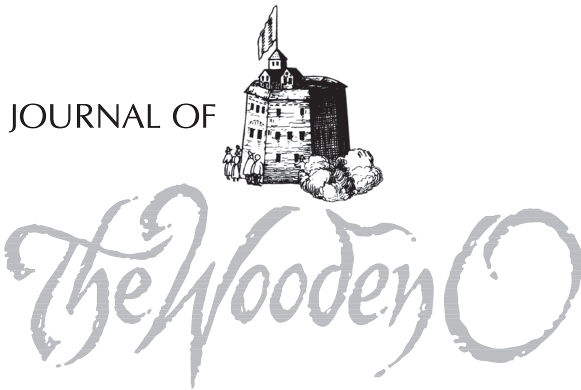

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"Feasts are too Proud / Better to Starve": Shakespearean Culinary Divides

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Food plays an unexpectedly key role in the Shakespearean canon, regularly signaling social, political, economic, and religious cruxes. While frequently overlooked, the preparation, availability and scarcity of food highlights significant informational nodes in the plays. Disputes involving food, for instance, often reveal close convergences between dietary options and challenging loci of interpersonal conflict, frequently connected with competing hierarchies associated with status as well as domestic, political, financial, or social power. Access to expensive items, on the other hand, typically indicates privilege when it is available and social or financial precarity when it is absent, restricted, threatened, or taken away. While food is not the only marker of status or authority appearing in the dramas, it draws attention to close ties between diet and social or political standing. As the title of this essay suggests, both feast and famine regularly signal complex moral and ethical issues. Many of Shakespeare's plays use food to communicate matters of social importance and distinction. These markers are not always evident to conventional modern audiences, but they help make visible how comestible privilege and deprivation illuminates critical social divides in the societies on display.

Germane references appear across Shakespeare's plays. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for instance, variations in status

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between the three central groupings in the narrative fuel numerous plot lines and interpretive directions. Some of these remain difficult to conceptualize. How, for example, should differences between the categories of "fairies" and "rude mechanicals" be articulated? This conundrum becomes even more challenging once Bottom is magically "translated" (3.1.113)[1] into an entity physically joining a human and an ass. Within the play, Bottom's friends are horrified by his alteration, but the drugged Fairy Queen has no qualms about the social position or unconventional physicality of her love interest. Titania highlights Bottom's newly heightened status after she becomes enamored with him through the food she instructs the faeries to feed him, namely, "apricocks and dewberries, purple grapes, green figs, mulberries, and honey bags" stolen from the bees (3.1.163). As Joan Thirsk indicates, apricots were the "fruit with the most intriguing history at this time" that was "often used at banquets."[2] Joan Fitzpatrick similarly notes that "although grown in England, apricots were available only in limited numbers since their season was short and they were therefore expensive."[3] Figs moreover were seen as a "Mediterranean luxury"; both figs and grapes were classed as "exotics of warmer climes" and "the royal garden at Richmond" boasted grapes as one of their crops.[4] Bottom's diet, therefore, corresponds with his new position in society as the romantic interest of a queen. In a play where social rankings matter greatly, demanding luxury goods for a "rude mechanical" emphasizes the striking change in Bottom's status, at least temporarily.

At the same time, however, Bottom's inclination toward animal feed makes it clear that his new classification as a human/ass hybrid looms as prominently for him as the status conferred by his unexpected liaison with Titania. Thus, when he becomes hungry, he does not desire apricots or other such niceties. Instead, he yearns for

> *Bottom:* Truly, a peck of provender; I could munch your
> good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a
> bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.
> *Titania:* I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
> The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee off new nuts.
> *Bottom:* I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.
> (4.1.31-36)

Since this is a comedy, albeit a complicated one, Bottom's preference for the foods likely craved by the non-human parts of his body rather than the rare and expensive treats offered by Titania heightens the humor of the scene. It also indicates that Bottom is less attracted to the luxuries available to royals than might be expected. An enhancement of his social position is clearly not his highest priority. While Bottom and his thespian comrades are frequently mocked in the play, the fact that he has diverse culinary choices underscores his exalted status while he is with Titania. His predilection for hay and oats, however, suggests that he has little interest in the delectable benefits on offer to those with status. The opportunity for sex with a queen does not automatically correspond with his desires or his other appetites.

Bottom's short-lived transformation, including its access to culinary delicacies, is unusual, however. Clear distinctions between working people and those of higher status are more commonly highlighted in the plays when food is mentioned. The preparations for the Capulets' feast in *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, emphasize the undervalued positions held by those working to provide a magnificent display for the forthcoming guests:

A hall in Capulet's house.
First Servant: Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He
Shift a trencher? He scrape a trencher!
Second Servant: When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's
Hands and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.
First Servant: Away with the joint-stools, remove the
Court-cupboard, look to the plate. Good thou, save
Me a piece of marchpane; and, as thou lovest me, let
The porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell Antony and Potpan!
(1.5.1-11)

This scene, which focuses on preparing for the Capulets' ball, provides insight into the organization of this affluent family's household. While a piece of expensive, sugar-filled marchpane appears to be available for the first servant to enjoy, the staff is

mostly noteworthy for the way some of their names—if, indeed, they have names—reