrace of Richard's reign.<sup>170</sup> In his final moments, Henry knows without being told that Richard killed his son, discerns that Richard will kill him, and speaks to the extent of Richard's deceptiveness and motivations for it. From his position on the *platea*, Henry is a prophet.

Henry's ability to burst through the constraints of temporality to embody an oracular voice and speak the truth about himself, this play, and the play's sequel originates in his status from his position outside the *locus*. There, he can understand its workings as though he reads the chronicles and attains the knowledge of Pugliatti's historian. A performer more than a character, Henry has access to the text of the tetralogy and the chronicles. As historian, Henry understands his own condition, mentations, emotional experiences, deeds, and moment in time. Through self-reflexive witnessing, Henry transforms what could have been isolation into wisdom. Arendt describes the pleasure that is possible:

Isolation in this...sense can be borne only if it is transformed into solitude, and everyone who is acquainted with Latin literature will know how the Romans, in contrast to the Greeks, discovered solitude and with it philosophy as a way of life in the enforced leisure which accompanies removal from public affairs.<sup>171</sup>

The journey to the *platea* has made Henry a philosopher King. Having attempted to adopt the role, Henry demonstrates a willingness to share governance. Reese states that this action, far from being that of a weak king, blesses the nobles gathered and models forgiveness<sup>172</sup> rather than chastisement, which makes Henry the first leader in the trilogy to attain a "recognizable ideal of

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<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*, 202

<sup>171</sup> Arendt, "Some Questions," 99.

<sup>172</sup> Given Arendt's notions of relationships, the unpredictability of action, and the undesirability of forcing governance and obedience, she argues that the twin actions ensuring the possibility of any action are promise-making and forgiveness. This scene in the play suggests the sort of forgiveness Arendt envisions (*The Human Condition* 236-237).

kingship.”<sup>173</sup> When Henry announces he will share power with Warwick and Clarence, two of his previous foes, the men are also willing to relent and to respect the other’s wishes.

**Warwick:** Your grace hath still been famed for virtuous;  
And now may seem as wise as virtuous...

Yet in this one thing let me blame your grace,  
For choosing me when Clarence is in place.

**Clarence:** No, Warwick, thou art worthy of the sway...  
And therefore I yield thee my free consent . . . .

**King Henry VI:** Warwick and Clarence give me both your hands:  
Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts,  
That no dissension hinder government:  
I make you both protectors of this land...

**Warwick:** What answers Clarence to his sovereign's will?

**Clarence:** That he consents, if Warwick yield consent... (4.6.26-46)

The mutual relenting by Clarence and Warwick, despite later comedic theatrical examples, denotes shared respect. Warwick acknowledges Henry’s wisdom and avoids conflict by admitting Clarence has greater standing. Clarence likewise acknowledges Warwick’s merit. They create a vision of shared power that is reinforced when, in Henry’s next scene, he counsels his protectors to raise troops to fight against the newly freed Edward. While he is willing to bring others into governing his kingdom, he has not attempted to secure the benefits of rule without its responsibilities or to hold onto only the pleasures of private life. It is a vision of participatory governance, which is a new standard and highly laudable. Unlike Edward’s ill-conceived reign, more people will make decisions in the government, be heard, and lead alongside others. The dialogue suggests and embodies this ideal. Henry’s decision is particularly gracious for unifying the country by bringing its factions into egalitarian rule. He inspires Warwick and Clarence with this vision. He has achieved the choric voice inspired by the anonymous soldiers.

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<sup>173</sup> Reese, 202.

Reese interprets the scene as establishing shared rule in largely secular terms, but Frey sees Henry's development as evidence of saintliness.<sup>174</sup> Frey points out that Henry lists his virtues in his final statement as King, before he is taken prisoner again.<sup>175</sup> But, Henry is perplexed by the people's preference for Edward. Henry says he has listened to the people's demands, been quick to help them, and has offered them pity, mildness, and mercy without taxing them greatly. Henry answers his question regarding the preference for Edward with Christian imagery, "these graces challenge grace: And when the lion fawns upon the lamb, the lamb will never cease to follow him" (5.1.65). Frey points out, like Reese, that even though Henry attains an ideal, his fall proves Providence is not at work: When a world is governed by an excess of soldiers and their armament, Providence does not protect the just and virtuous;<sup>176</sup> Reese declares that Henry was fated to fall and that the play depicts the slaughter of innocents.<sup>177</sup> Henry has become a person by Arendt's standards, but this achievement does not save a person from ruthless men.<sup>178</sup>

Phenomenologically, it is noteworthy that when Henry wonders why the people prefer Edward, he has lost his oracular powers. Within moments, his kingdom will be overrun by the Yorkist faction. He becomes the lamb who is sacrificed, or perhaps nothing so grand. He is simply murdered. Henry, the player on the *platea*, has become the character in the world of the play; he has lost his insight into history. Henry is most insightful into the world at large when he is not acting as King. In his solitude, it is possible for him to live outside the *locus*. When he is

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<sup>174</sup> Frey, 67.

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, 64.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*, 65.

<sup>177</sup> Reese, 203.

<sup>178</sup> Arendt, "Some Questions," 104.

absent from the public realm so far he is even absent from the play, Henry becomes a person who brings ideals and a choric voice to the world and, if he persists on the *platea* long enough, one who will be able to improve the commonwealth. Arendt speaks of this type of activity as achieving the highest good, but only if the man performing them absents himself from himself and speaks only with God and is willing to have the loneliest career of all: “no doing good is possible if while doing so I am even aware of it. . . . I must be, as it were, absent from myself and not be seen by me,” she explains, and admits the loneliness is so extreme, a believer in God would only be able to abide with such a state because he could imagine that God bears witness to his acts of goodness.<sup>179</sup> So too, Henry’s beneficence occurs when he speaks directly with God, when he is touched by the divine within through *synderesis*, and when he testifies to God in soliloquy, but he errs when he strays from the *platea* and is trapped in the *locus*.<sup>180</sup>

Each act Henry takes in the *locus* that Reese and Frey deem benevolent is fodder for arguments that Henry is too weak to rule, as seen in Edward Berry’s conclusion that Henry has an “irrelevance to earthly affairs”<sup>181</sup> or Cox’s argument that only centralized control neutralizes aristocratic power.<sup>182</sup> The mixture of Henry’s oracular powers, retreat, mistaken vision, good will, and peaceable motivations create a heady mixture of motivations and easily lead to the arguments regarding historical causation. The civil war has negatively affected the country to such an extent it takes something beyond virtue and shared administration to restore England to health. In the midst of treachery and blood lust, Henry VI’s good will cannot bring England

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<sup>179</sup> Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, 117.

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> Edward Berry, *Patterns of Decay: Shakespeare’s Early Histories* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1975), 71.

<sup>182</sup> Cox, 87.



peace, nor can he teach fractious students, persuade commoners-cum-sophists, or inspire a perfidious member of the gentry who chooses familial associations over shared governance. When he is alone, Henry may be a philosopher king, but he does not live in the era of Marcus Aurelius.

### **Roscius's Scene of Death**

The confrontation between Henry and Richard begins when Richard decides to kill Henry to eradicate more possibilities of the crown switching hands again, but when the two speak, Richard kills Henry to silence him. Henry, returned to solitude, once again sees through time to predict the horrors of Richard's rule, just as he sees past the *locus* to perceive Richard as he had presented himself on the *platea*: "Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain, and yet brought forth less than a mother's hope, to wit, an indigested and deformed lump...Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born to signify thou camest to bite the world" (5.6.85-88). Richard, also having come alive on the *platea*, sees Henry for what he is and calls him prophet. For a moment, the two men share the *platea*, but Richard's murder of his would-be partner in performance leaves him alone: "I have no brother, I am like no brother; and this word 'love,' which graybeards call divine, be resident in men like one another and not in me: I am myself alone" (34-83). The declaration of isolation has been received as an abandonment of family and country. But, Richard, completely alone, shows the desolation of a world whose public sphere has been eradicated. He establishes himself as a truly solitary man, a person born to commit crimes, hate others, and enact what evil he can. Before he admits this, he and Henry contest each other as brave speakers of the truth, with both characters using the *platea* to witness their acute self-consciousnesses and development of subjectivity. Henry and Richard, less caught in the net of

the *locus* and its plot, can comment on themselves and their world. Both are aware and speak of not only the rhetoric of the play but also of the time of their own worlds. Although they transcend temporal realities, with Richard anachronistically referring to himself as a Machiavellian and Henry aware that Richmond will become King and Richard a horror, both also are fully cognizant of the ethics, morals, and morés of their world; Richard knows his opening salvo of throwing a head to speak for him is as vile as it is theatrical; Henry knows his gentleness, in a better world, would make him a beloved King. Were their statements to be overheard by anyone else in the play, it would make them parrhesian truth-speakers, willing to testify to frank realities, despite the danger. But in the treacherous world of *III Henry VI*, the two characters cannot speak their truths to anyone but each other and the audience.

In their creation of an overt relationship with their audiences, they are political actors in a public realm created expressly to include an audience. In this space of appearances, they cannot control the effect of their words, but their willingness to speak their truths opens the possibility of the audience's speech and its political action, whether the audience is a citizen living on the North Road where the battle of Towton was fought or a citizen living in a modern-day country with its own cruel divisions. The audience watches Richard murder Henry and chooses what to say, never knowing what others will make of any comment or how they will respond, no more than they can in the middle of a public square where people occupy and create a public realm where few expected it to exist. There, they decide to allow their responses to endless war and economic injustices be anarchistic so that each can say what she needs to say, not necessarily what she ought, and thereby enact a political phenomenology even if it means risking ridicule

and accusations of formlessness, which becomes more favorable than concerted attempts to force any particular set of laws.

As for *III Henry VI*, while Richard's and Henry's frank statements do create new relationships with members of the audience, and though the audience itself views its viewing of this creation, the world of the play is not able to bring forth anything as vibrant and nourishing as Arendt envisions in her conception of the new relationships that can form. These new relationships do arise, however, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, in the various relationships that will ensue, including marriages and their implied births, a courtier whose advice his prince accepts, and a constable who safeguards his neighborhood so its citizens can enact more forthright disclosures.

CHAPTER TWO  
*MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* AND  
THE TIME OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

After the depiction of a public realm degraded by civil conflict in *III Henry VI*, it seems reasonable to anticipate that *Much Ado about Nothing*, which takes place immediately after the conclusion of a war between two brothers, would feature cautious entries into the space of appearance and the possibility of political action. However, while the nature of belligerent speech in *Much Ado About Nothing* is more charming than the history play's insults, *Much Ado's* characters degrade the public sphere by creating a world constituted in deceit. Every major character deceives others to such an extent that a project to determine who does speak the truth is achieved with alacrity: The results would show that no principal character routinely matches words to deeds. Characters deceive to protect themselves, to solicit desire, to harm the innocent, and to take vengeance against the guilty. As a result, the realm of appearances in this play retains the tainted quality found in *III Henry VI*, with characters at war with each other, even though their insults amuse and occur in battles meant to defend personal pride rather than to conquer a kingdom. Habitual deception, with characters unwilling to testify or make themselves mutually vulnerable, results in their general inability to witness reality, feel empathy, or engage in debate, and this empowers authoritarian control.

*Much Ado* stakes out the limits of its attenuation of the public realm in act five when Benedick explains men did not need to praise themselves during the "time of good neighbors," but now, a man "shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps," so

if he wants to be remembered, he should trumpet his virtues. The effect of the loss of good neighbors on the public realm becomes clear when he advises Beatrice to “Serve God, love me, and mend” (5.2.85). Benedick foresees healing relationships achieved only in marriage and prayer. The denuded landscape Benedick predicts is the reverse of what Barbara Everett notes are the props of the play: *Much Ado* deploys “the window, the arras of a musty room, the church, the tomb, the wedding dress, the night-watchmen’s staves, even the barber’s shop” for characters to enjoy and share.<sup>1</sup> Benedick offers Beatrice no relationship to the larger community because no robust space of appearances exists in Messina. Their world is void of shared information, good neighbors, community, and friends. In this claustrophobic world, people will not come together in their plurality to discuss their world, participate in civil life, create relationships, build their power by doing so, or embark on joint ventures. They will live far from the good life of action and far from one another. At its crisis, *Much Ado about Nothing* broadcasts that a world without a public realm is the private world of privation, shaped solely by family and prayer. The delightful landscape Everett describes will be rendered barren if no one can heal Messina.

The challenge of *Much Ado about Nothing* is to create a space in which neighbors sustain and extend the public realm so individuals can distinguish themselves and be remembered. If any one can prompt fellow characters to meet in the space of appearances, neighbors will be able to tell stories of praise or condemnation and guide their community through mutual disclosure and joint deliberation. If no one saves Messina, war will have eroded the possibility of communal life, and the effect of soldiers visiting the town will be the nullification of civil life, much as war was in *III Henry VI*. Fortunately, in Messina, there is no civil war, and one character prompts his

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Everett, “*Much Ado About Nothing*” (*Critical Quarterly*, Winter 1961), 320.

fellows to disclose themselves publicly. This character brings fundamental change to the city without overtly harming any characters. The man who achieves this bloodless revolution is Dogberry, the underestimated Constable whose misuse of language and misunderstood officiousness disguise the power he wields to bring political renewal to Messina.

Until Dogberry and the constabulary achieve this, the power characters wield in relationships is authoritarian, oppressive, and intolerant. The military in *Much Ado* forces its members into a homosocial group that demands their loyalty, obedience, and conformity within its hierarchical structure. Pedro leads this group, and although he appears charming, his errors amplify the skewed perspective inherent in homosociality and foster the hostility often found in the military. His susceptibility to flattery and consistent use of deception result in a generalized inability to discern the truth, which leads directly to the public shaming of Hero. Such an error would could be reversed if Pedro accepted advise from his court, but he refuses to be swayed when his fellow members of the nobility approach him directly.

The world of *Much Ado* prompts us to ask questions such as: How can a robust public realm rise up when military leaders have exercised excessive power? What actions encourage public disclosures despite multiple occlusions? In his response to these types of questions, Philip Collington argues that Castiglione's suggestions in *The Book of the Courtier* lend support for considering Benedick as the best adviser of his prince.<sup>2</sup> While I agree that Benedick makes a valiant attempt to rescue Hero, his choice to duel Claudio, were it to occur, would create a tragedy, just like the other options characters make that arise from medieval traditions.

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<sup>2</sup> Philip D. Collington, "Stuffed with all honorable virtues: *Much Ado about Nothing* and *The Book of the Courtier*" (*Studies in Philology*. 103.3: 2006).

Instead, the play renders the best response to Pedro's authoritarianism and the deception in Messina as Dogberry's subtle delegitimization of the prince. The Constable nullifies the destructive practices endemic in his city, and he achieves these accomplishments without violence or putting his own life at risk. He deflects attention away from his use of power by relying on folk traditions, including the theatrical tradition of the clown and disobedience disguised by feigned ignorance,<sup>3</sup> in order to rescue his city.

The result is irenic political renewal in Messina. Dogberry is not motivated to overthrow existing power structures. His language reveals he values his neighbors for their own sakes; he does not want to lord it over them but desires they disclose themselves. When we recognize that hierarchical societies like Messina's punish people who do not appear to conform to its rigid notions of rank, it is possible to discern Dogberry defuses Pedro's abuse of power and Messina's habitual deception by intentionally abusing his own reputation. In this, I respond to the traditional readings of Dogberry that cast him as ignorant and intercede in more recent discussions that attest to Dogberry's ability to usher in a comedic ending but have not been able to account for his ability to achieve it.

Arendt's insights are especially apt in the cast of *Much Ado's* depiction of power: Her work foregrounds routes to empowerment in the face of oppressive bureaucratic or authoritarian control. She appealed to Aristotle's *Politics* and the good life of the public realm not to resurrect specific Greek institutions but to revitalize political inquiry and illuminate the variety of affiliations possible in the space of appearances. Her use of the polis is a metaphor that enabled

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<sup>3</sup> James C. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts: Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

her to speak of public life as a set of activities that include words and persuasion,<sup>4</sup> making her work a call to act despite circumstances seeming to prohibit it. Thus, she returns to the ancient world for models and extols acts of bravura that resonate with the feats of epic warriors, but her metaphor does not only encourage people to reveal and distinguish themselves. She calls on them to contribute quietly to social processes that effect change. Dogberry's achievements can best be understood when considered alongside the insights of a collection of scholars who elucidate Arendt's concept of political action as it is constrained in modern, bureaucratic society, not acts that demand standing out from the crowd. Julia Lupton's analysis of characters' unintended disclosures,<sup>5</sup> David L. Marshall's clarification of the importance of people's distinguishing themselves,<sup>6</sup> Patchen Markell's description of the importance of anonymous action within processes,<sup>7</sup> and Nikolas Kompridis's broadcasting of receptiveness that promotes peaceful renewal<sup>8</sup> all shed light on how Dogberry saves Hero by spreading the responsibility for her rescue throughout a bureaucracy. The Constable's overall orientation resonates with Arendt's and Kenneth Reinhard's notions regarding the neighbor. Arendt demonstrates that Augustine's arguments regarding the commandment to love the neighbor as one's self end in absurdity.<sup>9</sup> In his separate account, Reinhard resolves this absurdity by establishing that love of the neighbor

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<sup>4</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 26.

<sup>5</sup> Julia Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), "Hannah Arendt Strasse" (*Renaissance Drama New Series* 40, 2012), 209-217, "Arendt in Italy: Or, the *Taming of the Shrew*" (*Law, Culture and the Humanities*. 8:1, February 2012), 68-83.

<sup>6</sup> David L. Marshall, "The Polis and its Analogues in the Thought of Hannah Arendt" (*Modern Intellectual History*, 7.1: 2010), 129.

<sup>7</sup> Patchen Markell, "Anonymous Glory" (*European Journal of Political Theory* 0:0: 2015), 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2006), 207-8.

<sup>9</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine* (Ed. Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).



includes loving the neighbor for his own sake.<sup>10</sup> Dogberry employs the word “neighbor” as a title, which reflects his non-hierarchical, non-instrumental valuation of the people around him. This inclination inspires him to create environments that allow them to reveal themselves according to their subject positions.

### **Plot Summary**

The play opens with a crowd anticipating the arrival of Don Pedro, the Prince of Aragon, who shepherds a collection of soldiers suitable for marriage to this, his holding of Messina.<sup>11</sup> Guests bring renewed life and ideas to people who know one another so well, they protect themselves from emotional vulnerability by practicing petty and major deceptions.<sup>12</sup>

Upon his arrival, the young soldier Claudio is enamored of Hero, which inspires Pedro to stage the first of eight ruses in the play. He offers to disguise himself as Claudio and propose to Hero on Claudio’s behalf at that evening’s masquerade. At the party, Pedro, Benedick, Antonio, and Claudio purport to not be themselves while, off stage, Hero accepts Pedro’s offer of marriage, but it is not clear whether she accepts Pedro or Claudio as husband. Pedro’s illegitimate brother John, who fought against Pedro in the war that has just concluded, takes advantage of the disguise to tell Claudio that Pedro wooed Hero for his own self. The deception

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<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Reinhard, “Towards a Political Theology of the Neighbor” (*The Neighbor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Camille Wells Slight, *Shakespeare’s Commonwealths* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 179. Slight explains that the play takes place “in a remote city ruled by Spanish overlords.” She relies on George Sandys’s account of the history of Sicily and Shakespeare’s source in Bandello. During the era in which the play was written, Messina was an Italian city-state ruled by Spain, making Leonato, the Governor of Messina, subject to the authority of Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon. Slight quotes Edward H. Sudgen’s *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists*, originally published by Manchester University Press in 1925 (265).

<sup>12</sup> John Crick “Messina” (*Twentieth Century Interpretations of Much Ado about Nothing*, Ed. Walter R. Davis, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 37.

is quickly resolved, and once Claudio and Hero are engaged, they and their friends decide to trick Beatrice and Benedick into making a match with one other.

Pedro and John steer the plot by mounting a series of what have been called practices, plays, and, far more damning, false narratives to convince characters into believing in worlds that do not exist.<sup>13</sup> While the ruses are exemplary of an urbane culture in which members of a court would avoid the appearance of naïve self-disclosures, their deceptions become more disparate from reality as the play continues. Except for disguises at the masquerade, each deception works and establishes the possibility that future ones will succeed, since those who actively deceive others are routinely deceived in their own turn. John perpetrates the greatest departure from reality when he stages a performance for Pedro and Claudio that suggests to them that Hero is making love to another man. At their would-be wedding, Claudio denounces Hero for her lack of chastity, and Pedro and John join in vituperation so dramatic that commentators have agreed with eighteenth century responses that it is the most poignant scene in Shakespearian comedy.<sup>14</sup>

When Claudio repudiates Hero, she speaks honestly but incompletely and cannot dissuade him or Pedro. Her friends take her side, and Friar Francis persuades them to stage another false narrative. They will publicize Hero's death to re-awaken Claudio's fondness for her. Alone, Beatrice and Benedick declare their love, and Beatrice asks Benedick to kill Claudio. He accepts, challenges his friend, and would have entered into a duel if it were not for Constable Dogberry, his fellow officer Verges, and the night watch.

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<sup>13</sup> Evans, 69. Jean Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 59. Nova Myhill, "Spectatorship in *Much Ado about Nothing*" (*Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 39.2: 1999), 294-295.

<sup>14</sup> Bertrand Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 80.

While Messina's aristocrats stage unannounced plays for one another, Constable Dogberry's watch overhears John's follower Borachio bragging that he won a thousand ducats for successfully convincing Claudio and Pedro that Hero is unchaste. The watch arrests Borachio and his friend for lechery. Dogberry secures the right to question John's men, and together the constabulary proves that John arranged the debacle. Borachio, believing Hero has died, confesses to Claudio and Pedro. Claudio vows to right Hero's reputation and submits to the requirement that he marry whichever woman Leonato requests. At the second marriage ceremony, Hero reveals herself to Claudio, who happily marries her. Benedick and Beatrice also decide to marry, and the play ends when Benedick urges Pedro to marry, promises to torture John, and leads the others in a dance before the wedding ceremony, in a reversal of tradition.

### **Deception**

In Messina every principal character lies.<sup>15</sup> Although the audience in the theater might enjoy the antics, in the world of the play, the deceptions cause a conflict between appearance and reality that prevents characters from inhabiting a common world.<sup>16</sup> In her philosophical treatise on lying, Sissela Bok explains that habitual deception creates cumulative harm, expands deceptive activities, is fundamentally dependent upon a person limiting her own perspective since deceit is deemed acceptable only by the deceiver, and finally promotes self-delusion and deprives the individual of insight, rendering human choice "without texture or depth" because it

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<sup>15</sup> Evans, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Walter R. Davis, "Introduction" (*Twentieth Century Interpretations of Much Ado about Nothing*, Ed. Walter R. Davis, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969) 5.

renders a person incapable of discerning deceit.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in *Much Ado*, characters' supposedly amusing lies facilitate the success of John's actively malicious deceptions.

In Arendt's phenomenological analysis, a person who speaks in the public realm empowers herself so long as the public realm persists, and people can experience meaningful lives when they can talk and make sense with one another,<sup>18</sup> but gauging the possibilities for empowerment in the world of *Much Ado*, Shakespeare's most realistic comedy,<sup>19</sup> presents the reader with having to discern the nature of the relationship that form amidst lies. In *Much Ado*, the characters' penchant for deceit, the military's closed, homosocial world, and the ruses staged by the brothers Pedro and John create a shared world that is filled with deceit and conducive to further deception. The tradition of command and obedience in the military amplifies the problems associated with the lies in part because excessive, undeserved loyalty typically arises in homosocial groups. Thus the play renders deeply flawed characters whose foibles are foundational to their society and offers a view of the world that is clearly less than ideal.<sup>20</sup>

For instance, normally, speech in the public realm lessens the impact of any single person because the necessarily plural nature of inclusive communities brings multiple opinions to the fore. People can test what one person says and, likewise, what people attest to can be challenged

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<sup>17</sup> Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978, reprint 1999), 60, 92, 105.

<sup>18</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 4.

<sup>19</sup> J. Wilson Dover, "Introduction" (*Much Ado about Nothing*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1923), xv-xvi; Walter R. Davis, "Introduction" (*Twentieth Century Interpretations of Much Ado about Nothing*, Ed. Walter R. Davis, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 5; and John Crick, "Messina" (*Twentieth Century Interpretations of Much Ado about Nothing*, Ed. Walter R. Davis, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 37.

<sup>20</sup> Sheldon Zitner, "Introduction" (*Much Ado about Nothing*, Ed: Sheldon Zitner. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 3. Bernard Evans points out that the play moderates its tragic vision by admitting the audience into every secret (*Shakespeare's Comedies* vii).

by another person.<sup>21</sup> When a group jointly commits a lie, however, a variety of beliefs cannot be heard. Everyone party to the lie must agree, and any opinion the deceivers cast into the sphere of appearances, when debated, is affirmed. This defeats the promise of the realm of appearances whose fundamental principle is that men create it, not man. Our world is filled with differences. Deception destroys this possibility, as seen when the male characters support each other to validate the lie that Beatrice loves Benedick.

When Leonato states the Beatrice dotes on Benedick, “whom she hath in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor” and Pedro suggests that “she doth but counterfeit,” Leonato assures him, “There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it” (2.3.109). When Pedro performs the function of the public realm by questioning Leonato’s claim, Leonato does not re-consider but offers ever more intense descriptions of Beatrice’s exhibitions of love sickness. He helps create a realm dominated by Pedro’s false narrative. The result is that Benedick believes one set of notions while the other men believe in another.

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<sup>21</sup> Arendt contrasts the public sphere with the social realm, the space of appearances in which “society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to ‘normalize’ its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement” (*The Human Condition* 40). This mirrors her notion of mass society and Heidegger’s *Das Man*. As such, participation in the social, when curbed, can have a moderating effect on one’s opinions, but the possibility of complete conformity is extensive. In *Strong Democracy*, Benjamin R. Barber teases out the nuances between conformity and distinction by discussing a public realm that is shaped through mutuality, shared obligations, and self-restraint while nonetheless fostering and sustaining individuals who conflict with themselves as well as others. In such a society, individuals who understand

individuals’ desires, intentions, talents, and projects as incommensurable [make] equality a problem for politics to solve rather than the condition for all politics. We would be able to conceive of occupying common space with our friends and fellows without having to surrender our distinctive identities and felt freedoms. And we would be able to see our behavior as determined not merely by external stimuli but also by rationally conceived ends, mutually willed goods, and ideals created out of common discourse and action. (42)

Barber reconciles the binaries Arendt seems to lay out, which resonates with the contrast in *Much Ado* between the conventionality of Claudio & Hero and the ostentatious individuality of Beatrice and Benedick.

Beatrice lives in a third set, one in which she has not publicly declared her love of Benedick but Benedick loves her “entirely,” which Hero affirms is vouched for by the prince and Claudio. Beatrice cannot test this belief because she, like Benedick, believes she is concealing her presence from the people conversing about her and because Hero states that she persuaded Benedick’s friends that, “if they loved Benedick, to wish him wrestle with affection and never to let Beatrice know of it” (2.4.37-43). Beatrice cannot scrutinize reality and consider others’ perspectives, and this inhibits her discernment of what is true.

If the characters wanted to bring Benedick and Beatrice into an intimacy because they knew the two loved one another, it could have been a favor to perpetrate these lies.<sup>22</sup> But, Pedro launches the deception to cure boredom and raise his esteem; the deception will be “one of Hercules’ labors” and will raise the practitioners’ social status by proving they are “the only love-gods” (2.2.357-382). For Leonato, it is amusing to imagine Benedick and Beatrice married: “they would talk themselves mad” within a week (346-349). The ruse makes Benedick and Beatrice the butt of the community’s joke and an instrument of Pedro’s power. Empowerment through the creation of relationships is normal, but ruses enjoin Beatrice and Benedick from similar power or affiliations based on a verifiable reality. No one risks mutual disclosures, debate, or the vulnerability that would subjectivize them and prompt empathy. Instead, characters harden themselves and shape themselves to fit into Pedro’s world.

Jean Howard analyzes these performances as the presentation of a world in which characters are subject to princely whim and all power flows from the crown. She argues that the

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<sup>22</sup> The question of Beatrice’s and Benedick’s mutual affection before the eavesdropping scenes has intrigued scholars for many years. While many scholars posit that Beatrice and Benedick do love each other, neither character has openly declared it. Beatrice certainly has not come close to doing an outrage upon herself. Perhaps Benedick does love Beatrice, why else would he say -- without a prompt -- that he will not marry her? So too, Beatrice does seem to love Benedick; she stopped loving him when he scorned her, which led to her harping on him. Perhaps the deception performed upon them solicits the characters’ willingness to openly declare their love.

play emphasizes differences between John and Pedro, even though both practice deceptions on unsuspecting parties, to justify pre-existing hierarchical categories that allow Pedro to seem good and John evil.<sup>23</sup> From the point of view of political phenomenology, Pedro causes serious harm in Messina because all the members of the society are directly injured by their lies. Lies have nullified the possibility of a shared realm of appearances: Pedro, John, and their volunteers each create worlds founded on fictions. Pedro's lie causes pain to Beatrice and Benedick, with Benedick suffering a toothache, Beatrice a cold – hardly deadly ailments – but what is funny to Pedro and his friends is not to Benedick and Beatrice: As Bok points out, lies do not amuse the deceived. More importantly to Bok, lies diminish the possibility of self-reflection.<sup>24</sup> This inability diminishes their understanding of the world; characters live in the same world but do not share the same facts. Without a shared reality, characters who disclose their own selves or others, share stories, build relationships, or make promises that create community construct new worlds on unsound foundations. The play renders this as characters witnessing an unreality, such as when Benedick misinterprets the invitation Beatrice is ordered to give him to come to dinner (2.3.253-260),<sup>25</sup> and testimony becoming unintentionally false, as with Borachio when he confesses to Pedro that he deceived “his very eyes” (5.1.231).

The harm caused erupts in a strange way: Characters who know the fictional worlds are lies act as though those worlds are authoritative: Benedick challenges Claudio on the basis of Hero's death, and he does not speak to Hero after she is declared dead. Antonio and Leonato challenge Claudio: “Thou hast kill'd my child: If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a

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<sup>23</sup> Howard, 63-4.

<sup>24</sup> Bok, 87.

<sup>25</sup> Much as Malvolio misconstrues the hoax in *Twelfth Night* when he reads “Olivia's” letter.

man” (5.1.78-9), Leonato becomes so strangely agitated, his brother finds Leonato’s response disproportionate: “’tis not wisdom to second grief against yourself” (2-3). These responses demonstrate how characters flail in their make-believe worlds, trying to force Pedro and Claudio to acknowledge that they killed Hero. These attempts do not and should not work: They require Pedro and Claudio to submit to a lie. *Much Ado* pits one public realm against another: the deceitful aristocrats of Messina against the hierarchical military. No resolution can occur while the Messinese try to impel Claudio and Pedro to capitulate to a falsehood or while the attempts to save Hero are direct attacks against Pedro. The only resolution will be to make Pedro hear the truth and acknowledge the harm he caused. He requires honest witnesses, and they will come from commoners who serve in the constabulary, not the aristocrats, because he has created a court in which everyone is likely to deceive one another for his own benefit.

### **Critical Reception and the Hierarchical Homosocial Military**

With its attention on relationships formed by speaking in the public realm, political phenomenology offers a way to intervene into the critical reception of *Much Ado about Nothing*. For thirty-five years, scholars have analyzed the play’s anti-matrimonial stance. Few alternate readings have made headway into the critical discourse because the play’s depiction of misogamy has given scholars ample opportunity to discuss its gender relations. Such readings, however, have depended upon generalizations regarding the psyche. Arendt’s phenomenology helps delineate the precise quality of relationships and clarifies how character forms within groups and helps uncover how Claudio’s youth and lack of exposure to a broad plurality incapacitate him. Pedro’s praise of Claudio discloses his own failures as a prince since he



inflames Claudio's limitations and promotes him, the flatterer, and mocks the courtier who distinguishes himself through his unique choices, Benedick.

From the 1960's through 1980, the play's two weddings, funeral, and formal greetings of a prince allowed C. L. Barber's notions concerning rituals and comedic folk traditions to shape much of the criticism on *Much Ado*, especially since the play's lack of a green world makes Northrop Frye's contentions regarding comedy largely irrelevant.<sup>26</sup> Critical commentary on *Much Ado* during the first half of the twentieth century also replied to Coleridge's and Empson's complaints regarding the play's alleged multiple plots, with the expected formalist responses to charges of the play's incoherence. Scholars argued for the play's unity on the basis of its rendering of rituals, misprision, man's "giddiness," or the flawed court.

The entry of feminist scholarship into Renaissance studies brought awareness to the depiction of female disempowerment and aversion to matrimony in *Much Ado*. Hero, Claudio, Pedro, and Leonato might be intent upon marriage, but the dialogue by Beatrice, Benedick, and John surrounds its detested nature, best captured when Beatrice imagines married people in Hell, while she and her bachelor friends will live in heaven "merry as the day is long" (2.1.49). These analyses gave critics fodder against arguments by scholars such as A. P. Rossiter regarding the play's depiction of misprision:<sup>27</sup> Carol Thomas Neeley and Janet Adelman argue that the play does not depict errors in perception; instead, homosocial groupings create, enforce, reassert, and expand the mirroring potential of individual development and interfere with the establishment of

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<sup>26</sup> C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), Northrop Frye, *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), and Antony J. Lewis's *The Love Story in Shakespearean Comedy* (Lexington Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1992).

<sup>27</sup> A. P. Rossiter, "Much Ado about Nothing" (*Shakespeare's Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*. Ed: Laurence Lerner. Penguin Shakespeare Library. New York: Penguin, 1967).

heterosexual bonds. This reveals the workings of masculinist ideology.<sup>28</sup> Eve Sedgwick, who does not address *Much Ado*, analyzes the bridge from the generalized interior landscape of the psyche to the external world, which Hartley articulates by exploring the specific nature of the social grouping of the military.<sup>29</sup>

Hartley notes that John mobilizes insider knowledge of the military mind to act with calculation against Hero, Claudio, and Pedro so he can persuade his fellow soldiers that Hero not only is “disloyal . . . . The word is too good to paint out her wickedness” (3.2.93-100). John promises to show Pedro and Claudio that Hero is making love with another man, and Claudio immediately plans on how he will denounce her if what John says is true: “If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her,” Claudio says, “tomorrow in the congregation where I should wed, there will I shame her” (110-114). Pedro's promise to join Claudio is founded on the power of homosocial bonds, but the form of attack is consistent with actions on the field of battle, where “in the presence of his company the disloyal soldier is stripped of his insignia of rank.” These practices confirm that Claudio is more soldier than courtly gentleman.<sup>30</sup>

Claudio's cruelty arises from his youth and one-sidedness, the latter of which is not countered by his prince. Kiernan Ryan argues that a culture and the moment of time in which a person lives affect an individual in myriad ways, and Claudio's actions expose the limitations of the culture he inhabits.<sup>31</sup> We discern this because, as Julia Lupton states, phenomenology

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<sup>28</sup> Carol Thomas Neely, “Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Comedies,” and Janet Adelman “Male Bonding in Shakespeare's Comedies” (Shakespeare's “*Rough Magic*”: *Renaissance Essays in Honor of C. L. Barber* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 61-72 & 73-103. Adelman cites Coppélia Kahn's *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare*. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1985).

<sup>29</sup> Lodowick Hartley, “Claudio and the Unmerry War” (*College English*. 26.8: 1965), 609-614.

<sup>30</sup> Hartley, 613.

<sup>31</sup> Kiernan Ryan, “‘Strange Misprison’: *Much Ado about Nothing*” (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 184,169.

examines how we intuit and inhabit our environments. This includes how one person approaches another, and how she becomes “a person in that approach.”<sup>32</sup> In every association and speech, Claudio has the opportunity to reveal himself and be recognized, respond and be responded to, and Claudio uncovers his lack of experience with inclusive pluralities at every turn. Instead, the “young start-up” (1.3.63) is distinguished by being particularly valiant despite his immaturity: “he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion” (1.1.9-17). He came of age too early for his achievements, and his bravado caught Pedro's attention: As Walter King and William McCollom have noted, Claudio adheres “without question to shallow and rigid codes of behavior”<sup>33</sup> and echoes Pedro's every line, which illustrates Claudio's lack of independence that “will cause him to swallow the slander of John and mirror the response made by the prince.”<sup>34</sup> Just as lies perpetrated by the group impede the divulgence of multiple perspectives, so too Claudio's compliance to military hierarchy blocks his witnessing of people's personal revelations.

It is within Pedro's command that Claudio has come of age and revealed himself. The homosocial military Pedro fostered, cultivated, and supervised is conducive to the virulent misogyny he and Claudio express in the broken wedding ceremony. The sixteenth century military limited its public realm through its gender exclusivity, so it lacked the perspectives that inclusive pluralities have the potential to offer: women and men of differing ages and socioeconomic statuses, with a range of beliefs and heterogeneous relationships coming to know others in the world of action. Claudio has only known an artificially limited world, but he does

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<sup>32</sup> Julia Lupton, “*Macbeth's* Martlets: Shakespearean Phenomenologies of Hospitality” (*Criticism* 54.3: 2012), 365.

<sup>33</sup> Walter N. King quoted in Walter R. Davis, “Introduction,” 8.

<sup>34</sup> William G. McCollom “The Role of Wit in *Much Ado about Nothing*” (*Twentieth Century Interpretations of Much Ado about Nothing*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1969), 71.

not acknowledge it restricts his perceptions, and Pedro does not remind him of this. They abide by what Nicole Miller calls “the masculinist juridical paradigm.”<sup>35</sup> For Claudio, this results in marriage as a trade, women as chaste or not, and only men as trustworthy, the last of which drives Claudio to extend loyalty even to his former enemy, John.

The specific world Pedro sustains is one in which John is forgiven, believed, and given the place to create relationships that he hopes will disempower Claudio and his brother. While members of the military are not necessarily rule-bound, which Benedick's unconventionality reveals, Claudio allows himself to be, and Pedro condones Claudio's choices. Pedro suspends Claudio in a hierarchical, homosocial, militaristic mentality whose public realm is shaped by violence. Civic and courtly life are beyond the young man's capacity because frank disclosures and responsible witnessing of multiple presentations of reality are disallowed by Pedro.

Claudio's actions suggest that a narrow civic space disempowers individuals by inhibiting their ability to apprehend reality and respond appropriately because they lack the panoramic view that results from belonging to more varied groups. Whether Claudio is accused of being narcissistic or misogynistic,<sup>36</sup> he lacks insight and is incapable of full participation in the world. His destruction of Hero's reputation has been called particularly “barbarous” since the earliest critical writings on *Much Ado about Nothing*. In 1710, Charles Gildon claimed, “Claudio's conduct to the woman he lov'd [is] highly contrary to the very nature of love.”<sup>37</sup> Even Claudio's

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<sup>35</sup> Nicole Miller, “The Sexual Politics of Pain: Hannah Arendt Meets Shakespeare's Shrew” (*Journal for Culture and Religious Theory*, 7.2: 2006), 20.

<sup>36</sup> Davis, 9; J. A. Bryant, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Comedy* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 136; Carol Cook, “The Sign and Semblance of Her Honor:” Reading Gender Difference in *Much Ado about Nothing* (*PMLA*. 101.2: 1986), 192.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Gildon “Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare” (*A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Much Ado about Nothing*. J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1899), 347-348. Originally collected in *Shakespeare's Poems, 1710* supplementary vol. to *Rowe's Works of Shakespeare*.

greatest defender, Kerby Neill, merely admits the character would have been sympathetic to an Elizabethan audience, since he punishes Hero according to her apparent error.<sup>38</sup> Gildon's early response, however, suggests Neill exaggerates this possibility.

If not in the military, at least in Messina, Claudio resembles the man Aristotle says Homer reviled: one who is "clanless, lawless, hearthless." Such a person must be exiled because he cannot make himself belong to his people, respect his people's laws, or create a home. His brutality demonstrates he has not allowed civic life to enhance his ability to live among others without strife. In Aristotle, people are naturally political but not naturally civilized.<sup>39</sup> The conclusion Aristotle comes to takes the form of the logical construction "if and only if:" a person is civilized by participating in the city; those who are uncivil do not belong in a city and must be exiled.<sup>40</sup> Claudio is such a man: He has brought the mentality that is appropriate for the military and the battlefield into his dealings with Hero, the likely outcome when one's perspective is warped by excessive homosociality and militarism; he becomes the man reviled by Homer on the battlefield and Aristotle in the political world.

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<sup>38</sup> Kerby Neill, "More Ado about Claudio: An Acquittal for the Slandered Groom" (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, 3.2: 1952), 100.

<sup>39</sup> Aristotle, *Politics I*, (Boston: Tufts University), Text 1253a.

<sup>40</sup> The phrase Nestor utters is: "ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος ὃς πολέμου ἔραται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυόεντος" (*Iliad* 9.63), or: "Clanless, lawless, hearth-less are those who love to bring dreadful war to their homes" (IX.63-64). The phrase is difficult to translate. Robert Fitzgerald translates it as: "Alien to clan and custom and hearth fire / is he who longs for war -- heartbreaking war -- / with his own people" (205). Robert Fagles offers: "Lost to the clan, / lost to the hearth, lost to the old ways, that one who lusts for all the horrors of war with his own people" (73-76). Commentators have disputed the significance of the phrase. For M. M. Wilcox, it has "a gnomic ring" (272) that is "clearly proverbial" and refers "to the outlawing of somebody who introduces civil war into the community" (*ibid.*). For Wilcox, Nestor refers to a generally agreed-upon truism of Ancient Greek culture: men who bring strife home are lawless, clanless, and they destroy their hearths. In both cases, what is clear is that being a soldier affects a person and can lead to the inability to choose behaviors that suit a community. While these same set of actions might be appropriate on a battlefield, they negatively impact the home front, headquarters, allies, and/or others with whom one is ostensibly cooperating.

Claudio literally reflects Pedro's will and beliefs in his echolalia of the prince. The play captures the difficulty of learning to associate with a variety of public realms when men limit their horizons by their association with and exclusive valuation of men like themselves. In the case of the military, those associations are with men who seek to kill and conquer. For Gary Waller, characters like Pedro and Claudio illuminate the rivalry and conquest lurking in the "dark corners" of masculinity. Their brutal indifference to acts of aggression reveals that their lives require hierarchy and its attendant victors and victims.<sup>41</sup> Pedro and Claudio make Hero the latter, but any women or inferior would serve their need to oppress others and make themselves dominant. A broader perspective apprehends this behavior as narrow, unsociable, and destructive. The comedy in *Much Ado* lessens the impact of this hostility, but the premeditated shaming of a woman and the insouciance Claudio and Pedro exhibit at her death render masculine rage at the feminine world as a product of a military whose plurality is minute. Pedro's authoritarianism has forged an atrophied public realm whose restrictions have distorted Claudio's discernment. Instead of belonging to a plural polis, Claudio's military experience intersects negatively with his callow heterosexual experience and exemplifies the flattening out of agency effected by hierarchical homosociality. The play dramatizes the problems caused when a person whose adolescence and adult socialization has been militaristic: He brings war home.

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<sup>41</sup> Gary Waller, "From 'the Unfortunate Comedy' to 'this Infinitely Fascinating Play': The Critical and Theatrical Emergence of *All's Well, That Ends Well* (*All's Well That Ends Well New Critical Essays*. New York: Routledge, 2013), 23. In his work, Gary Waller references Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies, Volume I: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 213, 222. *Male Fantasies* gained its insights from extensive interviews conducted with German soldiers who fought during WWII and grew up without their fathers, who had died during WWI. The fascist regime nurtured these fatherless men, and they dis-identified from their mothers, which resulted in the soldiers' excessive loyalty. The men lacked the capacity to differentiate themselves and to act with a sense of morality that they create themselves; they were subject to the all-encompassing mother figure that the military becomes. The links between *Much Ado*, masculinist culture, and Arendt's critique of Germans circa 1930 is grounded in the similarities around this problem. See also Sheldon P. Zitner, *All's Well, That Ends Well*, (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), 123 and Lloyd Davis, "Sick Desires: *All's Well That Ends Well* and the Civilizing Process," (*Shakespeare Matters: History, Teaching, Performance*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 113.

Hero also adheres to convention, which shows that her society's norms will not save her but indeed will create the conditions that destroy her and her city. Hero does not determine her own actions. She follows norms that require she remain silent and be modest: Hero and Claudio converse only once, despite being affianced, until the denunciation in act four.<sup>42</sup> Hero does not respond orally to Claudio's acknowledgement of their engagement (2.1.305-4). She speaks only after Claudio's second line to her when he asks if she knows any "inward impediment" why they should not be conjoined (4.1.14-15). Hero asks, "Have I ever seemed otherwise to you?" (54), which ultimately is an odd question, given her unwillingness to reveal herself. At the extreme, Hero's lack of language dehumanizes her.<sup>43</sup> In any case, her unwillingness to speak to her experiences reveals her society's values quash her voice, which allows others to create false narratives about her that are believed even by her father. The harm that follows illuminates the misguided nature of those conventions. Together, Hero and Claudio expose the deficiencies of the societal values to which they adhere. The military and the small town have encouraged people to respect a hierarchy that rewards mimicry and modesty. *Much Ado* discloses that neither silence nor imitation save characters or build community. Hero and Claudio have given into what Arendt calls "Our instinct of submission, an ardent desire to obey and be ruled by some strong man," and John has made himself that man.<sup>44</sup> These twins of convention are well matched.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Hartley, 612. In contradistinction, Harry Berger discerns "friskiness" in Hero. Berger admits that Hero's depiction indicates she thinks "it wrong to rebel against fathers and husbands." She does not triumph until the final scene when her "emphatic assertion of virginity pronounces Claudio guilty," which she can accomplish because "she has the advantage and knows how to call in 'other reck'nings.'" See: Harry Berger, Jr. "Against the Sink-a-Pace: Sexual and Family Politics in *Much Ado about Nothing*" (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 33.3: 1982), 306, 317.

<sup>43</sup> Slights, 177-178. Once again, Harry Berger takes a more nuanced view of Hero. To him, Hero is a "quiet, reliable, unappreciated girl-scout" who is "quite conscious of the principle of behavior to which she conforms," while also being dimly aware of the limitations of the "culture that she reflects," (305, 303).

<sup>44</sup> Arendt, "On Violence," 138.

<sup>45</sup> Hartley, 612.

Contrariwise, neither Benedick nor Beatrice follow convention. Both disclose the superiority of unorthodox choices when they immediately discern Hero's innocence and the character who inspired the denunciation. Benedick transcends his era's conventions and the excessive loyalty enhanced by homosociality. While his compatriots denounce Hero, he cares for her. In a pivotal moment, he disclaims his friends and moves toward Hero to ask, "How doth the lady?" (12).<sup>46</sup> He demonstrates his compassion and concern override his membership to a limited group. His ability to distinguish himself from others helps him see distinctions: he knows Claudio and Pedro are mistaken and that "if their wisdoms be misled in this the practice of it lives in John the bastard, whose spirits toil in frame of villainies" (187-188).

Beatrice has herself also risen above her culture's directive to be silent, which she reveals in her boisterous role. Her lack of conformity allows her to know "on my soul, my cousin is belied!" (145). Beatrice's and Benedick's ability to recognize Hero and differentiate between Claudio, Pedro, and John arises from having extended themselves in broad public realms. When they engage in challenging dialogues with each other, each character brings his or her own set of customs, conventions, perspectives, and language choices to a meeting with what amounts to a different culture. As Robert A. Levin points out, Beatrice and Benedick both "hold themselves aloof from society and by means of verbal wit display a sense of superiority," signaling the two have left the world of custom for the world of action and judgment where they can distinguish themselves and be remembered.<sup>47</sup> They have called into "full existence what they would have to

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<sup>46</sup> Benedick's willingness to ask how Hero is, especially in the face of his fellow soldiers' public excoriation of her, suggests an allusion to the grail legend's requirement that the knights ask what ails the king, without which "ladies sad will lose their mates/the land lie in desolation/damsels unconsolated will sigh/widows and orphans mournful all / and many a knight in death will fall." See Jesse Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1983), 16.

<sup>47</sup> Robert A. Levin, *Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedy* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 100.



suffer passively anyhow<sup>48</sup> and reveal this in how, as Lupton says, they become persons in their approach to one another. Having brought themselves into dialogue, they disclose themselves and allow themselves to be seen. This has been acknowledged since the earliest performances of the play when Charles I named *Much Ado about Nothing* “Beatrice and Benedick.”<sup>49</sup> This couple’s daring attitude allows them to be recognized.

Recognition establishes the ground of dignity. It arises in the interaction between people and calls attention to the ways in which a person who can act with others can also be responded to. In *For More than One Voice*, Adriana Cavarero elaborates Arendt’s notions on action to explain that human beings are unique only when and while they interact with words and deeds: A person’s voice unites and reveals her physical, emotional, and intellectual self in the act of speech. Her communication enables each person to identify her physical body and mind and therefore recognize her through the uniqueness of her voice. In speaking, a person distinguishes herself.<sup>50</sup> Claudio does not enter into dialogue with any woman, even Beatrice, who does address him. Claudio cannot recognize Hero. Without this ability, Claudio can destroy her. Claudio has brought military mentality to the home front; normally he would be exiled, but Pedro’s patronage excuses Claudio’s crimes and his own insufficiency, which is furthermore revealed by his mocking of the unconventional characters Benedick and Beatrice.

Phillip D. Collington argues that *Much Ado about Nothing* reflects Castiglione’s insights regarding the self-fashioning of a man of the court: A courtier must act honorably, defend

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<sup>48</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 208.

<sup>49</sup> James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips, *Memoranda on All’s Well that Ends Well, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Much Ado about Nothing, and Titus Andronicus* (London: Messrs. Fleet and Bishop, 1879), 42.

<sup>50</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 196-197.

women, and advise his prince.<sup>51</sup> Claudio's narrow-mindedness reveals that his Prince needs advising; Pedro has been the youth's mentor and leads the realm within which Claudio is ensconced. Together, the two men threaten civil society. From the perspective of political phenomenology, Pedro, as the ruler come to town who destroys the local girl, errs multiple times: He forgives his brother prematurely, woos Hero in Claudio's name without telling her, stages secret ruses, believes his brother's hoax that makes Hero seem unfaithful, plans to disgrace Hero at the wedding, and fails to recognize his errors when Antonio, Leonato, and Benedick point them out (3.2.123-124). By way of contrast, Collington argues, Benedick "achieves the highest level of service" by succeeding in martial and romantic worlds and by advising and defying his Prince.<sup>52</sup> As a courtier, Benedick strikes the difficult balance between social and political finesse, and he is able to correct his errors while also disempowering the enemies of women and civility.<sup>53</sup> However, while Collington attributes these salvific actions to Benedick, I argue that Benedick does not effect either Hero's rescue or Pedro's downfall.

Dogberry and the constabulary interrupt the destruction that John prompted. Although Hero's friends and family attempt to rescue her, their actions are rooted in medieval traditions and cannot succeed because they are based in practices that no longer hold unequivocal sway, are brazen attacks on Pedro's rule, and are founded on the fiction that Hero has died: Beatrice and Benedick embark upon a chivalric duel; Friar Francis stages a medieval morality play in which Hero will die and be resurrected; and, the two aging soldiers, Antonio and Leonato, call on the tradition of fealty to demand their Prince respect them. The failures of these attempts

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<sup>51</sup> Balthasar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, quoted in Collington, "*Much Ado and the Book of the Courtier*," 299, 296.

<sup>52</sup> Collington, 296.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 308-9.

demonstrate that change is a function of direct speech and that Messina is leaving the medieval world and entering the modern. As Paul Kottman elucidates, Shakespeare wrote at the beginning of the modern bureaucratic state when the crown experienced reduced power, the gentry gained influence, mercantile life was on the rise, and civic and military traditions collapsed from their own unsustainability. Kottman argues that in this space, Shakespearean drama stakes its claim on normative and moral questions by rendering fundamental changes in family life and the monarchy. These changes foreshorten traditional possibilities for action, and the plays dramatize characters becoming distinctive, narratable, and perceptible by creating their own reasons for acting. Their choices are unique, not a matter of carrying out duties given by the social world.<sup>54</sup> We see this in Beatrice and Benedick when Hero's demise prompts their first honest dialogue.

After the ruined wedding, Benedick admits to Beatrice that he loves her, but she does not respond in kind and reveals that her own feelings are unconventional enough to warrant shielding. Although Benedick says, "I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is that not strange?" (4.1.366-7) Beatrice replies, "As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you. But believe me not; and yet I lie not. I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin" (268-71). The single true statement Beatrice makes here is that she is concerned about Hero. Her own near-admission of affection is preempted by her distaste for one of Benedick's behaviors: "Manhood is melted into cursies, valor into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie, and swears it" (316-320): Beatrice is well aware of the extent to which people in Messina deceive, and Benedick is more of a talker rather than a doer, which

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<sup>54</sup> Paul A. Kottman, *Tragic Conditions in Shakespeare: Disinheriting the Globe* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 12-13.

Beatrice has long admitted, having vowed to “eat all his killing” in the war. She does not trust him to match words and deeds (1.1.40-42). While Beatrice has come to love Benedick with so much of her heart “that none is left to protest,” that “protest” comes quickly (4.1.285). As soon as Benedick has announced his love, she insists he be a man of action and kill Claudio. When he refuses, Beatrice indicates the very public action she would take: “O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the marketplace” (304-5). She despises Claudio for dishonoring Hero and reveals what she would do, voicing a ferocity that can fuel angry silence.

Beatrice’s imagined contribution to the public realm shocks Benedick, as it should, since she envisions abusing Claudio’s corpse gruesomely. And yet she and Benedick enact the deliberative role of assertion, question, affirmation, and persuasion that has been lacking in Messina. She convinces Benedick Hero is innocent. He already believed this, but required an incentive to challenge Claudio, his best friend. The result of the duel, were it to occur, would be the end of good neighbors in their city. Fortunately, Dogberry also makes what Kottman calls the unique choices of the modern era. Dogberry’s valuation of his neighbors, along with his performance as a clown, allows him to save the girl, as it were, his town, and his prince.

### **Lac’d and Lost: The Critical Reception and Dogberry’s Deceit**

On a theatrical level, Dogberry’s entrance serves a dual purpose: It interrupts *Much Ado*’s tragic tone and marks the arrival of a clown. Once Dogberry asks the watch, “Are you good men and true?” he suspends the somber elements of the play, interrupts the power John has accumulated, and introduces men who do not abuse their power or deceive their community. During its original performance, and for the following ten years, the play featured Will Kempe and Robert Armin in the role, so most audience members would have recognized the players as

clowns. Dogberry's costume and gestures would have confirmed this impression, and it has remained true till the present day, with a variety of actors playing the part. But, the nature of Dogberry's clowning is not immediately obvious. The critical literature has interpreted him as comedic and imbecilic. A precious few have noted his instrumental role of revealing the instigators of Hero's denunciation, and all but one interprets his achievement as pure luck. I argue that Dogberry is best interpreted as intending his appearance of a clown.

Political phenomenology allows us to closely examine how Dogberry's speech choices create relationships that empower him to enact a bloodless revolution that turns each aristocratic and militaristic form of action on its head. Instead of asserting his power, he conceals it; instead of trumpeting his triumphs, he sacrifices his reputation; instead of performing all actions, he cues others to disclose themselves. This renders him a dominant force for renewal by replacing predictable processes with unorthodox actions that create a more open community in which personal disclosures reveal reality.

Rossiter explains that Dogberry's comedic effect is a function of the constable's relationship to his audiences. The constable seems to have less power than people who broadcast their status via their mastery of language because his malapropisms amuse them. The resulting power imbalance disadvantages Dogberry, which lends to the comedic effect because an alternative, a power-hungry officer of the court, would "terrify audiences," whether they consisted of the nobility or commoners.<sup>55</sup> Rossiter's claims have been accepted throughout the critical literature. Scholars interpret Dogberry's malapropisms as a sign of his ignorance. Once scholars assert that Dogberry's language is inane, they do not examine it closely. They

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<sup>55</sup> Rossiter, 186, 191.

furthermore assert Dogberry is a static character whose role merely supplies the comic relief that mitigates the tragedy in *Much Ado*.<sup>56</sup> This damning combination of underestimating his role and disdain for his language create a situation in which scholars have neglected the fact that Dogberry is Shakespeare's original contribution to the Hero-Claudio love story.<sup>57</sup> By examining the relationships Dogberry creates within the world of the play, the tradition of the self-aware clown, and the benefits that accrue when a commoner participates in the theater that perpetuates the nobility's appearance of power, it becomes clear that Dogberry's role is multi-layered. He has a character arc, and his errors in language are deliberate attempts to either deflect attention away from his instructions or prompt his interlocutors to act in his stead. Like a magician's sleight-of-hand, Dogberry's flagrant abuse of the language calls attention to his seemingly ridiculous language and away from what we could otherwise call his seizure of power.

One of the more complete interpretations of Dogberry is typical. Howard claims Dogberry is a lower class figure who flounders with language and captures the villains by instinct. To her ear, Dogberry and Verges exist outside language and have no real social power. Instead, they try to please their betters. They serve the theatrical and political purposes of depicting the capacity of innocents to discern evil and correct wrongs but do not threaten superiors.<sup>58</sup> Like the critic Van Doren, Howard concludes that Dogberry cannot be interpreted because his language makes no sense.<sup>59</sup> Howard's analysis resembles Rossiter's and Zitner's;

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<sup>56</sup> Irene Rima Makaryk, *Comic Justice in Shakespeare's Comedies* (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, University Salzburg, 1980), 140.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Marc Parrott, *Shakespearean Comedy* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc. 1949), 157-158.

<sup>58</sup> Howard, 64.

<sup>59</sup> Van Doren, 123.

they recognize the power that Dogberry has but deny his ability to recognize it himself.<sup>60</sup> These analyses argue that the constabulary's power solves the crime of Hero's denunciation, yet they also argue that the constabulary, and Dogberry in particular, have no power.<sup>61</sup> Exceptions to these interpretations have been mounted by James Smith, J. A. Bryant Jr., and Phoebe Spinrad. Smith discerns that Dogberry accommodates himself to those on whom he depends, is tolerant of his superiors, and takes care that whatever hubris he expresses "falls short of destructive."<sup>62</sup> So too, Bryant notes Dogberry's contribution to the restoration of Hero's reputation and names him "the beneficent intruder" whose identification of the misprision of Hero brings justice to the play.<sup>63</sup> Finally, Spinrad recognizes that Dogberry's service to the community enhances his neighborhood.<sup>64</sup>

The conclusions acknowledging Dogberry's power while ignoring the possibility of its being intentional create logical absurdities and demonstrate that Dogberry fools scholars and the Messinese: When Dogberry arrests John, the play represents a householder overthrowing a nobleman. Dogberry is disadvantaged socioeconomically relative to John, Borachio, and Conrade, the culprits he arrests, and also to Pedro, whose brother commits the greatest malfeasance. Dogberry serves as constable under Pedro, but the local administrator he answers to is Governor Leonato, the man whose daughter was denounced by Pedro. Dogberry, situated in the administrative crux between jurisdictions and holding a social status beneath the nobility,

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<sup>60</sup> Zitner, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Articles on the anti-matrimonial stance ignore Dogberry: Hero's rescue is fortuitous. See Adelman, 80.

<sup>62</sup> James Smith, "*Much Ado About Nothing*" (*Shakespearean and other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 26-27.

<sup>63</sup> J. A. Bryant, 142.

<sup>64</sup> Phoebe Spinrad, "Dogberry Hero: Shakespeare's Comic Constables in their Communal Context" (*Studies in Philology* 89.2: 1992), 61.

cannot perform his actions overtly and survive. Instead, once Dogberry becomes aware of the denunciation, he must act despite the risk and save Hero surreptitiously. Dogberry must also rescue Pedro and Messina as well because the damage done was not only caused by Hero's silence; it was a function of her society's direct actions and norms. It is not possible to save her without fundamentally transfiguring the public realm that no longer performs its function. The key change will be to make Pedro see his own errors. Like Benedick, Dogberry must act like a courtier who advises his prince, but he cannot presume to be a member of the court. He is a mere "householder," and he knows it (4.2.80).

My interpretation untangles logical contradictions in the critical discourse on Dogberry and interprets the character as representative of an early modern bureaucracy who solicits aid from his fellow members of the constabulary in acts of processual power. But, Dogberry does not perform these actions to violently overthrow the power structure in Messina. He enables characters to disclose their subject positions as they know them because he values people for their own sake, as his neighbors, and not out of their status or utility to him. This analysis of Dogberry's role in the dual public realm of the theater and the political world also relies on his theatrical antecedent, Richard Tarlton, and brings insights from the traditional speech choices of the disenfranchised that participate in creating the theater of power practiced by the nobility. One of these devices, postponement, resembles a technique made familiar in the twentieth century theatrical rendition of a detective who faced the same sort of disempowerment as Dogberry, Peter Falk's performance of Columbo. Both detectives face superiors who believe they are entitled to wield power and commit crimes, and both characters inoculate themselves from the



harm that would ensue if they quickly and directly employed strong-arm tactics to neutralize the culprits in their respective texts.

### **Jestnoger and Vice-regent-generall to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton**

With Dogberry's entrance, a clown arrives on stage. Will Kempe was the first to play the role, and by the time of the writing of *Much Ado*, close to the end of his career with The Queen's Men, Kempe had formed a relationship with his audience that was reciprocal enough for his appearance to signal he was bringing a comedic element to the play. Subsequent performances highlight the comedy in the role. When Dogberry asks the watch if they are good and true, he emphasizes the gulf between the constabulary, the homosocial military, and the deceptive aristocracy. Yet, while the appearance of men whom the play distinguishes in as many ways as possible from the nobility publicizes their virtue, contemporary performances of Dogberry have staged the role as an unaware clown, even casting the constabulary as Keystone Cops.<sup>65</sup>

Kempe and Armin, who also played Dogberry, were famous as successors to Richard Tarlton.<sup>66</sup> Tarlton's early performances highlighted his self-awareness as a performer with direct address and interactions with the audience. His later performances also allowed for self-awareness despite the immersion of his roles into the fictional world of the play. These kinds of submerged performances incorporated the character into a story line without direct address or impromptu banter with the audience,<sup>67</sup> but Tarlton's achievement as a self-aware clown depended on jests that disclosed their knowledge of their comedic effects. This is clear from an incident in

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<sup>65</sup> Keith Jones, "Dogberry and the Keystone Cops?" (*Bardfilm*, January 15, 2009).

<sup>66</sup> Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre* (Baltimore: Maryland, Johns Hopkins University, 1978), 191.

<sup>67</sup> Weimann, 1978, 187.

which Tarlton played the roles of two separate characters in sequential scenes. In the first, his character was slapped on the face. Tarlton exited as that character and re-entered in the second role he played. His new character is told that the other was struck on the cheek, and Tarlton said he could feel it on his own face. The audience laughed uproariously at this joke, entertained by its metatheatrical commentary on dual roles and his clowning, but the other character played the scene as though it was not funny.<sup>68</sup> Kempe and Armin, trained by Tarlton, developed this same ability to play submerged roles while signaling self-awareness to the audience, not fellow characters. Dogberry's development from, affinity with, and allusions to Tarlton clarify that he saves the day by actively concealing his power from the aristocrats in the play. However, his lack of direct address also conceals his self-awareness from scholars.

Dogberry demonstrates he is fully aware of his performance after he secures the legal right to interrogate Borachio and Conrade. He is immersed in the world of the play, since he delivers these lines in dialogue, but they disclose intentionality. He is delighted that his method will drive Borachio and Conrade to distraction: "We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here's that shall drive some of them to a noncome" (3.5.59-60). He will make his interlocutors *non compos mentis*. Dogberry wields zany language to distract his interlocutors' attention with frustration and confusion. While they attempt to sort out his meaning, they do not notice Dogberry gaining the right to interrogate. Although some of Dogberry's malapropisms reflect his lack of education, they still serve his purpose as a constable.<sup>69</sup> His jests remain multivalent and undermine conventions by encouraging misreading, feigning ignorance, or overtly declaring one

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<sup>68</sup> Roger Clegg, Lucie Skeaping, "*Singing Simpkin*" and *Other Bawdy Jigs: Musical Comedy on the Shakespearean Stage: Scripts, Music and Context* (London: Royal College of General Practitioners, 2015), 18.

<sup>69</sup> A familiar ploy from the *Bowery Boys*.

thing while meaning its opposite.<sup>70</sup> His malapropisms also function theatrically by associating Dogberry with the *zanni* of *commedia dell'arte*, ill educated, boorish clowns whose speech mimics pronunciation to entertain, the Italianate element complicating his fundamental role as a rustic clown.<sup>71</sup> Edward Berry and Michael Mangan both describe Dogberry as a natural philosopher with a rustic air.<sup>72</sup> Dogberry seems to be idiotic but has more sense than others: he is the countryman who is wiser than city folk, a type of clown Tarlton made famous.<sup>73</sup>

As Tarlton's student, Kempe declared himself the "Jestnoger and Vice-regent-generall to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton," so it is not surprising that Dogberry would bring Tarlton into performances. Evans argues that one of Tarlton's pranks enters *Much Ado about Nothing*. When Dogberry gives instructions to the watch, the watch asks what they should do if people they intercept will not stand. This alludes to a joke Tarlton played. The watch commanded him to stand in the Queen's name: "'Stand?' [q]uoth Tarlton, 'let them stand that can; for I cannot.' So, falling down as though he had been drunke, they helpt him up, and so lat him passe." The resemblance between the caper and these instructions leads Evans to conclude the play lifts from Tarlton.<sup>74</sup> These many associations suggest that, as Shakespeare's original addition to the well-established Hero-Claudio storyline and co-created with Kempe, the role of Dogberry relied on and was inspired by Tarlton.

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<sup>70</sup> Chris Holcomb, *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jestng in Early Modern England* (Columbia, South Carolina, 2001), 84.

<sup>71</sup> Michael Mangan, *A Preface to Shakespeare's Comedies: 1594-1603* (New York: Longman, 1994), 62-63, quoting T. Garzoni, *Piazza Universale* (1585), who is likewise being quoted by John Rudlin, *Commedia dell'arte: an Actor's Handbook*, London: Routledge, 1994.

<sup>72</sup> Mangan, 55; Edward Berry, *Shakespeare's Comic Rites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 113.

<sup>73</sup> David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 23.

<sup>74</sup> Evans, 430.

When brought to bear within the insights of political phenomenology, Dogberry has partial access to power and to the servants' quarters but belongs to neither realm. He is the only principal besides Benedick who routinely speaks to members of both circles. However limited, his experiences and dis-identification from both spaces of appearance grant him a broader perspective than other characters, and he uses the knowledge in his interactions. Given that Dogberry is caught between two conflicting jurisdictions, his wider view and multiple positions in Messina give him practice at gauging characters' actions while juggling his own needs. They allow him to effect real change in the public sphere.

### **Dogberry's Deceit: Avoidance, the "fashion of the world"**

In each of Dogberry's four scenes, he demonstrates his cunning strategies for success, immersion in the play, and character arc: Dogberry's instructions to the watch reveal his strategy for peacekeeping in Messina as conflict avoidance, but the crisis Pedro brings creates a rise in action. Dogberry's confrontation with Leonato represents his greatest crisis. His interrogation of Borachio and Conrade is the character's climax, and his meeting with Pedro is his triumph, which brings his and the play's denouement. Once he must act, Dogberry interjects short-term tactics well established in folk tradition to minimize overt antagonism against the nobility and safeguard himself while he authorizes his arrests of John's men and neutralizes Pedro's authority.

Dogberry's instructions to the watch recommend they avoid confrontation. It is comedic advice, but it is also wise. Dogberry is caught between the normally absent prince and the local governor, which makes any action risky. So, he tasks the watch to "comprehend" all "vagrom" men, and if one will not stand, they should "take no note of him but let him go." They must bid drunks to go home, and if they will not, "let them alone till they are sober." If they meet with

thieves, they should let them “steal out of” their company. But, Dogberry anticipates his central conflict in an imagined confrontation with the prince: The law authorizes the watch to stay him, but only if the prince is willing (3.3.26-80). Dogberry will have to invent a way to make the prince want to comply with him.

The incongruity between Dogberry’s civic authority and civil custom is absolute: he must yet cannot perform his duties, so he bridges the disparity between duty and danger, service and survival by attuning himself to his superiors’ needs while not sacrificing his own values. Kompridis calls this capacity “receptivity,” the ability of a person to exercise agency within externally set limits. In a crisis, the need to act despite challenging limits creates ethical dilemmas. Such situations heighten moral and cognitive faculties, and the person who is receptive can act in the moment by drawing on his ability to reflect and judge despite dynamic circumstances.<sup>75</sup> Dogberry’s receptivity is his awareness of his superiors’ desire to maintain their illusion of control. If he can manipulate them into feeling superior to him, he can accomplish his goals. As Rossiter points out, Dogberry’s malapropisms help this.<sup>76</sup> Dogberry also relies on traditions that instruct a person of lower status how to create such a performance.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, James C. Scott demonstrates that linguistic sleights of hand are techniques disenfranchised people have used for centuries to protect themselves from punishment while acting in the public realm. Since empowered members of a society must create the illusion of their own authority, successful performances seem one-dimensional, with the empowered holding uninterrupted sway. But, the theater they create to perform their dominance opens the possibility for the seemingly

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<sup>75</sup> Kompridis, 207-8.

<sup>76</sup> Rossiter, 186.

disempowered to actively play a part in the illusion. Observers disregard the agency of impoverished and marginalized actors who appropriate performances for their own ends. However, subordinates acquire power, and so long as they maintain their superior's mask of authority, those in authority can ignore their subterfuges. Strategies the disempowered employ include "deflection, postponement, containment, cliché, rhetorical questions, and feigned ignorance," all of which Dogberry uses.<sup>77</sup>

Dogberry's folk strategies include deflecting attention away from himself with malapropisms and also prompting others to speak in his stead. In his four scenes, he postpones giving instructions twice and prompts interlocutors in three scenes. Dogberry allows himself to lose status in the community by feigning ignorance and encouraging others to perceive him as an ass to help preserve the illusion of Leonato's and Pedro's authority. His employment of clichés when Verges risks exposing their purpose has baffled editors but are understandable, given the crisis the constabulary faces. Finally, Dogberry is able to contain the damage of his exposure of Pedro's errors by attributing the crisis to John, who does not reappear in the play after the spoiled wedding. Dogberry's strategies are his staging of plays. As an inhabitant of Messina, Dogberry practices this tradition of his city. It is willful ignorance to assume he does not.

Unlike the Messinian penchant for deceit however, Dogberry's deceptions align with Bok's analysis of justifiable reasons for deception. Bok normally excoriates lying and finds few reasons to excuse it:

The reasons for lying appeal to liars: Liars find the moral claims that their lies will be beneficial, perhaps prevent harm, or support fairness or prior obligations much more persuasive than do those lied to or those not directly affected. Liars are quicker to argue that honesty will hurt them in practices where "everyone

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<sup>77</sup> Scott, 34.

else cheats”; they are more easily convinced that a lie which benefits them will harm no one else; and their concern for the effect of deceit on their own character and practices is minimal.<sup>78</sup>

Nonetheless, Bok admits that deception is justified if both parties know the other deceives<sup>79</sup> and when honesty poses too great a threat.<sup>80</sup> Dogberry, set to overturn the status quo, is subject to grave risk. His deception protects his health, wellbeing, and opportunity to bring justice to Messina should the need arise again. In my reading, he playacts like the others in Messina, but his performance fails to protect his social status: He disguises himself by seeming ignorant as to the proper use of English and of social proprieties, and he welcomes being called an ass.

Scott avers that mutual deceit preserves honor and keeps equilibrium and the appearance of continued class division, even though the people who have less status are controlling the upper class individual. The facade of cohesion augments “the apparent power of elites, thereby presumably affecting the calculations that subordinates might make about the risks of noncompliance or deviance.”<sup>81</sup> The end of *Much Ado* is comedic because Dogberry’s deception restores social cohesion to Messina and opens the public realm relative to its previous nature. The overt loss of power is contained to John’s fall, and John’s punishment is threatened, not depicted. Pedro is not compelled to acknowledge his loss of position in the community, nor is he impelled to take action.

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<sup>78</sup> Bok, 87.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 131.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 133.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, 56.

## The Afterthought: Traditional Postponement or Clouseau versus Columbo

Dogberry's instructions use the speech tool of postponement. He gives his last instruction as an afterthought, which makes it seem haphazard, but it is particularly theatrical. In light of its having been replicated in twentieth century televised depictions of police work, it also appears conventional: It is the most characteristic device used by Columbo, as portrayed by Peter Falk.<sup>82</sup> Bevington compares Dogberry to Inspector Clouseau,<sup>83</sup> but Dogberry's performance is closer to Columbo's. They resemble one another in form, intent, social status, and theatricality.

Dogberry feigns having finished speaking but interrupts the watch's repose to announce:

**Dogberry:** Ha, ha, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own; and good night. [To Verges:] Come, neighbor.

**Watchman:** Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the churchbench till two, and then all to bed.

**Dogberry:** One word more, honest neighbors. I pray you watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu: be vigilant, I beseech you. (Exeunt Dogberry and Verges)  
(3.3.85-95)

This prompts the watch to attend to Leonato's home. Dogberry's instruction might seem overly prescient, but Dogberry does not need to know anything in particular to instruct his officers to patrol Leonato's home; traditional practices on the eve of a wedding make it likely that young men will disturb the peace or cause downright harm.<sup>84</sup>

Postponement makes the thought seem unimportant. The value of delivering the crucial content inconsequentially becomes clear when compared to Detective Columbo, who was as

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<sup>82</sup> Roger Sabin, *Cop Shows: A Critical History of Police Dramas on Television* (New York: McFarland, 2015), 65.

<sup>83</sup> David Bevington and Peter Holland, *Much Ado about Nothing: Shakespeare in Performance* (London: Methuen, 2007), 33.

<sup>84</sup> *Charivari*, a folk custom, entailed activities that ranged from causing a ruckus outside a bride's family home to kidnapping brides. See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*.



beloved by audiences as he was hated by fictional criminals. His afterthoughts disarm and present as innocuous but function strategically. Columbo was not necessarily inspired by Dogberry; Scott accounts for the strategy. Both Columbo and Dogberry, one a seemingly absent-minded, idiotic detective, the other seemingly officious, hold inferior positions relative to the villains. The conceit of Columbo's character is that he has no chance of success if he approaches criminals directly. His socioeconomic position, a detective on a fixed salary investigating crimes committed by wealthy Angelinos, requires he create gestures that empower him innocuously, the prime one being his stock phrase, "Just one more thing," which parallels Dogberry's "One word more." The constable and detective postpone to heighten the vulnerability of their interlocutors. With Columbo, postponement pacifies the suspect and facilitates the detective's penetration of the crime. With Dogberry, it deflects attention from actual instructions, which disarms in his first scene. In his second, Dogberry exhausts Leonato and then makes his request.<sup>85</sup>

In his dialogue with Leonato, Dogberry's performance is a tour de force of deflection, rhetorical question, and feigned ignorance. He concludes with the actual purpose of his visit:

**Dogberry:** One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

**Leonato:** Take their examination yourself and bring it me; I am not in great haste, as it may appear unto you. (3.5.43-47)

The critical response emphasizes that Leonato errs because if he had listened to Dogberry, the denunciation of Hero could have been avoided. But, Dogberry needs to keep Leonato ignorant of the names of the "knaves" he has arrested: these are John's men, and Leonato's preferential

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<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the most important link between Columbo and Dogberry is that both use the rule of law to capture criminals. In Columbo's case, he is able to defy and destroy the entitled murderers in twentieth-century Los Angeles County, despite the culprits' beliefs that they are superior to him, thus marking the working class sensibility of the television show. In Dogberry's case, he dislodges princely whim in favor of rule of law, marking a significant change from medieval feudalism and into the modern state.

treatment of the upper classes, established in his opening lines when he minimizes the deaths of the men “of no name” lost in the battle, and his need to protect his guests’ interests, could feasibly disrupt his willingness to listen.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, if Leonato were to attend the interrogation, he would likely have to confront Pedro with John’s treachery. I suggest Dogberry protects Leonato by distracting him while securing the legal right to perform the interrogation.

In Thomas Marc Parrott’s analysis, he unwittingly elucidates why Dogberry must conceal his intentions. Parrot notes that “the night watchmen, standing butts of ridicule in Elizabethan comedy, like the policemen in twentieth-century films...report to the Chief Constable, the egregious Dogberry” who takes the matter to Leonato. “Had it not been for the tedious garrulity of Dogberry and Leonato’s impatience to get his daughter off to church, the whole story would have come out...” Parrot acknowledges that the subsequent examination seems “unduly prolonged” but is important “for its illumination by the brilliant flashes of nonsense proceeding from the mouth of Dogberry.”<sup>87</sup> Parrott asserts that English comedy had already established the police as ridiculous. Lorna Hutson, however, details the theatrical depictions of the English justice system as having an educative and participatory effect. Audiences learned techniques for the discovery of crime and the procedures for the implementation of justice. Dramatized versions of civic life in England furthermore normalized interactions between police and the citizenry while simultaneously separating criminal activity from customary behavior.<sup>88</sup> Parrott’s assertion that the police were the object of humor does not account for non-comedic depictions.

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<sup>86</sup> Bryant, 136.

<sup>87</sup> Parrott, 153-8.

<sup>88</sup> Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

So too Parrott's description of Dogberry as "egregious," which signifies outstandingly bad, reveals that Dogberry must not demand the right to interrogate Conrade and Borachio. The origin of the term egregious is *ex* and *grex* – literally "outstanding" because it refers to standing out from the flock.<sup>89</sup> Parrott does not mean that Dogberry's abilities were great; his performance is egregious in the negative sense, but his toppling of Pedro and John also makes him stand out as a potential object of violence.

Fortunately, Dogberry can achieve his ends anonymously. Bureaucracies such as an emergent constabulary<sup>90</sup> create the possibility of action that affects the public realm without a person's having to take responsibility for his achievements: He is merely following orders. Such institutions alienate when they supposedly absolve the individual of responsibility; however, it is possible for people who belong to or are disempowered by bureaucracies to take distinctive action, as can be seen in David L. Marshall's and Patchen Markell's elaborations of Arendt's political theory.

Marshall notes that Arendt's political theories agitate against the impulse to disappear into the masses. Arendt uses the polis as a metaphor to broadcast the potential for an individual to create spaces in the public realm to reveal his distinctions. Marshall makes his case by pointing out that Arendt does not analyze the specific institutions of ancient Greek democracy.

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<sup>89</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers the etymology of egregious as: "classical Latin *ēgregius* outstanding, excellent, splendid (also used sarcastically), pre-eminent, illustrious, lit. 'towering above the flock.'"

<sup>90</sup> Joan R. Kent's *The English Village Constable 1580-1642: A Social and Administrative Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) illuminates that constables were vital for the creation of the state and local government especially during the Tudor and Stuart eras. It is along these lines that I read Dogberry and his team as depicting the various ways in which constabularies were hard put to develop systems of policing that accommodated the law and the neighborhood. It was a system that was evolving and would eventually become more like the centralized, modern, bureaucratic one that we recognize. In 1600, its representation could fluctuate, just as those police forces did within regions and even from village to village. Yet, as part of the process that by and by, with no clear direction, ultimately led to modern policing, we can read Dogberry as a step towards the overly large, alienating, and bureaucracy of today. As such, it is "emergent."

Instead, the image allows Arendt to reformulate political action in the public realm despite modernity's development of state systems that reduce possibilities for participation. Arendt leaps over several centuries of political theory to resurrect ancient notions of action.<sup>91</sup>

However, Arendt wrote in the aftermath of authoritarian systems of state control that penalized people who spoke out. In such situations, it seems impossible for an individual to distinguish herself beyond her private life; and yet, as Patchen Markell explains,<sup>92</sup> in several writings, Arendt applauds individuals who achieve meaningful action without calling attention to themselves. These individuals act within the narrow range of possibility existing between the individual and the vastness of mass human activity. Individuals can perform within and despite power structures that enforce hierarchies when they take action by affecting a process that is indifferent to them but can, nonetheless, be marked and altered by their anonymous action.<sup>93</sup>

This is precisely what Dogberry achieves. The effect of Dogberry's choices resembles aristocratic soldiers': He advises his prince and defeats, shames, incarcerates, and enables the proposed torture of a gentleman. Dogberry reveals his concern over taking such action when he admits he has been trounced before, having "suffered some losses" (4.2.83). Instead of forcing Pedro's and John's hands directly, he spreads the blame for the ouster of John throughout the bureaucracy, which renders the procedures he uses anonymous. He therefore enforces the rule of law in Messina without bringing down aristocratic ire on himself.

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<sup>91</sup> David L. Marshall, 129.

<sup>92</sup> In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, one of Arendt's chief focuses is that bureaucrats enforced procedures that killed and tortured but understood their work as helping themselves succeed in their careers. Arendt critiques this as "unthinking:" these people avoided reflecting on their complicity with the system that made people choose between torture, murder of their family, or death. She also acknowledges there are worse things than death, including being tortured for disobedience and endangering one's family (10).

<sup>93</sup> Markell, 3-4. He identifies this insight as crucial to Arendt's hostility against the ideology of rule (12).

While the bureaucracy allows Dogberry to diffuse the blame for his toppling of authority throughout the constabulary, Dogberry's specific method combines feigned ignorance with the theatrical tool of the cue. Within the bureaucracy, Dogberry prompts the sexton to fulfill his role by working within previously established procedures. This allows him to "save the girl." However, this is not enough. Dogberry's clowning agitates against anonymity. He distinguishes himself by cuing Pedro. Dogberry prompts the prince to respond within the parameters of his public persona, which changes Pedro and therefore Messina on fundamental levels. Dogberry creates the conditions that allow people to take action by prompting them to disclose themselves: to witness, testify, and subjectivize themselves, which arouses political renewal in Messina.

#### **"In Comely Truth": Aggravating Cues**

Dogberry enacts incompetence to prompt the sexton and Pedro to perform according to their temperament and customary roles in society; this allows the two characters to reveal themselves and conceal Dogberry's power. The sexton's revelation of his role deflects attention from Dogberry's instrumental part in saving Hero, and Pedro's demonstrates his wit and capacity for change. Dogberry's preservation of Pedro's illusion of power is particularly amusing and, while it protects him from Pedro's wrath, is an exaggerated gesture of obeisance. Nonetheless, it also serves as a kindness that preserves Pedro's reputation.

In the jail, Dogberry extends his inept interrogation for so long that the sexton, knowledgeable of correct procedure, interrupts Dogberry in frustration: "Master Constable, you go not the way to examine. You must call forth the watch that are their accusers" (4.2.32-33). The irritation a person feels when someone mistakes so much creates a balancing effect: The more the speaker errs, the more his interlocutor must perform the task correctly. Dogberry thus

obtains the witness testimony, which the sexton confirms with his announcement of the denunciation of Hero and John's escape (61-65). This cues the watch's report, the sexton's recording of it, and the sexton's conversation with Leonato. Everyone performs his given role, and justice is achieved through the processual flow of human activity Markell articulates.

Anonymity will not create a happy ending, due to Pedro's intransigence. Fortunately, Dogberry can change his society and take more overt action because he is protected from punishment when Conrade calls him an ass.<sup>94</sup> Dogberry is at first affronted: "Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years?" (73). Dogberry then recognizes the insult will assure everyone he is not attempting a coup. Unfortunately only the constabulary has witnessed this; it was not recorded: "O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass. Though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass" (74-7).<sup>95</sup> Storey interprets this moment as Dogberry finally receiving his just deserts,<sup>96</sup> but Dawson points out that it is very strange that Dogberry would repeat the word if it felt like a verbal assault. In order to account for this broadcasting, Dawson first theorizes that Dogberry does not know the term "ass," concludes he does, theorizes he does not understand "am," but since this seems unlikely, finally concludes Dogberry cannot control his meaning.<sup>97</sup> Dawson's

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<sup>94</sup> Given Borachio's subsequent confession, when Conrade calls Dogberry an ass, it could be possible for his statement to reflect Borachio's unspoken response in performance to the news that Hero has died and John fled. That response would also signal the information Dogberry needs to assure himself that he is armed with the vital information and willing confessor that will deflate Pedro and render him able to amend his errors.

<sup>95</sup> James Hammersmith reads this moment a different way: He argues that Dogberry insists words be written because the errors in the play are a function of their being overhead. "Villainy upon Record: The Dogberrian Method" (*Interpretations*, 11.1: 1979), 19.

<sup>96</sup> Graham Storey, "The Success of *Much Ado about Nothing*" (*Twentieth Century Interpretations of Much Ado about Nothing*. Ed. Walter Davis. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 22.

<sup>97</sup> Anthony B. Dawson, "Much Ado about Signification" (*Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 22.2: 1982), 218.

argument is ingenious but only explains the humor and the confrontation with Conrade, not with Pedro.

When Dogberry brings Borachio and Conrade to Pedro, he has no reason to assume the prince will treat him with mercy because Pedro will have to acknowledge his own participation in the destruction of Hero's reputation. Dogberry invents a way to make the prince "willing," as the play had foreshadowed, to admit his error. Pedro asks Dogberry what offense the men have committed, and Dogberry reports that:

They have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves. (5.1.207-211).

Dogberry's extraordinary use of synonym and irregular use of numbers confuses, but Pedro shines by joining in Dogberry's performance. He replies to Dogberry in kind and with wit: "First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offense; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge" (212-215). Claudio and Pedro both join in the madcap language, but Pedro addresses Borachio and Conrade since "this learned constable is too cunning to be understood" (219-220).

Dogberry entertains Pedro and invites him to demonstrate graciousness to his social inferior. More importantly, he makes the prince hear that John instigated the rumor and gives Pedro the chance to correct his errors. Pedro responds with precision to the pyrotechnics of the constable's deflection, addresses the information that the men lied about an innocent woman, and re-formulates the men and his brother. Pedro admits John "is composed and framed of treachery," and has fled (250-1). Pedro becomes what Kompridis calls de-centered, which is so uncomfortable, it is resisted. It is inextricably linked to subjectivity, sensibility, and a person's

recognition that he must change.<sup>98</sup> This shift accounts for Pedro's lack of eminence at the end of the play. At this moment Dogberry self-interestedly – and kindly – draws attention away from his superior's demise: “And masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass” (256-7). He instructs Pedro that he is not a powerful member of the judicial system who has arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned two members of the gentry, disclosed the malice of the prince's brother, and prompted John's torture. Dogberry triumphs, quietly.

Pedro understands what he has done because Borachio, who conceived and enabled the greatest departure from reality, gives a full and honest testimony to his actions. His statement does not conform to reality; Hero is alive, but he believes he speaks the truth, and this gives his confession great power:

I have deceived even your very eyes. What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overhead me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain. (230-242)

From his point of view, Borachio's words and deeds match completely, a unique event in the play, and nearly an example of a universalizable singularity that simultaneously witnesses and testifies because it is a statement that only the person who had the experience can attest to and yet it is so precise, it is what anyone who had that same experience would say.<sup>99</sup> The power of such a statement is so great that although Pedro tests it, his testing is the prince's first contribution to the deliberative work of the public realm. Pedro demands Borachio affirm John

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<sup>98</sup> Kompridis, 214-5.

<sup>99</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demeure* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 41, 94.



ordered him to act this way, Borachio admits he did, and Pedro encounters his own conscience: “Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?” he asks (244). The simile suggests his previous state of being had been cold and mechanistic, but now Pedro acknowledges his responsibilities.

Dogberry’s crafty deceptions disguise the fact that he has brought the rule of law to bear against the nobility. He makes others willing to submit to him by cuing them to apply the law or admit the wrongs they have committed. By deflecting attention from his power, Dogberry is delightful to the audience in the theater, seemingly harmless and amusing, but he also changes the world of the play without bloodshed. Dogberry’s revolution reveals that medieval bravura brought Messina to the brink of disaster and that the city can be saved with modern acts that bring a renewal that is largely beneficent. Real change, Kompridis states, is the capacity to create new traditions, practices, and institutions, which require cooperation and disclosing the world anew.<sup>100</sup> Dogberry irritates others into specific actions that reflect their own roles in the community and personal predispositions. Characters conserve elements of their former ways of being as they also participate in ways they thitherto had avoided. Dogberry breathes new life into his community not by destroying it *in toto* but by helping it witness itself. Dogberry reveals that good neighbors enable self-disclosure.

### **Master Neighbor Constable**

Dogberry is able to restore the time of good neighbors to Messina because his values lie not with militaristic honor, although he respects his prince, nor with the empty conventions of his small town, although he knows them. Instead, his guiding concern is for the public realm in the

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<sup>100</sup> Kompridis, 197, 280. Daniel Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement* (New York: Penguin, 2013).

relationship he mentions most often: His neighbors.<sup>101</sup> He uses the term as a title. If the opening of *Much Ado* is the meeting of two mutually exclusive public realms, the all male military and the domestic world of a small town, Dogberry bridges the gulf between them by conceptualizing his relationship to all who are gathered through the lateralizing quality the word connotes, where affiliation arises from geography.

In Messina, Dogberry's neighbors include a variety of genders, ages, and socioeconomic groups, but the horizon of the military is battle. During war, people who share the public sphere include fellow soldiers, all separated by rank, some of whom must be treated with the deference Claudio shows Pedro. The sphere of appearances leading up to battle might include female camp followers, male servants, and sex workers, but a battlefield brings the enemy who must be killed and townsfolk who are potentially the object of what King Henry describes as the "arbitrament of swords," during which soldiers gore the "gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery...[in] premeditated and contrived murder" (*King Henry V* 4.1.162-170). At war, the enemy is treated with brutality, and the public sphere is razed by de-civilizing violence. Dogberry, however, knows a public shaped by a different horizon; his actions are a function of what Reinhard describes as relationships constituted by the contingencies of geography and grounded in a connection that must not be unraveled: the link between the self, God, and the neighbor such that "the subject loves the neighbor only by means of the love of God, and loves God only by means of the love of the neighbor."<sup>102</sup> The complexity of this triangulation interested Arendt as early as her dissertation, which analyzed how Saint Augustine weaves the commandment "love thy neighbor" into his writings.

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<sup>101</sup> Dogberry calls Verges, Seacole, and the watch neighbor six times, more than Leonato and Verges use the term.

<sup>102</sup> Reinhard, 71-75.

In *Love and Saint Augustine*, Arendt explores the contradictions in the love of neighbor as Augustine presents them. Her work discloses that Augustine's conception is never able to account for loving neighbors as themselves. Under Augustine, love is always a craving that can never be fulfilled in the world, so we crave a "well ordered" love that is directed towards the eternal, not our neighbor. If we love our neighbor, we do so because we are all the sinning descendants of Adam. Our neighbor reveals our own sins to us; and, re-framed as one who performs this revelation, is loveable as a fellow creature of God who has or will devote herself to God and be reborn into His love. In the eternal city of God, we are able to love our neighbor as ourselves. None of these conclusions conceives of a way to love this living neighbor beside me for herself, in and of this world. Each sees the neighbor instrumentally. At its worst, life is of so little account, my hurrying my neighbor towards immortality might just be a blessing: He will be with God all the sooner.<sup>103</sup> While I must not kill, I have no obligation to spare a person from death. As Sarah Spengemen asserts, Arendt's reflections on the nature of Augustinian love guided her for the remainder of her intellectual life.<sup>104</sup> Augustine lacked a theoretical framework for understanding the other and made the Christian commandment to love the neighbor devalue concrete existence.<sup>105</sup> In response to this incoherency, Arendt posits a political theory that favors plurality, whereby a neighbor's difference is implicitly invoked. To love the empirical, historical person beside me, it is necessary to envisage plural humans in the public sphere where people

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<sup>103</sup> Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>104</sup> Sarah Spengeman, *Saint Augustine and Hannah Arendt On Love of the Neighbor: An Investigation into Arendt's Reliance on and Refutation of Augustinian Philosophy* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2015), 111.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, 150-151.

can relate and separate, promise and forgive while establishing political equality and preserving uniqueness and individuality.<sup>106</sup>

Dogberry's love is of that worldly being near at hand; the constable's neighborhood is a shared space of appearance where people come together and where each is distinct, as seen from his acknowledgment of rank in his commands to the watch and his ability to prompt individuals to subjectivize themselves. Arendt's notion of the neighbor resonates with the character of Dogberry because the problem he faces is intrinsically worldly: Hero's hoped-for rise in social status has been the source of her destruction. The Friar's solution to remove Hero to a convent if Claudio does not repent means she will spend the rest of her life "In some reclusive and religious life out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries": She will be dead to the world (4.1.241-2). Dogberry's task is to rescue Hero for Messina. The problem is so difficult, Dogberry's anxiety skews his dialogue with Leonato. He careens from a vision of egalitarian Christianity to one of sharp distinctions inherited from the monarchy and the Church. Dogberry reveals the challenge of conceptually maintaining an appropriate balance between the love of the other who is a neighbor, the love of the self, and the love of God when he and Verges acquire permission to question Borachio and Conrade. Dogberry's speech reflects the disconcerting pressures he must traverse between his Christian valuation of the neighbor, where love is a radical egalitarianism, and his deference for the hierarchy between Leonato and himself, Leonato and the prince, and all three of them before God the Father. These disparities inflect Dogberry's speaking.

Previous interpretations allot all agency in the scene to Leonato, but Dogberry's receptivity allows him to manipulate Leonato and Verges, which is especially important since

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, 235.

Verges almost reveals they arrested John's men. This endangers their ability to question them, given Leonato preferential treatment of the nobility. The resulting scene is filled with Dogberry's anxiety. He lies to control the situation, but control is elusive: He becomes agitated and throws in all the tactics that safeguard the disenfranchised.

Dogberry's anxiety rises when Verges reveals they have arrested "a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina" (3.5.29-30). This prompts Dogberry's longest speech in the scene and includes malapropisms and heightened awareness of the differences in standing, along with Dogberry's initial undercutting of anything that Verges might say through the use of a proverbial statement, a ploy to preserve the theater of power, "When the age is in, the wit is out" (33). Dogberry then utters a phrase completely out of context, "Well, God's a good man." Dogberry is not only comic relief; he is a character unnerved by the stakes: The phrase is a prayer, a reminder of Jesus as man. And yet, as soon as Dogberry announces the incarnation, he retracts it, fearful that this ultimate lateralization might offend his governor; he says, "As two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind" (35-6): Verges is getting ahead of himself, giving information to Leonato and lacking deference.<sup>107</sup> Verges needs to remain seated at – and on – the rear.

Dogberry immediately recants his retraction: "An honest soul, i' faith, sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshiped; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbor!" (36-39): He has betrayed Verges. While Dogberry does not want to say whom the watch has arrested, he does not want to undermine Verges's and his positions. Dogberry uses the phrase, "as ever broke bread," a proverb that affirms Verges's veracity. He quickly senses his mistake, though: "broke bread" recalls the last supper, which figures the messianic moment when

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<sup>107</sup> Claire McEachern attributes the phrase to a proverb, as noted in R. W. Dent's *Shakespeare's Proverbial Language: An Index*. Dent notes Tilley's use of it in 1640, well after the writing of *Much Ado*.

all are welcome at the table, the ultimate image of egalitarianism. The associations Dogberry makes mentally force him to deflect yet again and when he does, he discloses the conflict between the egalitarian and authoritarian traditions in Christianity: “But, God is to be worshipped, all men are not alike” (37-8). Dogberry can no more reconcile the contradictory traditions in Christianity than Augustine can, nor can Dogberry resolve the conflict between his duty to his governor, prince, and community, but he remembers the central fact that initiates this scene: He and Leonato are neighbors, and Dogberry invokes the crux of the matter to end his speech. They are neighbors; they are even “good” neighbors. Although Dent claims “Dogberry is muddled” in his use of proverbs,<sup>108</sup> this is a typical delegitimization of the constable. Dogberry is desperate and imports conflicting proverbs, but his position is maddening. In my reading, his speech reflects anxiety, not the planned use of linguistic pyrotechnics he employs with the sexton and Pedro.<sup>109</sup>

Dogberry can become confident that he deflected Leonato’s attention away from Verges’s revelation once Leonato insults Dogberry with “Indeed, neighbor, he comes too short of you” (40). Dogberry seems to misunderstand Leonato’s insult with “Gifts that God gives” (40), but this represents his relief that Leonato has shifted his focus from Verges’s statements to Dogberry’s inanity. Linguistic legerdemain has ensured their safety. This is particularly clear when Dogberry intentionally misunderstands Leonato and reuses the strategy of postponement.

When Leonato tells Dogberry, “Neighbors, you are tedious” (16), Dogberry wishes all his tediousness on Leonato, as though he believes he received a compliment. Leonato responds, “All

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<sup>108</sup> Robert William Dent, *Shakespeare’s Proverbial Language: An Index, Volume 1*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 11.

<sup>109</sup> My reading here is of course influenced by political theology and my work with Lupton.

thy tediousness on me, ah?" (21), and Dogberry intensifies his wish: "Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it" (23-25). When Allen says Dogberry mistakes Leonato's meaning,<sup>110</sup> he implies that Dogberry misunderstands Leonato's mood. Dogberry is illiterate, but illiteracy requires well-developed understanding of intonation.<sup>111</sup> In my reading, which takes into account the nature of relationships and the mutual recognition that occurs within them, Leonato is busy, anxious for the wedding. His tone could be commanding or impatient, but it would communicate displeasure. Dogberry, aware of the disparity in status between his governor and himself, would hear it. Dogberry would not benefit from misunderstanding tone but would benefit from increasing Leonato's annoyance. Dogberry intentionally frustrates Leonato.

Having irritated Leonato into hurrying Verges and himself along, Dogberry announces the reason for his visit in an afterthought, using the same phrase as with the watch, "One word, sir" (43). He requests to bring the men to Leonato. The malapropisms that follow erase Verges's "arrant knaves;" Dogberry says they have "comprehended two aspicious persons," as though he understands rather than apprehends the men and finds them auspicious, not suspicious. Leonato then orders them to take the examination themselves. This supposed misstep authorizes

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<sup>110</sup> John Allen, "Dogberry" (*Shakespeare Quarterly*. 24:1 1973), 45.

<sup>111</sup> Illiterates disguise their lack of mastery of written language by developing compensatory abilities, including recognition of patterns, whether in colors, sounds, or positions in space. See Walter J. Ong, *The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 1982). Readers see literacy as intelligence, and literacy shapes how people think, but of the thousands of languages humans have created, only 106 have been committed to writing (7). When we assume Dogberry's illiteracy equates with ignorance, we err. Illiterates value literacy, believing that if they could read, they would be more intelligent, and we see this in the Dogberry: Reading is natural (3.3.15-16), and he desires to have Conrade's calling him an ass written down. None of this diminishes Dogberry's ability to discern intent in tone. When we read Dogberry's character as officious, it makes sense, as Allen states, that Dogberry misunderstands Leonato; however, that interpretation overlooks other motivations and fails to account for his self-awareness at the end of the scene.

Dogberry to perform the interrogation and absolves Dogberry of blame or being overly presumptuousness.

Dogberry's use of "neighbor" undermines the hierarchy and suggests he might rebel against rank, but his language and actions reveal deference. While humans are commanded to love their neighbors as they love their own selves, they are also told that God is the Almighty creator. Dogberry's speech arises from the tensions between mutual love and rank, mutual dependence and promise, mutual threat and fear bound by the measurable distance of the limits of their town and held at bay by the walls of each person's house. Dogberry does not martyr himself for the sake of his lady; he is not a chivalrous knight. Instead, he must love himself and his neighbors as they present themselves to him in the given world that is hierarchical, militaristically inflected, filled with vanity-protecting deceptions, and led by an authoritarian prince. Dogberry exercises his agency within the tension between the love of neighbor as a person sharing this space and the demands that he revere the rank of the person who is close enough to destroy him. Dogberry's love must furthermore be recognizable to his neighbors as pertaining to them, which requires he treat individuals in ways they can recognize. He must be "receptive," as Kompridis has developed the notion.

Dogberry changes reality without anyone's having noticed; at the end of the play, Messina looks nothing like its beginning. It is a cultural and ethical change: characters disclose themselves and recognize one another. In the play's first scene, Beatrice mocks Benedick for speaking while no one listens to him (1.1.111). Over the course of the play, Beatrice and Benedick are mocked for their nonconformity. In the play's final moments, Benedick guides the festivities.



The dancing at the end is celebratory. Dogberry brings no rancor to himself or the majority of characters. He does make John a scapegoat and reveals Pedro's forgiveness to have been misguided, premature, immodest, and a denial of their shared custom of staging ruses, but Dogberry preserves the illusion of authority. The results are clear: Dogberry survives within the world of the play, the theater, and the critical tradition. He is one of Shakespeare's most beloved characters, enjoyed because never seen as so haughty he doesn't delight. He is no sacrificial victim, and he is not a revolutionary, but he transfigures Messina. Arendt explains that the new always appears in the guise of a miracle.<sup>112</sup> Dogberry's miracle is his concerted, magician-like use of deflection, a subterfuge that calls attention to his zany language and thereby distracts attention away from his self-empowerment.

### **New Messina**

Arendt explains that without the capacity to bring new possibilities to the world, we would lack "the faculty to undo what we have done," which would render us "the victims of an automatic necessity bearing all the marks of inexorable laws."<sup>113</sup> The renewal Dogberry brings arises from his specific valuation of relationships and allows him to invent new forms of affiliation despite the rigid, conformity-enhancing hierarchy that prohibited entries into the public realm. In Kompridis's account, he argues that change necessitates learning, which entails gathering "new tongues with which to say what cannot be said and new ears with which to hear

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<sup>112</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, 246.

what cannot be heard.”<sup>114</sup> Dogberry’s successful speech techniques reflect what his interlocutors need to hear so that they can learn. They enable Pedro’s de-centering. Before his encounter with Dogberry, Pedro considered himself invariably right, complete, an expert throughout the realm. Dogberry cues Pedro into seeing he is error-prone and has been complicit with malice. At the end of the play, Pedro’s voice is a minor one, his character noticeably chastened, his speech muted. As Slights says, no one defies Don Pedro’s authority at the end of the play, but no one listens to him much either.<sup>115</sup>

While Dogberry and the constabulary exhibit deference to the members of the court, that court has shown itself to be mindless, formulaic, and lacking in compassion.<sup>116</sup> Many of its members failed to testify to their experiences, witness reality, or create relationships that arise from mutually revelatory divulgences. Dogberry defeats the gentry that had so little concern for each other or reality, they inhabited false worlds, failed to speak honestly, and obstructed others’ witnessing of the truths in the world of the play. Dogberry outfits himself with tools from the theater and the language traditions of the oppressed to create the possibility that the Messinese will see reality. Without him, it would have no public space for people to heal and tell true stories of one another. In the original performances of the play, certain members of the audience, if they wielded or were knowledgeable of the speech techniques of the oppressed, could perhaps discern

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<sup>114</sup> Kompridis, 229. Kompridis’s formulation of new tongues with which to say what cannot be said and new ears with which to hear what cannot be heard recalls *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* when Bottom awakes: “The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was” (4.2.210-217). In *The Mature Comedies*, Frank Kermode identifies this as the play’s reference to Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass*, but the biblical formation from Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians is also apt.

<sup>115</sup> Slights, 188-189.

<sup>116</sup> Bryant, 126 and 136-140.

this. Perhaps previous oversights of the possibilities embedded in the play can be rectified in future performances.

The end of the play renders a robust and open public realm: All – or almost all – of its lies uncovered, its community gathered, its hierarchy jovially upended when it honors characters who balance the martial and romantic realms. Leonato admits to two ruses: Hero was dead only while her reputation suffered and they tricked Benedick into believing Beatrice loves him. Benedick does not understand what Leonato is saying and asks to marry Beatrice. He good-naturedly teases Pedro to marry and be cuckolded: “There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn,” he says, assuring Pedro that he will find a new place in the world with marriage, albeit a place that is subject to a woman’s choices. Benedick and Beatrice announce their mutual affection in self-protective admissions that fool no one, especially when Claudio and Hero reveal the love notes Benedick and Beatrice wrote one another. All reveal themselves and allow their vulnerabilities to be seen.

Most importantly, Benedick takes center stage as the master of ceremonies: He orders dancing to take place despite Leonato’s request (5.4.117-124), promises “brave punishments” for John, and initiates the jig that would conclude plays from this era. In taking on the multiple roles of bachelor-groom, torturer, matchmaker, marriage counselor, and clown, Benedick resembles Bottom, who believed he could play every role the mechanicals rehearse. *Much Ado about Nothing* has linked Benedick to the courtier who balances social and political realms, and here, it also links him to a protean clown.<sup>117</sup> Since Dogberry also achieves a balance between political and social worlds, having succeeded in a conflict against men, saved a lady, and advised his

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<sup>117</sup> Mangan, 68-71. Mangan calls sexual infidelity the stock situation of the jig and notes that the shifting role of the clown pushed him to the periphery, giving him reign over the jig at the end of the performance.

prince, this jig discloses the play's dual preference for Benedick and for Dogberry. Slightly off stage, perhaps Dogberry shares a fist-bump with his neighbor Verges.

## CHAPTER THREE “IT NIPS ME INTO LISTENING” PERICLES AND THE POWER OF SHARED NARRATIVES

Dogberry needs a champion to uncover the purposeful nature of his achievement in *Much Ado about Nothing*. When audiences do not notice that he uses prompts to cue others to speak in his stead, postponement to deflect attention away from his instructions, and malapropisms to confuse his interlocutors, they cannot determine how he defuses the harm Messina’s Prince brings to their community. To such audiences, Dogberry seems too inept to have the capacity to dethrone Pedro and John. Marina, the female protagonist of third play I discuss, needs no such advocate.

In the last fifteen years, scholars have analyzed Marina’s reconfiguration of patriarchal territories in *Pericles*.<sup>1</sup> With her “frank and open handling of language as an instrument of truth,”<sup>2</sup> she engineers her escape from a brothel, convinces the characters who have enslaved her to allow her to open a school, and saves herself from the physical and psychological ruin working in a brothel would have wrought. She accomplishes this despite being “the most endangered of all heroines in the late romances:”<sup>3</sup> Marina is a foster child who is abandoned at birth by her father, not sought after by her mother, and only rescued from murder because she is kidnapped and trafficked into sexual slavery. A discussion of the political renewal disadvantaged

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<sup>1</sup> Lorrain Helms, “The Saint in the Brothel: Or, Eloquence Rewarded” (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 41.3: 1990), 328.

<sup>2</sup> Julia Lupton, “Shakespeare Dwelling: *Pericles* and the Affordances of Action” (*Shakespeare and the Urgency of Now: Criticism and Theory in the 21st Century*. Ed: Cary DiPietro and Hugh Grady. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, July 2013), 77.

<sup>3</sup> Byron Nelson (*Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference*, 2: 2008), 18.

people achieve when they testify to injustices they witness would be incomplete without an examination of the particular way Marina achieves these results.

The textual key to Marina's success comes close to the end of the play: Pericles says he hungers for Marina's voice and that heavenly music nips him into listening (5.1.233, 103-105).<sup>4</sup> He experiences these joys aurally because he and Marina allow themselves to be "receptive" to each other.<sup>5</sup> They listen and speak with exquisite care to one another despite the challenging situations they face: They are anonymous strangers; Pericles has been ill for three months and has refused to speak. When Marina approaches him, he shoves her and she, the indentured servant of sex traffickers, exhorts him to consider the possibility that her grief might equal his (75-88). Her admonition wakens Pericles, and he encourages the stranger before him to speak. She wants to flee and hesitates offering precise answers. But, he apologizes for his actions, explains his complex feelings of loss, and she feels called to stay. Because Pericles reveals himself while never failing to attend to Marina's answers, and because she finally reveals her own self, they discover their kinship.

Once Marina and her father announce who they are, Pericles hears heavenly music, attaining an aural ecstasy that figures the painstaking care he used to listen to Marina. Diana, goddess of hunting, chastity, and creativity invites Pericles to her temple in Ephesus to tell the story of his and his daughter's lives. With Marina at his side, Pericles shares his life story and is also reunited with his wife, Thaisa, whom he and Marina have long believed was dead (108-197).

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<sup>4</sup> For this chapter, I will be working with the Arden version of *Pericles: Prince of Tyre* edited by Suzanne Gossett. (*The Arden Pericles*, Third Edition, London: Methuen Drama, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2006), 207-8.

Thus, when Pericles shares his stories, he bodily awakens to the play's truth: Knowledge of reality is available when characters narrate their personal stories in the space of appearances. In my reading of *Pericles*, I bring political phenomenology's attention to the relationships created during dialogue to inquire into the effects that occur when characters share their personal narratives. I argue that by incorporating, re-creating, and transforming Pericles's adventures, his daughter Marina's journey, and the narration of Gower, *Pericles* highlights the ability of a narrative to make a person recognize what he never knew before. When this occurs, *Pericles* depicts the public realm growing in egalitarianism. From this vantage point, it is possible to discern the aesthetic unity of the play.

On a phenomenological level, the plot uncovers the "very conditions of telling and shows two people finding themselves and each other"<sup>6</sup> through Marina's and Pericles's mutual revelations in the recognition scene. As the depiction of characters sharing their stories, the play demonstrates that the characters' isolation was a function of their limited points of view. Both characters saw themselves as tragic figures, but when they share their stories, they recognize that their story was only one thread in a braided narrative that binds them to one another. This liberates both characters, freeing Pericles from his depression and Marina from her indentured status, and it grants them the meaning their lives had seemed to lack.

Alongside this plot line, the form of the play emphasizes the meaning-making qualities of narrative in several ways. It juxtaposes the dramatization of Pericles's and Marina's stories with Gower's poetic diegesis and contrasts the positive benefits of Marina's exhortations against wrong-doing with Pericles's failure to confront Antiochus's abuse of power. The amalgamation

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<sup>6</sup> Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011 ), 100.

of contrasting storylines crowned with the meeting between their protagonists uncovers the fact that *Pericles* is an example of what Rick Altman has identified as a “multi-focus narrative.”<sup>7</sup>

Altman is the first scholar to identify, define, and analyze the multi-focus narrative. These texts range from novels to romances to film and span 2300 years of literary history. With their origins in the Ancient Greek novel and influence on medieval romances, their form would have become so familiar to Shakespeare, especially through *The Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and Ludovico Ariosto’s writings. In more recent years, this sort of narrative has shaped a number of twentieth century novels and is the hallmark of ensemble theater. The form thrives on discontinuity arising from episodes that are apparently unrelated. This peculiar nature requires audiences to piece together meaning from scenes so disparate, the individual narratives are frequently deemed fragments. As a result, audiences typically reduce multi-focus narratives to “manageable proportions, either by organizing the novel’s material around the title character or by treating each new episode and character as part of a familiar” form. However, those readers who discern meaning in these texts discover a transcendent value in them.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, the reception of multi-focus narratives matches the critical response to *Pericles*. Some scholars have deplored the play’s lack of reason, meaning, or order,<sup>9</sup> while others have acclaimed its unequalled value.<sup>10</sup> Even those readers who condemn *Pericles* nonetheless side with the play’s admirers when they discuss the reunion between Pericles and Marina. This scholarly agreement on the power of the reunion scene reflects the literary effect of multi-focus

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<sup>7</sup> Rick Altman, *Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 242.

<sup>9</sup> See, amongst others, John Dean, *Restless Wanderers: Shakespeare and the Pattern of Romance* (Salzburg, Austria: Institute für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> G. Wilson Knight’s *Crown of Life* is a prominent example.



narratives: They risk challenging audiences with interruptions of the sustained depiction of a single protagonist so as to generate a transindividual point of view. That is, when the two protagonists of the multi-focus narrative inevitably meet, the audience understands both perspectives simultaneously and gains an enlarged view of the world. With *Pericles*, this arouses a feeling of wonder.

The regenerative effect of the Marina-Pericles reunion is enhanced and predicated upon Gower's narration in such a way that, in performance, the play elicits a sense of the marvelous for the audience. When Gower suggests images to imagine, introduces dumb shows, and guides the audience through the plot, the play is wielding the narrative tools of wishing, prediction, imagining, and meaning-making as they are generated in written texts. However, because the play incarnates onstage what it had suggested in poetry, the audience experiences more fully than in other plays the wish fulfillment that the Marina and Pericles characters experience.

Thus, the literary devices and the genre Altman analyzes allow me to discuss the formal aspects of *Pericles*. However, since the example of multi-focus narrative in *Pericles* depicts meaning arising from storytelling, I am able to link the literary effects of the play to a political discussion well-established in Arendt's works and of interest in today's discourse.

In the past ten years, scholars in fields as diverse as literature, political science, critical race theory, jurisprudence, psychology, and theory of mind have analyzed the multifarious functions and effects of narrative. Its meaning-making attributes and potential to defuse the abstractions and obfuscations of authoritarian ideologies help reveal *Pericles* is a work that requires the egalitarian techniques of ensemble theater while depicting the political renewal generated by shared rule. Instead of the abuse of power Pericles finds himself subject to in the

dramatic scene when King Antiochus threatens to kill him or the cruelty Queen Dionyza would exercise by putting Marina to death for outshining Princess Philoten, the reciprocity of the reunion necessitates and generates a co-equal valuation of others in the space of appearance. As characters, Pericles and Marina must listen with all the power they have to be able to recognize one another. As actors rehearsing the scene, they face unusual demands due to the multiple repeated cues of the dialogue, which require negotiations, compromises, and debate, all of which empower the actors. The scene thus renders and depends upon the mutual regard typical of ensemble theater.

The discussion and disputes, cooperation and negotiations practitioners of ensemble theater enact require mutual respect much in the way Arendt describes individuals participating in the public realm. Where ever individuals come together in the space of appearance, they are able to “show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and they make their appearance in the human world...” through speech. While a person’s identity is “implicit in everything somebody says and does,” it is through storytelling that people lend coherence to reality.<sup>11</sup> Shari Stone-Mediatore, working with Arendt’s notions, shows that storytelling helps elucidate reality. Without narratives and shared dialogue, people cannot “fully process their perception of events and the roots” of crises they face, leaving them with a sense of the world that is obscure and fragmentary. As such, people cannot “revise their ‘common sense’ political language to respond to changing circumstances.”<sup>12</sup> I broker these insights to point out the resonances between between Marina’s story and the twenty-first century understanding of human

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<sup>11</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 178-179.

<sup>12</sup> Shari Stone-Mediatore, *Reading Across Borders: Storytelling and Knowledges of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 55-57.

trafficking. Interestingly, the specific nature of today's enslavement was uncovered only when people told their stories and others listened.

Thus, in response to critiques of *Pericles*, I bring phenomenology's notions regarding narrative to ask, How does Gower's narration support and sustain the play and render the reunion powerful even to those who otherwise deplore it? How does the inclusion of two protagonists create, rather than destroy, the play's unity? In response, I argue that the play renders the world as inherently plural and interdependent. Characters who share their stories make their "sorrows bearable"<sup>13</sup> because they belong in the same story and because the intrinsic capacity of narrative is to create meaning. In *Pericles*, the political phenomenological process of witnessing leading to testimony becomes a co-witnessing by Pericles and Marina that leads to political renewal. W. H. Auden asserts that such a play appeals to "low brows and very sophisticated highbrows;"<sup>14</sup> its depiction facilitates regression into a child's delight in being told a story, but the literary effect demands a mature understanding of how diverse the world is. Knowledge depends upon a character's willingness to tell her story and an audience who listens.

### **Summary, the Multi-Focal Narrative, and the Critical Response to *Pericles***

*Pericles* is a mixture of live action and spoken narration that dramatizes -- and tells -- the story of Pericles, Prince of Tyre and his daughter Marina. The play opens with Gower introducing himself and his first protagonist, Pericles, who journeys like many other hopeful suitors had to marry the beautiful princess of Antioch. Gower explains that the woman's father enticed her into an incestuous relationship. When men pursue her in marriage, Antiochus requires

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<sup>13</sup> Arendt, "Truth and Politics" (*Truth: Engagements across Philosophical Traditions*. Ed. David Wood, José Medina. Oxford: Wiley & Blackwell, 2008), 312.

<sup>14</sup> W. H. Auden, "*Pericles and Cymbeline*" (*Lectures on Shakespeare*, Ed. Arthur Kirsch. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 272.

they answer a riddle. If they respond incorrectly, they are put to death. When Pericles hears the riddle, he reneges on the challenge and refuses to name the King's crime of incest aloud. In contrast to this response, the second half of the play dramatizes Marina debating all who would harm her and exhorting them to cease their wrongdoing. She thereby saves her own life and leads her interlocutors into choices whose consequences they prefer. In between Pericles's encounter with Antiochus, Marina's with her would-be wrongdoers, and the father-daughter reunion, Pericles encounters multiple characters who are rewarded for their frankness, including his adviser, Helicanus, and the fishermen who help him attend a joust in Pentapolis. In that city, he is also chosen forthrightly by its princess to be her husband. Pericles had also saved the city of Tarsus from starvation, so when his wife, Thaisa, seems to die during childbirth, Pericles leaves Marina to be raised by the King and Queen of Tarsus. Years later, the Queen envies the attention Marina receives and orders her murder, but Marina is saved by pirates who kidnap her and sell her into sexual enslavement. At the brothel, Marina saves herself through her eloquence. In the reunion between Marina and her father, they reverse their previous errors by engaging in dialogue and telling their personal histories, which enables them to embody the nature of narrative: Since the two characters had never before met, their narratives make recognizable what was previously unknown.

I argue that this unusual tale can best be understood by bringing it into a conversation with the phenomenological understanding of narrative. Arendt argues that it is not just speaking in the public realm that is of vital importance but specifically the telling of a story that charges the world with meaning. A story brings coherence to otherwise random events:

The chief characteristic of this specifically human life, whose appearance and disappearance constitute worldly events, is that it is itself always full of events

which ultimately can be told as a story, establish a biography . . . . For action and speech...are indeed the two activities whose end result will always be a story with enough coherence to be told, no matter how accidental or haphazard the single events and their causation appear to be.<sup>15</sup>

As a phenomenologist, Arendt holds that people live lives and experience occurrences that do not hold meaning unless individuals organize the events into a lucid story because coherency is, by definition, a chief effect of narrative. Paul Ricoeur succinctly explains this with “To make a plot is already to make the intelligible spring from the accidental, the universal from the singular, the necessary or the probable from the episodic.”<sup>16</sup> Ricoeur’s literary analysis attends to the meaning storytelling brings meaning to fiction, and his analysis is complemented by Arendt’s analysis of narrative in the public realm, where storytelling brings meaning to a person’s life.

Thus, Arendt attests to the vital role of narrative, whether in literature, oral stories, or written biographies, as the practice of creating meaning out of events that otherwise appear unrelated. Narratives proffer coherence to individuals by revealing how stories have a central role in discerning the nature of reality itself: In a story, facts acquire humanly comprehensible meaning. More firmly, she states that: “reality is different from, and more than, the totality of facts and events, which, anyhow, is unascertainable. Who says what is -- λεγει τα εοντα -- always tells a story...”<sup>17</sup> Reality itself becomes discernible when an agent crafts a story.

These insights into the meaning-building nature of narrative allow me to respond to readings of *Pericles* that have condemned two of its elements. Although audiences enjoyed the play when it was originally produced, critics have since remarked that its unity is destroyed when

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<sup>15</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 97.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* Volume 1 (Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1984), 41.

<sup>17</sup> Arendt, “Truth and Politics,” 312.

Marina's story supersedes Pericles's and that Gower's narration frequently interrupts the action with extra-dramatic comments, thus reducing the play's mimetic effect and overtly guiding the audience into the supposedly appropriate response.<sup>18</sup> From the seventeenth century through the middle of the twentieth century, the desire for realism meant the play's reception was frequently negative. Critics wrote that Marina's story interrupts the plot "for the longest time" and while the meanness and prose of these scenes contrast with Pericles's journey, they serve no "dramatic action (for her escape is simple)" and render Marina into "mostly a symbolic, not a dramatic character."<sup>19</sup> Since the reception of *Pericles* has veered between arguments of its chaotic randomness and transcendent meaning, it is necessary to analyze its use of the instrument that creates coherence: narrative.

In this argument, I am responding to Andrew Hiscock's 2013 call for a thorough-going analysis of narrative strategies in the play. Narrative structures *Pericles*, Hiscock explains, but no one has yet explicated its "intrigue."<sup>20</sup> As Hiscock has it, *Pericles* is obsessively concerned with the exercise of narrative. He traces this interest to the early modern notion of *narratario*, that is, the faithful communication of human experience and ethical idealism in a sequential manner.<sup>21</sup> Hiscock writes that no scholar had yet been able to discern how this notion of narrative functions in *Pericles*. John Arthos attempted to account for its use by arguing that the play translates a romantic narrative's use of "crowded, fantastic" and "fabulous" elements into a drama, but it

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<sup>18</sup> Kwang Soon Cho, "Shakespeare's Control of Audience Response: Dramatic Techniques in *Pericles*" (*English Language and Literature*. 36.4: 1990), 737.

<sup>19</sup> John Arthos "Pericles Prince of Tyre: A Study in the Dramatic Use of Romantic Narrative" (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 4.3:1953), 267-268.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Hiscock, "Pericles, Prince of Tyre and the Appetite for Narrative" (*Late Shakespeare, 1608-1616*. Ed. Andrew J. Power and Rory Loughnane. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 24.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 16-22. Hiscock attributes the lack to scholarly commitment to historicizing literature from the early modern era. He relies on Lorna Hurston's *The Invention of Suspicion* for his argument.

fails because the spectacle and splendor of drama is different from narrative to an inordinate degree. Thus, what successes the play achieves are intermittent. At best, the interest brought about by individual scenes engages an audience, and each scene prepares its audience for the wonder of act five's reunion.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that Arthos's analysis does not offer a picture of the power that narrative supposedly has. Hiscock himself is disappointed by his own analysis of the function of narrative in the play. In it, he attends to the play's formal depiction of bids for narrative supremacy and argues that *Pericles* favors political authority as narration rather than militaristic heroism. For Hiscock, this is rendered by the play's radically subversive depiction of female eloquence and the restorative power of Marina's speeches.<sup>23</sup> Hiscock states that the disparity between the early modern notion of *narratario* and the use of it in *Pericles* presents a quandary that has not been solved:

...at no point do we find ourselves in the company of a forensic rhetorician who can explicate the intrigue of *Pericles* to our complete satisfaction. Instead, carried along by the pressures of romance, we are asked to invest imaginatively in its 'gappes' and become complicit in its fantastical undertakings . . . . Doreen Delvecchio and Antony Hammond...assure us that "[t]h whole concept of narration, of telling a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end, proceeding in intricate stages and leisurely description, was utilized by Shakespeare as the structural basis for *Pericles*," (but) this seems to take remarkably little account of the remorseless concertina-ing...of the play's chronological architecture which constantly invites audiences to organize their interpretative journey.<sup>24</sup>

Narration structures *Pericles* but is highly problematic, Hiscock says, with scholars deploring how it jars readers into the company of the teller, not the tale.

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<sup>22</sup> Arthos, 257-266.

<sup>23</sup> Hiscock, 25-27.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, 24.

I respond to Hiscock's call by offering Altman's analysis of the multi-focus narrative, which offers a taxonomy of narrative. Altman is the first scholar to identify and define the genre, and his work resolves the predicament Hiscock mentions while also making it possible to access the compelling picture of the plural world in *Pericles*. Without this analysis, scholars like John Dean can legitimately unmoor connections between scenes and summarize the play in terms of its being a meaningless journey in which scenes arrive for no other reason than the fact that their events occur.<sup>25</sup>

Altman's analysis demonstrates that multi-focus narratives have a 2300-year history. They include a variety of forms, from Ancient Greek novels to modern-day films, Renaissance stories and twentieth-century performances by ensemble theater troupes. Examples he describes are Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Roman de Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and André Malraux's *Man's Fate*.

The content of multi-focus narratives depends upon the discontinuity that arises from episodes that feature two opposing protagonists. The protagonists and storylines must seem unrelated enough to inspire audiences to create novel methods for deriving meaning from what seem like fragments. Since some audience members do not discern a meaning that incorporates the transindividual point of view that the texts risk continuity to generate, the audience usually reduces the text to more familiar and comfortable forms than the multi-focus narrative.<sup>26</sup>

This is precisely the choice that many scholars have made in their responses to *Pericles*. Criticisms of the play include some that are more damning than Arthos's, such as Ben Jonson's

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<sup>25</sup> John Dean, *Restless Wanderers: Shakespeare and the Pattern of Romance* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik University Salzburg, 1979), 236.

<sup>26</sup> Altman, 288-289 & 241-243.



insult that it is “a mouldy tale”<sup>27</sup> and Lytton Strachey’s conclusion that it reflects Shakespeare’s growing boredom late in life.<sup>28</sup> At the extreme is John Dean, who argues that scenes in *Pericles* evolve spontaneously. The play constantly agitates “towards a non-apparent goal.”<sup>29</sup>

What is particularly remarkable about Altman’s analysis is that it accounts for these condemnations of *Pericles* as well as the many endorsements of the play. Altman’s analysis explains that those who respond positively to works like *Pericles* gain

significant pleasure from the heady liberty offered by multiple-focus texts. Convinced that they are breaking new ground each time they recognize a new thematic intersection, readers experience the excitement of the explorer, the inventor, indeed the alchemist. Turning mean narrative into the most noble of substances, multiple-focus readers become increasingly captivated by the search for the fifth essence, the quintessential conceptual pattern that gives meaning to the entire narrative universe.<sup>30</sup>

This sort of positive response to the multi-focus narrative mirrors, amongst others, the influential mid-twentieth century reading of *Pericles* by G. Wilson Knight, who argues that “the second half of *Pericles* has no equivalent in transcendental apprehension in all of Shakespeare but the latter half of *Antony and Cleopatra*.”<sup>31</sup> Knight’s response to *Pericles* helped promote its reexamination as a romance and participated in launching a scholarly focus on myth, allegory, and Christology, with a general conclusion that in terms of genre, romance incorporates and transcends a tragic vision: In Shakespeare’s later plays, reunions prove a character is alive; a crucial decision in a

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<sup>27</sup> Ben Jonson, “Ode to Himself (After the Failure of the New Inn)” (*Bartleby*, September 12, 2015), line 21.

<sup>28</sup> Lytton Strachey, “Shakespeare’s Final Period” (*Books and Characters*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1919), 52, 42.

<sup>29</sup> Dean, 254, 176.

<sup>30</sup> Altman, 288.

<sup>31</sup> G. Wilson Knight, “Myth and Miracle” (*Crown of Life*, New York: Taylor & Francis, 2002), section III.

tragedy is reversed, and the deadening cynicism of winter becomes spring's renewal.<sup>32</sup> Before Altman's ground-breaking study, it was easy to attribute the wide range of responses to *Pericles* as a function of varying aesthetics, but we can now assert that this mixed reception is typical with multi-focus texts.

The most compelling link between multi-focus narratives and *Pericles* is that in both, two focal points generate the text's symmetrical armature in such a way that they rely on narratorial commentary as a bridge. The plot features parallel scenes between seemingly unrelated characters and risks alienating audiences in order to promote conceptually-oriented interpretations and a transindividual point of view. The power and beauty of accessing multiple points of view simultaneously is worth a few moments of aversion in the audience.

Unfortunately, with *Pericles*, those moments remained in the critical response for many years.

It was not until Maurice Hunt showed how *Pericles* deploys two focal points that it was possible to begin to discern the elements of the multi-focal narrative in the play. Hunt argues that Pericles and Marina function as opposites, with one character failing to speak against wrongdoing and the other confronting moral error with verbal exhortation.<sup>33</sup> Hunt links *Pericles* to the story of Jonah and the whale to mount an argument that forcible protests against wickedness in

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<sup>32</sup> E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951); G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life* (London: Methuen, 1965); F. D. Hoeniger's Arden edition of *Pericles* (London: Methuen, 1969); Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Northrope Frye, *A Natural Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Hunt, "Pericles, Prince of Tyre" (*Shakespeare's Romance of the Word*, Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1990), 23-25. Simon Palfrey makes a similar argument in *Late Shakespeare a New World of Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). Palfrey argues Pericles needs to "amend the absence of appropriate language," which has caused him to suffer (59).

Hunt points out that with every depiction of crime, abuse of authority, or cruelty, the play praises characters who protest wrongful action. He emphasizes the scene with the fishermen when the First Fisherman describes the oppressive nature of the world being a result of the mighty eating the disempowered, but the Third Fisherman invents a way to protest the behavior: "I would have kept such a jangling of the bells, that he should never have left, till he cast bells, steeple, church, and parish up again" (2.1.27-43).

both the Shakespeare play and the biblical story avert ruin and bring redemption to king and society alike. Marina's role shows that vigorous chastisement has transformational power.<sup>34</sup>

Altman points out that the risk multi-focal narratives take by including more than one protagonist is worth it. The transindividual effect achieved when the two meet is powerful and more realistic than other types of narrative because it captures the nature of reality with great complexity. We see this in *Pericles*: When Marina and Pericles meet, the play achieves a grand perspective by offering the audience glimpses of a variety of points of view simultaneously. Father and daughter recognize one another by sharing their stories in the space of appearances. For them, the transindividual effect necessarily includes recognizing that their individual narratives are so limited, they are incorrect. As Sarah Beckwith argues, *Pericles* explores the mutuality of narrative and community to show that the principal characters's life stories can be shared because they are the same story; the play renders people finding themselves and each other in the act of bringing their personal narratives to one another. This results in a community of mutual attunement.<sup>35</sup>

As such, *Pericles* as a multi-focus tale achieves the effect Matthew Smith discusses in his phenomenological analysis of theater in the round. As I discussed in chapter one, Smith demonstrates that live theater produces an awareness of the variety of perspectives on the action of the play and in the world. This perspective reflects the plural nature of the space of appearance. Thus, the performance of *Pericles* is the live version of the narrative choice to include multiple characters in a series of fragmented episodes in order to effect an enlarged perspective in the audience.

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 25-37.

<sup>35</sup> Beckwith, 92, 95, 100, 103.

As a medieval story whose origins are the Alexandrine novel with two opposing characters whose relationship perplexes many scholars but give others evidence of transcendent meanings, *Pericles* is not a fragmented text that explores the workings of *fortuna*. Instead, as Hunt shows, it pits Pericles's response to the moral outrage of Antiochus against Marina's confrontations of moral error. With Marina's verbal exhortations and deliberations, she helps characters witness their actions from a new point of view. It becomes possible for her interlocutors to reframe themselves as characters in her story rather than isolated individuals.

### **Diplomacy versus *Parrhesia*: Give my tongue leave to love my head**

Hunt's analysis of Pericles and Marina as opposites leads to his conclusion that Pericles becomes melancholic and devitalized because he harbors Antioch's secret and denies "the moral promptings of his conscience."<sup>36</sup> Pericles, like Jonah, at first refuses to protest against wickedness, but when Jonah does, he averts ruin and brings redemption to king and society alike.<sup>37</sup> Jonah thereby overcomes his foible, but in *Pericles*, Marina produces the desired effect. Like Hunt, I understand the contrast between the characters politically, but I want to examine why Pericles is able to dialogue with Antiochus and how Pericles's response to Antiochus fails to acknowledge their relationship and establishes a disruptive bond.

In the ancient Greek world that gave birth to the *Pericles* story, several kinds of relationships are invoked by the play's opening scene: The immorality of the father-daughter incest Antiochus embarks upon, the possibility of the elemental power of host and guest implicit

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<sup>36</sup> Hunt, 23-25.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 25-37.

in Antiochus's receiving Pericles and then inviting him to stay with him for forty days,<sup>38</sup> and the ethical obligation to use forthright speech. Forthright speech was called *parrhesia*, which signified the moral obligation for an individual to speak his mind. *Parrhesic* speech depends on and alters a relationship by requiring a speaker draw on his courage and call on his listeners' as well. It is invigorating to challenge a person, potentially frightening to risk physical combat, and was superior in Ancient Athens to dispute through the use of language. A person must be courageous to denounce another's ideas. The verbal trope introducing a *parrhesic* moment in Ancient Greece included the speaker acknowledging the courage he required to enact *parrhesia* and to remind his opponent to be courageous too.

From the point of view of political phenomenology, which examines how speech shared in the public realm generates relationships, when Antiochus impedes suitors from marrying his daughter by having them answer a riddle, he provocatively brings his incestuous relationship with her into the space of appearances; the riddle is so transparent, it is a declaration. When Pericles interacts with Antiochus, he can affect the relationship through speech, but he chooses not to. Instead, he tries to remove the riddle and Antiochus's relationship with his daughter from the public realm. This is not possible.

When Pericles arrives in Antioch, he is greeted by its King and the severed heads of the suitors who came before him. Antiochus confirms Pericles "at large received the danger of the task" (1.1.1-3). Antiochus explains at every opportunity that it is likely Pericles will die, but he refuses to accept responsibility for the situation, which is a function of his decision to establish and continue a sexual relationship with his daughter, create a riddle suitors would have to answer

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<sup>38</sup> At 1.1.117, Antiochus offers to "respite" Pericles, and while this suggests delaying the end of the contest, in this diplomatic scene, Pericles would be expected to stay with Antiochus, the host who makes the offer.

in order to marry her, and to kill the suitors who fail to answer correctly. Antiochus places all blame elsewhere and yet the riddle he devises is utterly clear:

I am no viper, yet I feed  
On Mother's flesh which did me breed.  
I sought a husband, in which labour  
I found that kindness in a father.  
He's father, son, and husband mild;  
I mother, wife, and yet his child.  
How they may be, and yet in two,  
As you will live resolve it you. (1.1.-65-73)

In this riddle, Antiochus dares men to announce his relationship to his daughter.

In response to this shocking situation, Pericles tells the King that the actions Antiochus takes are so evil they should not be spoken of; Pericles has the “book of all that monarchs do” but will keep that book shut since “vice repeated is like the wandering wind” and will spread (1.1.95-98), which signifies his willingness to keep the relationship secret. It is also his attempt to eradicate Antiochus's actions from the public realm. He contradicts this offer, however, when he licenses the King's right to act as a political one: “Kings are earth's gods” (104), Pericles asserts. This tortured logic misconstrues Antiochus's public actions as though they are both private and fixed. In the flux of conversation, Pericles asks the King to “give my tongue...leave to love my head,” thus asking Antiochus's permission to remain silent so that he might not be decapitated. But, the play dramatizes that Pericles does not practice a loving relationship to his head or anyone by keeping quiet (109). Instead of acknowledging the multiple crimes Antiochus commits, Pericles fails to take Antiochus's statements seriously by not accepting responsibility for the relationship the two men have entered into or responsibility for how he changes that relationship with his

speech. He does not save the daughter or the king from themselves, and he reneges on the rules of the contest he has agreed to.<sup>39</sup> Pericles refuses his obligations to a man who asked for more.

More specifically, Tracy McNulty analyzes the relationships constituted under hospitality to ascertain how a person's identity in her home alters when she welcomes a guest. A welcome prioritizes relationship over solitude.<sup>40</sup> Lupton links McNulty's argument to contingency and history by pointing out hospitality employs social scripts in physical environments, which reveals that hospitality is an intersection of the political and domestic realms.<sup>41</sup> McNulty's and Lupton's arguments clarify Antiochus's relationship to Pericles: With a multifaceted history invoked by the taboo relationship, the King's attempt to secure his daughter for himself, his setting up of conditions that result in necessary failure, and the murder of the men who arrive as quasi guests on diplomatic journeys, the King is not only committing multiple crimes within his own culture, he is inviting men to confront him. Pericles and the men who fail do not respond to the riddle correctly because the proper answer is "How dare you commit incest and scorn the laws of hospitality?"

Instead of discerning the fluidity of dialogue and the possibilities for Pericles to intervene in his relationship, the critical literature customarily accepts the role of Antiochus as though he constructs an established truth: He is Pericles's introduction to evil and an example of temptations fathers must resist; he sets in motion the test that Pericles must overcome in order to rejoin his

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<sup>39</sup> In a sense, Pericles offers Antiochus the early modern version of the assessment that "it's all good," which reveals the shallow element nestled within a phrase that otherwise suggests a transcendent acceptance of reality.

<sup>40</sup> Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007) vi-vii.

<sup>41</sup> Julia Lupton, "Shakespeare and Hospitality: Experience Economies from Hannah Arendt to Errant Romeo" (Paper, University of California, Irvine: The Humanities Collective May 19, 2011), 7-8.

family and provides the riddle that is the armature of the play.<sup>42</sup> With the insights of McNulty and Lupton, it is possible to recognize that Antiochus is not the unyielding reality of the world of the play. The King creates and sustains a political relationship to each person he greets in the throne room, and he does so in an era in which the compelling power of hospitality was so elemental, it could disrupt a life-and-death battle between two warriors and convert them into allies.<sup>43</sup> Even habituated to their relationship, the father and daughter would see the murder of guests as a crime (1.0.26-30).

In light of hospitality's prioritization of relationships and the contrast the play establishes in act four when Marina's interlocutors express their gratitude for her exhortations, it becomes clear that the play stages Pericles's response to Antiochus's provocation next to Marina's actions in the public realm. After all, Antiochus requires the groom be worthy (36), and this includes being forthright, but, Pericles fails at this and every moment in his audience with the King. Thus, when Pericles asks to be released from the bond, Antiochus decides to kill him because, ultimately, by not answering the riddle correctly, he cannot save the father, nor can he marry the daughter and rehabilitate the relationship into a marriage. *Sotto voce*, Antiochus says Pericles has found the meaning, and he wants to kill him, but he will "gloze" with his guest.<sup>44</sup> His deception is that Pericles has forty days to answer the riddle (110-120). By way of contrast, Marina's

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<sup>42</sup> See Knight, *The Crown of Life*, 38; Barber, "Excerpt from 'The Masked Neptune,'" 149; and Phyllis Gofrain, "Puzzle and Artifice: The Riddle as Metapoetry in *Pericles*" (*Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeene, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 135-136.

<sup>43</sup> In Book Six of *The Iliad*, lines 140-282, Diomedes and Glaukos meet on the Trojan battlefield, but they recognize that their ancestors were guest-friends -- they had offered hospitality to each other. Even though Diomedes and Glaukos fight on opposing sides of the war, Diomedes declares they share this bond. It is on this basis that the two men will not fight, regardless of the enmity of their armies: "let us keep clear of each other's spears, even there in the thick of battle" (Trans. Robert Fagles, New York: Viking, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> See Suzanne Gossett, the editor of the Arden *Pericles*, who points out that "gloze" means "fair and specious words" (*The Arden Shakespeare: Pericles*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2004), 189.



eloquence illuminates the options Pericles has in the throne room, that even seemingly private encounters are public, that dialogue is a process, and how the truth, when revealed, ends debate.

Marina's verbal choices demonstrate it is possible to help a person who is committing a wrong witness his own actions and understand he inhabits a relationship that affects others by seeing it from a broader point of view. Once he does, he changes his course of action. Scholars have acknowledged Pericles's weakness,<sup>45</sup> but Hunt argues that his passivity is best understood as the opening salvo in a play that contrasts his responses with verbal protests against evil.<sup>46</sup> I augment Hunt's argument by contending that Marina finds herself in multiple unjust situations and invents ways to survive, save her sense of integrity and honor, and win renown. Marina extricates herself by bold and exacting speech that she adjusts according to the needs of the moment. She willingly enters into relationships in which she deploys *parrhesic* speech that demonstrates her courage and requires her interlocutors to be brave enough to announce their own truths. Her verbal creativity is a "frank and open handling of language as an instrument of truth"<sup>47</sup> that engages her interlocutors in dialogue that extends the moment and forces others to see themselves from the exemplary point of view required for ethical action.<sup>48</sup> In these actions, Marina brings a broader view of the world to her interlocutors than Hunt acknowledges, and her willingness to do this offers the others salvation.

Marina's dialogues demonstrate her courage by being willing to engage with her interlocutors no matter what responses they offer her. She listens to them, responds appropriately,

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<sup>45</sup> See Arthos and Palfry.

<sup>46</sup> Hunt, 18.

<sup>47</sup> Lupton, "Affordances," 77.

<sup>48</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy" (*Responsibility and Judgment*, Ed. Jerome Kohn, New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 141-144.

and fearlessly relies on her education and creativity to reply with remarks that demonstrate her having understood their meanings but is unwilling to comply with their choices. She also consistently demonstrates her charity towards others, valuing them as much as she values herself, which matches her description of herself when first confronted with the possibility of being harmed:

I never spake bad word, nor did ill turn  
To any living creature. Believe me, la,  
I never killed a mouse nor hurt a fly.  
I trod upon a worm against my will,  
But I wept for't. (4.1.72-75)

Marina's Jainist-like instinct endures. Were it not for her stance, Leonine would be a murderer, Lysimachus a rapist, and Pericles lost to acedia. She remains resilient despite relationships that situate her amongst the most disempowered of people: Foster care makes her so vulnerable, she is almost murdered; pirates kidnap, traffic, and sell her into sexual slavery; she lives in a brothel whose owners have so overused their workers, they have made them "as good as rotten" (4.2.7-8),<sup>49</sup> the brothel owners' only interest in Marina is in her commodification.<sup>50</sup> Despite these power differentials, Marina speaks. If the play moves from a scene of incest to

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<sup>49</sup> Lupton, "Affordances," 73.

<sup>50</sup> Byron Nelson (*Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference*, 2: 2008), 18. Nelson references but does not give bibliographic information for his sources, but he names Brian Vickers, MacDonald Jackson and Roger Warren. Interestingly, Marina's experience of being kidnapped and sex trafficked is similar to people who are sexually enslaved nowadays. It may be the case that the current day experience resonates with the depiction in *Pericles* due to Wilkins having been a procurer.

appropriately separated family relations, it also moves from a disastrous response to abuse of power to empowering responses.<sup>51</sup>

Marina is particularly articulate because the degree of danger which she faces must tempt her to simply impose her will on her interlocutors -- she is invested in ensuring they do not kill, rape, or enslave her -- but she draws on opportunities for assertion to lead her interlocutors to reveal themselves to her and themselves. She does not make anyone comply with her wishes out of hand; her deliberations demonstrate the relationship-building capacity of speech. Nelson argues Marina is the most endangered of all heroines in the late romances and escapes each peril by learning how to bargain her way out of sexual assault, but concludes she is a victim.<sup>52</sup> This summary is succinct, but Marina makes subtle choices and varies her speech from praise of Leonine to admonitions for Bolt, reproof to Pericles, and extended conversation with Lysimachus. After her failure to persuade Leonine, she arrives in the brothel, where her repudiation of the brothel owners' counsel achieves nothing. She learns from her failures: When she meets with clients, instead of using flattery as she had with Leonine or complaints as she had with Bawd, she develops skills as a rhetorician to help others see themselves from their own point of view, not hers (4.1.69-87).

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<sup>51</sup> The critical tradition attributes Marina's forthright attitude to her noble status and to models from medieval saints, but other noble female characters in the play are not forthright about the harms they suffer or commit. See Lorraine Helms, "The Saint in the Brothel: Or, Eloquence Rewarded" (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41.3:1990). For instance, Gower suggests the daughter is made to have sex by her father, but when the riddle is performed in her voice, it reads as her complaint. She does not persist in her complaints. Williams argues Marina fends for herself by wielding discursive tools that give her great freedom. See "Papa Don't Preach: Proximity in *Pericles*" (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, 71.2:2002), 599.

<sup>52</sup> Nelson, 21, 25.

In her extended scene with Lysimachus, she intuitively understands what her interlocutor is thinking and prompts him to speak to his intent, which forces the governor to see his purchase would violate his own morals.<sup>53</sup> She also names her desires:

For me, that am a maid, though most ungentle fortune have placed me in this sty, where, since I came, diseases have been sold dearer than physic, O, that the gods would set me free from this unhallow'd place, though they did change me to the meanest bird that flies i' the purer air!" (4.5.90-94).<sup>54</sup>

Instead of being a victim, Marina's willingness to state truths are acts of self-determination. Before she states her desires, she blends Socratic debate with dramatic irony in a bravura performance. She dilates her conversation by making it run on two separate, parallel tracks. She and Lysimachus speak around each other, with Marina on a track where she speaks the truth about herself: she cannot be offended by her trade; if she is now practicing a trade, she has always practiced it (72-81). On the second track, Lysimachus reveals he thinks Marina is a sex worker in an offensive and illegal trade who seeks greater remuneration from him (70-90).

Since Marina's dialogue twists in on itself, it can lead nowhere, an atelic prompting without convergence that stretches into infinite. This lack of a definite topic delays the work of the brothel and renders Marina's speech a performance performed for its own sake:<sup>55</sup> So long as they speak, Marina preserves her virginity.

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<sup>53</sup> It is worth noting that the relationship between Lysimachus and Marina parallels many current-day sex trafficking situations in as much as Lysimachus seems unaware of Marina's status in the brothel. Marina is enslaved (4.2.40-47); however, it is not clear Lysimachus is aware of this.

<sup>54</sup> The moment alludes to the character of Marcus in *Titus Andronicus* when he sees Lavinia and calls her "fair Philomela" (*Titus Andronicus*, 2.4.28-43; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book VI, lines 82-83 and 22-43).

<sup>55</sup> In *The Human Condition*, Arendt argues that there is nothing higher to attain than the actuality itself. The pure performance of the dancer or actor was considered the highest and greatest activity in the ancient world (206-207). In the case of this dialogue, it is similar to "Who's on first," with the performance functioning as a demonstration of mastery in timing, attention, and memory.

However, Marina allows the two tracks of the conversation to converge when she confronts Lysimachus about his presence in the brothel and asks directly for what she wants: Lysimachus must act with honor. When he reveals he knows Marina is in a brothel, she takes the opportunity to elucidate the problem with his statement: “Do you know this house to be a place of such resort, and will come into 't?” She then challenges him with, “I hear say you are of honorable parts, and are the governor of this place” (84-86), and exhorts him to “Make the judgment good that thought you worthy of it” (96). Her imperative risks much. She gives the governor the chance to act in whatever way he believes is honorable. She does not know Lysimachus well enough to know what he will do. Since their subject positions are dissimilar; he is free to act as he chooses, and she occupies an embattled, enslaved status. The two have potentially radically divergent notions of right and wrong, so his honorable actions could include giving her a large financial tip, being gentle, or raising Marina’s status (80).

Lysimachus asks her to take him to a more private place, and Marina gambles that her notion of honor is Lysimachus’s. She calls on his honor, which is a function of public reputation. Honor and privacy are in opposition, as Charles Taylor explains; honor is held externally. It is not a private matter, in opposition to subjectivity, which is closely tied up with thoughts and valuations that remain apart from how any other individual might assess oneself.<sup>56</sup> Marina thereby re-constitutes the brothel as an instantiation of the public realm and shows Lysimachus cannot treat it privately: she thought he was honorable and will know he is not. Both characters recognize that brothels are disease-ridden, offensive, and illegal (94). His actions will have public consequences. Lysimachus offers his own imperative: Be sage. With this command,

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<sup>56</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 152-6.

Marina reveals herself. Her description alludes to Ovid's story of Philomela, a rape victim changed into a bird (104-6). Marina explains she is a virgin and prays to be set free, even if it means no longer being human.<sup>57</sup> Marina discloses that she is in the brothel unwillingly. Sex with her would be rape.<sup>58</sup> Marina's account eases the corruption in Lysimachus's mind (151) and reveals her temerity as a teller of truths. The truth ends all debate. As Arendt explains, the truth is coercive and puts an end to deliberation. Marina's dialogue with Lysimachus stops when she helps them see that her truth is the broadest, most accurate account of their relationship.<sup>59</sup>

Dialogues in act four highlight the phenomenological tension between political and philosophical discourse. Arendt pits the debates of the political realm against truths crafted in the life of the mind to uncover their interdependence: Factual truth is

much more vulnerable...than all the kinds of rational truth taken together. . . . .  
The chances of factual truth surviving the onslaught of power are very slim indeed; it is always in danger of being maneuvered out of the world not only of time but, potentially, forever. . . . Kant...stated that 'the external power that deprives man of the freedom to communicate his thoughts publicly, *deprives him at the same time of his freedom to think*' (italics Arendt's), and that the only

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<sup>57</sup> Since Lysimachus comments on Marina's well-spoken manner, it is somewhat amusing that she alludes to a moment from *Titus Andronicus*, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays. In any case, the allusion to Philomela clarifies for a well-read individual that sex with Marina would be rape.

<sup>58</sup> In the Oxford version of the play, which includes elements from Wilkins's novel, Marina reveals herself more explicitly and also reveals the cost of Lysimachus's course of action would be:

If you take from me mine honour, you are like him that makes a gap into forbidden ground, whom after too many enter, and you are guilty of all their evils. My life is yet unspotted, my chastity unstained even in thought. Then if your violence deface this building, the workmanship of heaven, made up for good, and not for exercise of sin's intemperance, you kill your honour, abuse your justice, and impoverish me. (Scene 19 lines 114-123)

Recent analyses of sex trafficking affirm this description of first-time sex trafficking victims. The spokesperson for the *Abolish Human Trafficking Report* of 27 October, 2015, states that once a person has been trafficked, especially sex trafficked, he or she will not be able to leave the situation before s/he is an adult, which is especially pertinent since the average age of trafficked individuals is 15.

<sup>59</sup> In Marina's dialogue with Bolt, Bolt is furious with Marina, condemns her choice, and threatens her with death and rape (173-5). He makes a fatal error by allowing Marina to ask him what he would wish on his enemies. He admits his employers are the worst he can think of, and Marina leaps to the occasion. Her description of Bolt's work places him as the inferior in every encounter (208-217).

Here, she is using her skills at invention by listing jobs whose low status puts his employ into high relief: Cleaning sewers or being indentured to executioners is better than being the enforcer of a brothel. Her creativity is great enough that when Adelman says the brothel is the only scene of generativity in the play, it would have been more precise to refer to Marina's inventiveness than the sex that takes place there. (*Suffocating Mothers* 196-197).

guarantee for “the correctness” of our thinking lies in that “we think as it were, in community with others to whom we communicate our thoughts as they communicate theirs to us.”<sup>60</sup>

She argues that although truth halts debate, the fallibility of human reason makes it important for people to communicate their thoughts in the public realm. If they do not, they lose the freedom to think and cannot guarantee their ideas are correct.<sup>61</sup> Truths, therefore, are not only found in isolation; they are a function of relationships and occur in history. However, since historical facts are contingent, they can be irrevocably lost, making it important to preserve them in stories by illustrating cause-and-effect relationships between them and reinforcing their integration into the public realm.<sup>62</sup> This occurs because the hallmark of narrative is to link phenomena into causal-chronological wholes, connecting otherwise isolated occurrences into interrelated networks.<sup>63</sup> Without philosophy, the political realm, and narrative, people cannot create, test, preserve, or publicize the truth. This elucidates how Marina creates a climate necessary for thinking. Lysimachus and Bolt participate in a closed community in which their desires coincide; Lysimachus is anxious to use “a dozen virginities” and Bawd and Bolt do not dispute him (4.5.27-34). Marina opens their circle to disagreement and alternate facts, both of which are required for thinking and critical judgment. With the introduction of her truths, the others cannot help but agree.

The relationships created demonstrate respect. So long as Lysimachus does not know Marina’s identity, he holds her in the kind of regard that Arendt mentions: with feelings of

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<sup>60</sup> Arendt, “Truth and Politics,” 299.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Arendt, *ibid.*, 297.

<sup>63</sup> Herman, 237.

friendship but lacking intimacy and closeness.<sup>64</sup> These qualities, which might deepen their relationship beyond their shared decision to treat one another according to how she or he would like, are not possible so long as Marina keeps her identity secret and fails to embark upon the kinds of disclosures she prompts from others. Nonetheless, Marina takes others' desires seriously, presents the implication of their choices, and accepts her responsibility for the possibilities her presence affords. The result is an equitable relationship: Each person speaks, reveals himself, listens to the other, and debates. In ancient Greece, frank speech of this kind was considered necessary for democracy, a fundamental component of the deliberative process.<sup>65</sup> When Pericles refuses to engage Antiochus in conversation, he refuses to respect him and insults the king by not believing he is courageous enough to hear the truth. The consequences are clear: Pericles leaves the King and his daughter to be shriveled up by a fire from heaven so dreadful, "they so stunk that all those eyes [that] adored them ere their fall scorn now their hand should give them burial" (2.4.9-12). Pericles's deference to monarchical authority offers the King no chance to change.

### **To glad your ears: Narrative in *Pericles***

Marina's dialogues present a test of her character's ability to listen to her interlocutors, requiring she carefully attend to each word so she can counter it and not allow characters to conceive of their relationship as inconsequential. In order for *Pericles* to contrast Marina's actions with her father's, it interrupts his journey, a discontinuity that frustrates readers who read

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<sup>64</sup> Arendt, 243.

<sup>65</sup> Robert W. Wallace, "The Power to Speak -- and Not to Listen -- in Ancient Athens" (*Free Speech in Classical Antiquity: Penn-Leiden Colloquium on Ancient Values*. Ed. Ineke Sluiter and Ralph Mark Rosen. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 2004), 223-227.



the play solely as his.<sup>66</sup> So long as this purposive effect of discontinuity in multi-focus narratives is not acknowledged, scholars can complain that the play's interruption is strange, intrusive, or unrealistic.<sup>67</sup> Ironically, the spoiled unity of the play lends a sense of realism by reflecting the world's diversity. The interruption is also necessary for the play to create act five's sense of wonder.<sup>68</sup>

That response occurs when Marina meets Pericles. The audience understands the implication of the reunion because we know their narratives. Dramatic irony stirs the audience to hope they will recognize one other since each is the precise person the other needs to see, but since the characters met only at Marina's birth, they cannot recognize one another. To intensify this difficulty, no one has told Marina who the visitor is, and Marina has kept her identity secret. For Pericles, that Marina is alive will rejuvenate him. For Marina, although she has made a life for herself, she believes she has lived in "a lasting storm" that whirs her from her friends (4.1.17-18). She has no one who is particular to her, no kin, no member of her tribe. Abandoned by her father and not sought after by her mother, she is remarkably vulnerable. Yet, this woman who never met her own father must make herself known to this man whose name she does not know and who refuses to speak.<sup>69</sup> In this scene, what had seemed like the plot's failure to present

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<sup>66</sup> Altman, 248.

<sup>67</sup> These vary from Jonson's comments in *Every Man in his Humour* and "Ode to Himself" to the Victorian Era's New Shakespeare Society's making the play into a kind of "Piltdown Man" (Skeene, *Thwarting* 25), to William Watkiss Lloyd and Gervinus, who nonetheless praise Marina for her immaculate morality.

<sup>68</sup> Skeene attributes the praise to critics who sought unity and who enjoyed reconstructing it, especially G. Wilson Knight, who saw unity in its symbolic pattern and earthly immortality; T. S. Eliot, who saw it as a turn towards liturgy; and D. A. Traversi, who called it a mythical pilgrimage towards earthly perfection. All of these scholars praise the power in the reunion scene (*Thwarting*, 40-69).

<sup>69</sup> Marina is being reasonably cautious; Dionyza might still want her dead.

the triumphant journey of a proud protagonist<sup>70</sup> generates the transindividual point of view that is the dramatic center of multi-focus texts. They fill the scene with multiple characters so their audiences glimpse the plural nature of the world. Interestingly, the critical response to the reunion also sees it as the dramatic center of *Pericles*, and the center of this play features the meaning-giving power of narrative.

In the last ten years, Adriana Cavarero, Shari Stone-Mediatore, Frederick W. Meyer, Allen Speight, Ned Curthoys, Laura J. Disch, and Julia Kristeva have each illuminated the social relationship between a narrator and her audience. David Herman also brings narratological questions into the science of the mind. He relies on the research of dozens of scholars who have linked neurological processes to narrative structure to argue that stories and interpreters have mutually influential roles: interpreters see textual cues as affordances that allow them to negotiate storyworlds, and narratives are resources for making sense of the world.<sup>71</sup>

For these scholars, a person's ability to construct a narrative equates with his ability to confer meaning upon otherwise alienating, disempowering, and random events. Cavarero argues that the narrator's ability to posit causal relations between events enables him to demonstrate who he is as a person, which is more than the roles he serves. Indeed, in Cavarero, the unique, dignity-conferring qualities of a person are only available through the narrative that can be told

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<sup>70</sup> Arthos's study of the play insists the play is focused on the progress of Pericles's misfortunate and happiness; his description highlights disparities between scenes, and he minimizes Gower's role as merely providing the "proper tone" (258, 270). Williams's alternate account critiques Gower and argues his moral verbiage conceals an investment in and fascination with incestuous desire (597-599).

<sup>71</sup> David Herman, *Storytelling and the Science of Mind* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2013), 48, 1. In this sense, the play offers its audiences possibilities for interpretation and prediction in ways similar to how the character Marina, perceived in relationship to other characters as either an object or a subject, makes it possible for others to treat her in various ways. It is possible to see these abstractions and characters as creating potentials within relationships. I owe my thinking on this to Lupton's characterization of affordances: "...objects and environments solicit or enable specific behaviors, postures, and attitudes among those who handle or pass through them." Lupton references James J. Gibson in this line of thinking ("Affordances" 65).

of him.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, since the construction of a plot creates meaning, scholars like Meyer and Stone-Mediatore draw on the effects of narrative to account for ways in which a speaker can persuade others to join collective actions: Narratives elucidate an individual's connection to a social cause. So too, when a storyteller confers meaning to events, he can alter others' notions of the world by indicating an event's otherwise unknown tensions and ambiguities. Finally, narrators who talk about experiences outside common occurrences broaden others' perspective of life.<sup>73</sup> These accounts correspond to early modern definitions of *narratio*: It was a rhetorical form that set out what deeds had been done by reporting who did what when, how, and why, which was useful for persuading hostile audiences because its clarifications had the virtue of being brief and plausible.<sup>74</sup> These scholars reveal how Arendt's notions regarding narrative bridge the political, literary, theatrical, and historical realms.

For Arendt, stories have a two-fold nature. First, when an individual gives an account of himself, it will necessarily be partial because no individual can know the full consequences of his actions. Nonetheless, his deeds and statements bring the public realm an account of his experiences. After the individual and all participants to the pertinent events die, the public realm participates in the second element of narrative by recording and divulging who the individual was as a unique being.<sup>75</sup> Arendt points out that when the recording and disclosure occur in theatrical productions, they transpose the individual in a more precise way than in a story because theater necessarily entails relationships, as would the life experience of the individual,

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<sup>72</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 26-28.

<sup>73</sup> Shari Stone-Mediatore, *Reading Across Borders: Storytelling and Knowledges of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 159.

<sup>74</sup> Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12, 27-28, 36-39, 54.

<sup>75</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178-179.

thus recreating to a relatively greater extent the public realm as it was during the events of the individual's life.<sup>76</sup> As Arendt explains, "This is also why the theater is the political art par excellence; only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art. By the same token, it is the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others."<sup>77</sup>

Arendt's account thereby presupposes multiple participants in the narrative process and solves a problem that concerns Hiscock: So many individuals create a play and so many narratives are entailed in *Pericles*, he finds an analysis quickly becomes unwieldy.<sup>78</sup> This is precisely the arena clarified by multi-focus narratives and Arendt's phenomenology. Together, they offer explanatory analyses for *Pericles*: Its armature includes multiple narratives so as to dramatize the enlightenment characters achieve when they reframe their isolated narratives into ones that are necessarily interdependent with others,' the rendering of which creates a sense of awe for characters and audience when these characters meet and recognize one another even though they have no chance of being able to do so.

### **Opposing Coigns the World Together Joins: Multi-focus Narratives and the Ensemble**

Theatrically, since act five's performance of the reunion between Marina and Pericles depends upon an exquisite level of engagement and negotiation, it is best understood in terms Jonathan Neelands offers for understanding the work and effect of ensemble acting. For Neelands, ensemble acting foments extensive participation amongst individuals who commit to working towards a common goal rather than highlighting their individual needs as performers or

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, 183-188.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, 187.

<sup>78</sup> Hiscock, 35.

separate roles as characters.<sup>79</sup> Performers bring their lived, heterogeneous experiences into the collective creation of artistic works and must negotiate, develop leadership skills, and diminish their individual needs. Neelands claims that this process enlarges the capacity of individuals to bring the interpersonal skills they develop in rehearsal to their lives outside the theater, which results in the amplification of their capacity for shared rule and egalitarianism.<sup>80</sup>

Neelands's argument reveals what occurs in the dialogue between Marina and Pericles even though it moves in the opposite direction from his description. The same interpersonal skills he names reflect what Marina and her father must achieve to be reunited: They must be able to hear each others' words, intuit the emotions of the other, stay in process with their own feelings, and set aside their reactions enough to be able to recognize someone they have never met. The result enables Pericles to hear on a plane unavailable to others but also requires Marina remain silent about the more sensational elements of her own story.

The Pericles-Marina reunion is highly problematic because a person cannot recognize another he has never met. Its achievement in the play is exceptional. It is also consistent with the romances and the "miracle" that is the natural function of narrative: to make meaningful and recognizable what had hitherto been unknowable, chaotic, and meaningless. Through this enactment, the play renders the public realm as a space in which people who bind their narratives together ascertain that the nature of the world consists of their relationships with one another. This rendering mirrors the notion of narration in the public realm as Arendt conceives it and as Stone-Mediatore, Dietz, and Curthoys elaborate. Each scholar shows egalitarian structures

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<sup>79</sup> Jonothan Neelands, "Acting Together: Ensemble as a Democratic Process in Art and Life" (*Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 14.2:2009), 4. Altman states that this effect, in fiction, undermines the narrator's authority (264).

<sup>80</sup> Neelands, *ibid.*

depend upon mutuality, vulnerability, negotiation, and recognition of interdependent relationships; the effects of such actions when publicized as an individual's story have the capacity to defeat the interpersonal and ideological ground of authoritarianism.

The process work for ensemble theater is especially important in the recognition scene in *Pericles*. It requires negotiation and contraction, much as Neelands describes, because the dialogue between Marina and Pericles is elongated by parley and reciprocity. Its unusual demands include Pericles's indistinguishable questions and Marina's nebulous answers in a series of repeated cues. Tiffany Stern and Simon Palfrey have analyzed the performative effects of this kind of dialogue on the Shakespearean stage.<sup>81</sup> Before the original performance of a play, players were handed individual "roles" of paper, which consisted solely of a character's speeches and cue-phrases. Players memorized lines in isolation with limited rehearsal. This required they generate a sense of their characters in order to personate them effectively. Since they did this apart from knowledge of the plot as a whole, repeated cues placed powerful stressors on their performances.<sup>82</sup> In scenes when a cue-phrase is said more than once in a short space of time, players spoke "inside" each other's lines: They interrupted each other and talked at the same time, which generated frustration and anxiety and resulted in performances that were necessarily different from what the players imagined when they memorized their roles alone. The writing therefore generated performances of great emotional intensity.<sup>83</sup>

In act five of *Pericles*, the repetitions are so extensive and the responses contain such a paucity of information, a player would not know how to respond without listening with

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<sup>81</sup> They do not analyze *Pericles*. Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 158, 163-164.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, 96-99.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, 158 163-164.

unparalleled acuity. Given the stress of this scene in particular and of live performance in general, it is likely each player would respond to incorrect cues with improper lines. Even with rehearsal in the contemporary world, the repeated cues increase the need for negotiations and assiduous listening.<sup>84</sup>

Marina launches the dialogue with her characteristic *parrhesia* and criticizes the stranger. When Pericles pushes her, she reproves him and makes him see her worth: “I am a maid, my lord, that ne’er before invited eyes....She speaks...that may be hath endured a grief might equal yours, if both were justly weighed” (5.1.75-80). Pericles asks her to repeat herself, and she does, but when he asks where she is from, she responds without clear answers and postpones telling her personal history for a hundred lines. This reveals Marina’s foible: Although she helps others witness themselves, she does not reveal herself.

The Marina character answers each query precisely but narrowly; she obeys Pericles’s requests but defends herself against him. Her hesitation is understandable. Marina does not know where his questions will lead, he has been very ill, and he has struck her, an indentured worker subject to the island’s ruler and its sex traffickers. She is being called on to heal this man who has not spoken to anyone in three months who rewards her with pushing and interrogating her. As a character, Marina feels suspicion and concern, which explain her vague answers: She was born of no shores, is a stranger who lives near the shore, was named by someone that had power whose name she does not at first give. She asserts she will not explain who she is because she will not be believed (5.1.95, 105-106, 139-140, 133). Bradin Cormack explains that, on a legal level, Marina’s having been born at sea makes categorization of her difficult, and that the play’s

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<sup>84</sup> Daniel Keegan, personal interview, 2013.

subjectivication of her is its most complex achievement.<sup>85</sup> Phenomenologically, for her reunion to her father to occur, Marina must overcome this habit of concealment. Forthright speech requires she divulge personal details.

Theatrically, the delay of Marina's self-revelation builds tension. Pericles's questions resemble each other to an inordinate degree. Within the space of seventy-one lines, he asks:

What say you?...What country-woman?...Where do you live?...Here of these shores?...Where were you bred?...How achieved you these endowments, which you make more rich to owe?...What were thy friends?...Thy name?...A king's daughter?...And call'd Marina?...But are you flesh and blood?...Have you a working pulse? And are no fairy?...Where were you born?...And wherefore call'd Marina?...What mother?...How came you in these parts?...Where were you bred? (5.1.89-160)

Pericles's commands repeat as well: "Prithee, speak...Report thy parentage...Tell thy story...Recount, I do beseech thee...speak on...Stop there a little!" (5.1.89-160). The possibility that the actors will misstep heightens the tension of the scene. Each actor must be willing to alter his lines to answer sensibly. The scene requires all the skills of conversation -- attentive listening, empathy, courtesy, and appropriate response -- alongside the skills of ensemble acting -- remaining in character, performance of recognizably legitimate physical gestures, attention to nuance, persistent negotiation -- and closes the distance between character and actor. This likewise affects the audience such that they are more than usually moved by this reunion: It quashes the distance between character, actor, and audience and creates a united effect.<sup>86</sup>

Upon Pericles's fourth command to tell her story, Marina reveals herself. Pericles recognizes her because the facts she relates elucidate cause and effect relationships:

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<sup>85</sup> Bradin Cormack, *A Power to do Justice*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 288.

<sup>86</sup> See Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of the Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).



My mother was the daughter of a king, who died the minute I was born . . . .  
The king my father did in Tarsus leave me, till cruel Cleon, with his wicked  
wife, did seek to murder me and wooed a villain to attempt it, who having  
drawn to do't, a crew of pirates came and rescued me, brought me to  
Mytilene . . . . I am the daughter to King Pericles, if good King Pericles be.  
(148-169)

The response is the overwhelming joy of Pericles and Marina's astonishment seen in her line, "Is it no more to be your daughter than to say my mother's name was Thaisa?" (198-199).

In one sense, the story Marina offers is all that she and Pericles require. They are together as two people who only care that this other is precisely who he is: Her father, his daughter. Nothing else matters, including Marina's omission of her time in the brothel. Instead, the only person who can bring healing to Pericles is simultaneously the only person who can be healed by him. The mutual healing is a re-birth: Each is exactly the *who* the other needs to create lives both find worth living, and their reunion demonstrates that the tragic stories they had told themselves of their lives were so one-sided, they were incorrect on the face of them.

The scene is Pericles's achievement and reversal: He exhorts his interlocutor to speak, listens to her with care for her words and their implications, asks her to explain herself more fully and to de-mystify her answers, and persists in asking her to give an account of herself despite her hesitation. Instead of fleeing, allowing her her silence, or deferring to her, he attends to her as well as himself: He explains his feelings, regardless of his embarrassment or shame, accounts for his rudeness by admitting he is "great with woe," explains he believes she mocks him, and elaborates on how she cannot imagine how startled he is by her name. Pericles expresses the renewal he feels by merging the world of speech with the world of birth: "I will believe you by the syllable of what you shall deliver" (89-160). He remains in process and voices his emotions at every moment. The result is Marina's reversal. She reveals herself, and both

leave the relationship established through this singular conversation more equitably than before, having engaged in mutual recognition, which only comes from their persistence, negotiation, and divulgements. Their co-witnessing restores them to a greater sense of wholeness and enables them to move more freely in the world, with Marina removed from the enslavement of indentured service and Pericles from the bonds of depression. Beckwith explains that the music that nipped Pericles into listening is the “answering echo, the divine attunement to the harmonies established through the human voice. There is no competition here between divine and human voice.”<sup>87</sup>

### **Wishes fall out as they’re will’d: The Paradox of Imagination**

The risk the actors take in the demanding reunion between Pericles and Marina heightens the existential bond between audience and actors, pressing on the audience to hope for the actors’ success and fear their failure while simultaneously arousing the audience’s hope that the characters will reunite. This scene demonstrably heightens the feeling of wonder because the Gower narration engenders the imaginative experience inherent in fiction, and the play intensifies this experience by rendering it in live action. The play thus achieves an exceptional merging not only between audience, actor, and character but also audience and character, all within the achievement of a transindividual point of view, because it combines narration with dialogue.

Hiscock notes that scholars complain of Gower’s narration interfering with the audience’s experience of the drama, but this attests, in part, to their omission of an analysis of the cognitive experience of reading -- as opposed to watching a live performance -- when they analyze

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<sup>87</sup> Beckwith, 102.

*Pericles*.<sup>88</sup> I examine the antepenultimate narrations to argue that the combination of narration, dumb show, and dramatic action establishes a process that makes *Pericles* a play that marries the experience of reading to the experience of theater so that the play's characters and theatrical audience experience wishes being fulfilled. I rely on Ricoeur's analysis of the links between fiction and the imagination to discuss linguistic elements of this process. Saulius Geniusas's analysis also accounts for its pre-predicative, that is, nonverbal elements.

Phenomenologists have variously argued amongst themselves that the imagination either reflects or creates reality.<sup>89</sup> Ricoeur and Geniusas elucidate that the imagination therefore has a dual, paradoxical, capacity, and they resolve the quandry by explaining that imagination suspends direct reference to objects of ordinary discourse and offers a new model for reading reality.<sup>90</sup> Ricoeur effects this reconciliation in his account of the poetic imagination, and Geniusas emends Ricoeur's analysis phenomenologically. By examining the nature of imagination when presented with metaphors, it is possible to ascertain how an imaginative flight from the world can then use the imagination to authentically forge a new understanding of that same world. This is what occurs in the audience during dramatic performances of *Pericles*.

Ricoeur argues that metaphors create a "predicative impertinence" that, when solved, construct reality. When a metaphor presents a reader with an impossibility, its emotional shock

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88 Hiscock, 24.

<sup>89</sup> For this argument, I depend largely upon Saulius Geniusas's article "Between Phenomenology and Hermeneutics: Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination" (*Human Studies*, 38: 2015), 223-241. In addition, see Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imagination* (F. Williams, Translator, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1964). Sartre's account draws from Husserl but moves that account of the imagination in an existentialist direction. See Edmund Husserl, *Phantasy, Image-consciousness, and Memory in 1898-1925* (J. B. Transl. Sordrecht: Springer, 2005). I also draw from Cornelius Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary" (*The Castoriadis Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 319-227 and Michel Merleau-Ponty "Eye and Mind" (*The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 121-149.

<sup>90</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling" (*Critical Inquiry*, 5.1: 1957), 143-159.

forces her to reconcile the image into a new vision of the world. For instance, *Pericles* creates two different literal impossibilities when Marina says she robs “Tellus of her weeds to strew” Lychoridia’s grave with flowers and Gower later says Marina’s art “sisters” the natural roses. Marina equates picking flowers with theft and wild flowers with the Earth Goddess’s garments; Gower grants Marina the power of a goddess to create nature (4.1.12, 5.0.7). The resulting jolt invites a reader to make sense of the impossibilities, and she discerns that Marina means she is collecting flowers and that Gower is describing Marina’s needlework as being realistically executed. To understand this, the reader frees herself from the epistemological-affective shock by suspending the metaphor’s meaninglessness from reality. Here, she examines it and, upon sorting it out, makes it reasonable, which reshapes her world into one that includes Marina’s powerful capacity for needlework and sense of a web of life when she kills live things to honor her dead nurse’s grave. The transformation of an impossibility into a possibility is precisely the transposition metaphors accomplish: Marina is not a goddess, nor does she steal from Tellus; she is sensitive emotionally and artistically. Ricoeur gives the primary function of this process to language; Geniusas points out that a pre-verbal consciousness ascertains the equations between picking flowers and robbery as well as the earth with Tellus.<sup>91</sup> This process occurs on a larger scale in reading: Readers make meaning of a text as a whole and see reality in new ways.

*Pericles* joins theatrical spectacle to the sense-making process a successful reader accomplishes with texts in such a way that audiences imagine characters’ inner worlds more than they customarily do in performance. When Gower narrates, he elicits the normal function of reading, recalls the delight a child might feel being read a story, and introduces plot points in the

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<sup>91</sup> Geniusas, 233.

pre-predicative dumb shows, which allows the audience to infer what wishes the characters have. Since interpreters of fiction make sense of narrative texts by using provisional, revisable ascriptions of intention to characters,<sup>92</sup> Gower's calling on the audience to perform an activity customarily associated with reading enables the play to evoke its audience's imagination rather than simply dramatizing all plot elements through live action.

Act four leaves Marina in the brothel before she meets any clients and Dionyza convincing Cleon to tell Pericles Marina died (4.3.140, 4.4.39-50). Gower informs the audience Pericles is at sea "To see his daughter, all his life's delight" (4.1.12). The audience imagines father and daughter together and ascribes that wish to the Pericles character. Dramatic irony intensifies the imagining because if the two were together, Pericles would rescue Marina. In the dumb show, that reunion is delayed: "Cleon shows Pericles the tomb; whereat Pericles makes lamentation, puts on sackcloth, and in a mighty passion departs," causing Pericles to "suffer by foul show" and for sorrow to devour him (22-23). The audience again imagines Pericles and Marina together, knowing that each can rescue the other.

When Gower returns, he summarizes Marina's accomplishments on Mitylene and directs the audience to think of "her father...again / Where we left him, on the sea. We there him lost; / Whence, driven before the winds, he is arrived / Here where his daughter dwells..." (5.1.13). These directions invite the audience to call up an image of Pericles amended by a metaphor: Pericles has been "lost," which may remind the audience of his being lost at sea, but in this moment, enveloped in sorrow and refusing actions that would restore him: He is lost to humanity. Gower alerts the audience that Pericles is "now at anchor," and to increase the

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<sup>92</sup> Herman, 58.

possibility that the audience will imagine the reunion, he does not say “at Mytilene,” but, “where his daughter dwells” (15). Gower instructs the audience: “In your supposing once more put your sight / Of heavy Pericles” (5.1-23-24).

The audience is cued to simply think of Pericles, but the affective hope that the unlikely reunion will occur calls forth memories of the plays by Shakespeare in which a character who is presumed dead is shown to be alive, knowledge regarding the generic conventions of romance, and the story of Christ’s resurrection. Herman calls these “affordances,”<sup>93</sup> the grips a story offers a reader to catch ahold of to imagine what will happen. In *Pericles*, the audience simultaneously recalls that the characters need to see each other. With words hermeneutically or without words phenomenologically, the audience knows, She is right here. Such knowledge elongates the scene and enhances the desire for the wish to be fulfilled. Mary Zimmerman explains the feeling: “*Pericles* is a play that satisfies our fondest, saddest wish that what we have lost could be found again, that the great unexpected tragic losses that we go through in life could miraculously be restored.”<sup>94</sup> With Pericles’s joy at finding his daughter, it becomes clear that “Truth can never be confirmed enough” because he wants his joy to endure. He has found the relationship between his story and Marina’s: “Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget / Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus / And found at sea again!” (5.1.185-187). If not in text, at least in performance, Pericles and Marina bring each other to life.

As Ricoeur explains, when a person reads metaphors in fiction, she takes them up in their meaninglessness, brackets that meaninglessness, comes to understand the resonances, and

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<sup>93</sup> Herman, 48.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Gossett, “‘Tell Thy Story:’ Mary Zimmerman’s *Pericles*” (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 57.2: 2006), 184, 188, 186.

reframes the world:<sup>95</sup> A reader's relationship to fiction is to take the imagined world and reconstitute it into forms she had not seen before. *Pericles* masterfully wields the narrative tools of wishing and prediction but also imagining and meaning-making. It then supersedes them all by taking what was imagined and incarnating it onstage. The combination of narration and dialogue highlights the disparity between the two, with Gower's words relatively static, uninterrupted, and still in opposition to conversation filled with interruption, silences, and assertions such that the presentation of a narrator joined with live action renders the differences between reading words and speaking in dialogue, augmenting *Pericles*'s differentiation between *Pericles*'s acquiescence to Antiochus and Marina's willingness to engage her interlocutors.

Theater strengthens the already powerful effects of fiction, and in the case of *Pericles*, the play transcends even these effects by rendering how isolated personal narratives are inaccurate portrayals of reality. For individuals to attain a realistic understanding of the world, they must weave their partial stories with others' to disclose the salvific interdependence that was true all along. Thus, I argue *Pericles*'s "intrigue" is the literary and theatrical effect of multi-focus narratives dramatized alongside narration. Insight into the two protagonists' journeys grants a transindividual point of view while Gower's narration, which invites audiences to imagine the reunions, enhances bonds between characters and audience. While more formal work can expand upon this analysis, these two techniques illuminate the theatrical effects of the play's "remorseless concertina-ing...of the play's chronological architecture:"<sup>96</sup> they elicit wonder.

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<sup>95</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality" (*Man and World*, 12.2: 1979), 134.

<sup>96</sup> Hiscock, 24.

## The Boundary of Personal Narratives: The Stages of our Story

Even though the play reveals the power of shared narratives, a counter argument could be made that would discuss the extent to which the personal stories in *Pericles* are incomplete. Marina's misattributes her would-be murderer and omits all references to the brothel. Marina's personal narrative effects her family's healing but fails to account for her journey from the brothel to her "leafy shelter" by the shore, her school, and why she gives the bounty her students pour on her to "the cursed Bawd" (5.1.43-44, 9-12). In this, Marina dramatizes the impossibility of any one person accurately representing her own narrative. While she does honor the unspoken needs of the stranger to whom she relates her story, the play inscribes the erasure of the nature of sex trafficking from history. As Arendt explains, facts are fragile; "everything that has actually happened...could just as well have been otherwise," so if the character of Marina does not explain these elements of her experience, they will likely not be known. While there are rationalizations for this, the risks are great: At stake is the sense that gives people their bearings.<sup>97</sup> Marina's omission is grave; however, Gower's narration, the play's rendition of Marina's experiences, and the drama of the reunions exonerate this erasure.<sup>98</sup> Her testimony is short-sighted but interpretable in compelling ways as effects of multi-narration.

Marina and her father rewrite her into a character who suffers little but displacement. In Ephesus, Pericles announces he is

The King of Tyre, who fringed from my country did wed at Pentapolis the fair  
Thaisa. At sea in childbed died she, but brought forth a maid child called  
Marina . . . . She at Tarsus was nursed with Cleon who at fourteen years he

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<sup>97</sup> Arendt, "Truth and Politics," 309, 312.

<sup>98</sup> Thus, Marina is not "at fault," as it were. Instead, since the play does contain the facts of her experiences; others facilitated the erasure of the truths the play contains regarding sex trafficking and the route to the greatest eradication of harm to those trafficked.



sought to murder, but her better stars brought her to Mytilene, against whose shore riding, her fortunes brought the maid above us, where by her own most clear remembrance she made known herself my daughter. (5.1.24, 5.2.1-13)

Pericles's account mirrors Marina's of herself. Both offer only facts that Pericles and then Thaisa need to recognize each other. Marina omits the brothel; Pericles, his depression.

The ideal standard of testimony is a universalizable singularity: A speaker witnesses himself as a testifier and explains the details of an event with a level of veracity and specificity such that anyone else who had the same experiences would also give the same account.<sup>99</sup> Thus, Pericles and Marina clearly offer limited testimonies. Marina's account is not what Lysimachus, the Bawd, Bolt, or Pander would offer; Helicanus and the lords in Tyre might mention Pericles's depression. This makes Marina's narrative seem excessively diplomatic by shielding the governor of Mytilene and the characters in the sex trade.<sup>100</sup> At Mytilene, Marina is justified: she protects the stranger who is ill; the sensational aspects of her story could overwhelm him. However, Pericles's narrative suggests she opts to keep these facts concealed.<sup>101</sup>

Nonetheless, in *Pericles*, with multiple narrators sharing the stage, Marina's omission only seems overly judicious if analyzed in the absence of Gower's narration and the play's rendering of her: The play as a whole contains her story. In addition, on the *platea*, Gower comments on the action, enters into a relationship with the audience, holds knowledge of the play and its sources, and chooses which aspects to deliver. With his narration, all the other

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<sup>99</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 41, 94.

<sup>100</sup> As a character, Marina protects her father from the remorse he might feel if he were to learn that his absence led his daughter being enslaved and nearly murdered. She also protects herself from the possibility that Pericles will not believe her. The omission inspired Margaret Healy to examine the mixed response the original audience would have had to Pericles's betrothal of Lysimachus and Marina; they would have understood the governor to be as ill with sexually transmitted diseases as other clients of the brothel. See Margaret Healy, "Pericles and the Pox" (*Shakespeare's Romances*. New Casebooks, Contemporary Critical Essays. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

<sup>101</sup> *Pericles* thereby happens to render the four-century loss of knowledge in the public realm that clients who learn the life stories of human trafficking victims and sex workers refrain from employing their services.

narrations can be incomplete because he presents the action of the play in all its facticity, which allows its characters to not quibble over errors or drown out details required for the reunions. Because of this, the drama can retain its poignancy, with Pericles and Marina attending to each others' statements empathically. Indeed, if Marina were to explain all her experiences, their melodramatic aspects would outweigh the element in which Marina and Pericles stand on equal ground: Nothing matters but that this precise person exists, and their reunion is unconditioned by any experiences. What they require for mutual healing is simply each other.

By containing these narratives, *Pericles* produces awe and calls on theater-goers to ask why Pericles's and Marina's stories are together. On the level of plot, it seems to be for familial reasons. The experience is intense enough to blot out intellectual inquiries: This family is whole iconically, regardless of historical events. What need the audience any more? Altman explains that knights in the Grail romances who ask "what need we more?" fail, leaving king and country sickened and wasting.<sup>102</sup> Multi-focus narratives force readers to deepen their answers by offering glimpses of a reality that entail the social world.<sup>103</sup> *Pericles* renders a greater healing by showing that what heals a family saves a society: Marina makes Bolt and Lysimachus understand others and themselves, which is the effect of narration in the public realm. When people tell their stories, they flesh out their listeners' views of reality and bring a perspective that heals the wounds caused by the inevitable limitations of being human.

Scholars who analyze Arendt's notions of narration offer a theoretical account of what Marina's dialogues achieve dramatically: She enlightens her interlocutors of the effect of their

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<sup>102</sup> Altman, 262. See Jesse Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1983), 21: "the misfortunes and wasting of the land are the result of war, and directly caused by the hero's failure to ask the question; we are not dealing with an antecedent condition...But this much seems certain, the aim of the Grail Quest is two-fold; it is to benefit (a) the King, (b) the land."

<sup>103</sup> Altman, 253, 261-262.

choices by truth-telling that elevates each character to a level of dialogue characterized by mutual recognition and vulnerability. Shari Stone-Mediatore, Ned Curthoys, and Laura J. Disch frame Arendt's view of narration as a response to her experiences of a totalitarian regime that denuded its citizens of their status as human beings. Each scholar independently shows how Arendt portrays narration as having the capacity to neutralize practices that enable totalitarianism. Transcendent principles and universal reason led to an ideology that justified killing others. Individuals followed their beliefs, not their experiences, and used dogmatism, obfuscation, and indoctrination to avoid their customary reliance on the injunctions against deceit and murder.<sup>104</sup> Arendt emphasizes that experience-attentive, explicitly engaged narration, along with communication and spontaneous action, mitigates each process that condones atrocities. In other words, when a person tells her story, she fosters political renewal by engaging her audience's critical faculties and thereby illuminating the incongruity between abstractions and reality.<sup>105</sup> An individual audience member can stop slipping into habitual behavior when he asks himself what it would be like to experience life from the narrator's perspective. This broadening of a person's point of view is central to Arendt's arguments concerning how that person can make a judgment regarding proper action: Actions that accord with a person's ethics depend upon his imaginative access of an exemplary figure in order to determine how to act in the moment.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Shari Stone-Mediatore, *Reading Across Borders: Storytelling and Knowledges of Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 48; Laura J. Disch, "More Truth than Fact: Storytelling as Critical Understanding in the Writings of Hannah Arendt" (*Political Theory*, 21.4: November 1993), 671-681; Ned Curthoys, "Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Narrative" (*Journal of Narrative Theory* 32.3: Fall 2002), 349.

<sup>105</sup> Disch, *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Disch, 687. See also Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy" (*Responsibility and Judgment*. New York, Schocken Books, 2003) and "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture" (*Social Research*. New York: The New School. 38.3:1971).

On a provocative level, Marina experiences on a fictional, individual level the horrors that Arendt witnessed on a mass scale. If we allow characters to figure allegorically, Antiochus and Dionyza call to mind authoritarians willing to execute a man who knows the truth or a young woman who receives masculine attention. The rulers' facile use of assassins is reminiscent of state sanctioned mass murder; Pericles's exile and Marina's displacement figure what became a vast homelessness. In this way, the play can be said to suggest, on an infinitely smaller scale, the terror-run states, death factories, and un-precedented displacement the twentieth century witnessed millions endure.<sup>107</sup> Marina's dialogues that engage her interlocutors in endlessly creative deliberation reconfigure authoritarian isolation into public spaces. Her use of narration and logos create a polis in which speech and action are coequal and coeval partners. Marina invites her interlocutors into relationships of mutual courage, recognition of each other's dignity, and respect, all while not sacrificing the truth she sees.<sup>108</sup> Marina effects Arendt's notion of narration.

Marina also demonstrates that isolated narratives are incomplete, and that offering them is a step towards perceiving the reality of the world. Moreover, like Stone-Meridatore says, storytelling is precisely the kind of interactive practice that is "crucial to participatory politics." Storytelling "constitutes an ideal medium in which to present noncoercive, community-situated beliefs about political phenomena."<sup>109</sup> In the play, Marina does not broadcast her experiences in the brothel to her family, but four hundred years later, storytelling that was heard in the public realm uncovered the resonances between twenty-first century human trafficking and Marina's

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<sup>107</sup> Stone-Meridatore, 51.

<sup>108</sup> Curthoys, 354.

<sup>109</sup> Stone-Meridatore, 61-62.

experiences of being kidnapped, trafficked, sold into sexual enslavement, spared from harm, and released into indentured servitude.

In the last fifteen years, as Janet Halley documents, when women listened to sex workers, shared this information in scholarly and legal forums, entered law schools, joined law firms, won employment on regulatory boards, demanded their voices be heard in international regulatory committees, and became legislators, they altered sex trafficking laws.<sup>110</sup> Before this could happen, it was imperative that people listen to women's experiences, a value heeded by consciousness raising groups. The dominant feature of these groups was speaking and listening without judging the content of the other participants' narratives. The groups succeeded as spaces in which women could voice their experience of violence, educate each other, and generate relationships out of which it was possible to band together to affect pre-existing institutions and create methods that would reduce the amount of abuse people experienced in the sex trade.<sup>111</sup>

Research thus reflects that people are often both trafficked and freed in ways similar to Marina; sometimes they are lured with false promises, but sometimes they are kidnapped. In either case, they are often unwilling participants in the business. Studies in Europe meanwhile validate Marina's experience of converting clients. As demonstrated in Sweden and the Netherlands, the best way to reduce exploitation of sex workers and the sexually enslaved is to educate clients of the harm they cause by purchasing sexual services. No other legal remedy does

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<sup>110</sup> Janet Halley, Chantal Thomas, Hila Shamir, and Prabha Kotiwaran, "Four Studies in Contemporary Governance Feminism" (*Harvard Law Journal of Law and Gender*, 29.2: 2006).

<sup>111</sup> See Ann Snitow, *Powers of Desire*, as quoted in Barbara Ryan, *Feminism and the Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement, Ideology, and Activism* (New York: Psychology Press, 1992), 47, and Deborah Gerson, as quoted in Nancy A. Naples, "Deconstructing and Locating Survivor Discourse: Dynamics of Narrative, Empowerment, and Resistance for the Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse" (*Signs*, 28.4: Summer 2003), paragraph 8.

more to eradicate oppression.<sup>112</sup> Such “message sending” makes sexual violence visible and changes hearts and minds among elites and across populations.<sup>113</sup> Marina’s experience of deliberating with her clients is idealized and fictionalized, but when would-be clients learn, as Lysimachus does, that they are characters, so to speak, in a story they would abhor, they refrain from purchasing the forced services of the workers. That is, they decide they will not rape these individuals. They are able to reframe their understanding of themselves from another’s point of view and enlarge their perspective of their actions.

Halley points out that it is vital to contextualize sex workers’ narratives within frameworks of economic conditions and cultural sex practices and that ideological positions influence legal remedies. Nonetheless, the resonances between today’s understanding of human trafficking and the play’s depiction of it render the power of a shared narrative. This occurs because a narrative can accomplish a paradigm shift. For Lysimachus, as for clients who no longer patronize brothels, people achieve a transindividual point of view that includes the person in front of them. This similar liberation from previously held biases accompanied the effect of women coming together in egalitarian groups to share their stories with one another.

When Marina and Pericles divulge their experience of the world, they allow others to know who shares this space with them. *Pericles* dramatizes this work of the polis in Marina’s role and then transcends it by braiding her incomplete narrative to her parents’ and Gower’s. Together, these narratives offer a vision of people, gathered in one place, living in the woven

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<sup>112</sup> See Iris Yen, “Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation” (*The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 98.2: Winter, 2008), 656. Even Ronald Weitzer, who otherwise disputes Halley’s findings, admits that criminalizing traffickers and prosecuting clients of the sex trade, alongside establishing opportunities for sex workers to leave the work, is the most favorable method for reducing harm “Sex Trafficking and the Sex Industry: The Need for Evidence-Based Legislation” (*The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 101.4: Fall, 2011), 1369.

<sup>113</sup> Halley, 421.

fabric of braided narratives and glimpsing the reality of the world as it is only because they have revealed themselves in the play that brought them together. In its depiction of a family that has never been united recognizing one another because the nature of narrative is to make meaningful what had previously been a devastating absurdity, *Pericles* renders a vision of the world in all its wholeness as shared stories.

In my reading, *Pericles* brings forthright speech and personal narrative into a field of performance and story that requires self-revelation, negotiation, respect, listening, and participation, all of which are intrinsic to communal, egalitarian societies, as Neelands points out in his account of ensemble acting.<sup>114</sup> In this, I challenge the conclusion that Howard B. White comes to regarding the title of this play. He asserts Shakespeare did not have the historical figure of Pericles in mind when he wrote *Pericles*.<sup>115</sup> But, Neelands relies upon Cornelius Castoriadis's description of the origin of democracy in the Greek polis, and Castoriadis shapes his account on Arendt's notions of the public realm. Castoriadis states that in Athens, people generated equality amongst themselves out of their respect of the law, their ethical obligation to speak their minds, and their rights to speech, equal representation, and self-determination.<sup>116</sup> He identifies these practices with the historical figure Pericles, whose funeral speech characterizes Athenians as a people whose democratic practices allowed them to live lives of beauty, wisdom, and love of the common good. My reading illustrates how *Pericles* exalts these same principles and that sharing

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<sup>114</sup> Neelands, 187.

<sup>115</sup> Howard B. White, *Copp'd Hills Towards Heaven: Shakespeare and the Classical Polity* (New York: Spring Science & Business Media, 2012), 96.

<sup>116</sup> Neelands, 183-4; Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy" (*The Castoriadis Reader*: Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 275-280; Hannah Arendt, "On Violence" (*Crises of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch. 1972), 140. Neelands summarizes Castoriadis: "In Greece we have the first instance of a community explicitly deliberating about its laws and changing those laws based on the principles of the ekklesia: isonomia: equality in respect of the law; isegoria: the right to speak; isopsephia, equal representation; parrhesia: moral obligation to speak your mind; autonomia: right to self-determination (183).

narratives uncovers the power of speech in the space of appearances: It is precisely what is required to attain the Periclean ideal of the good life.



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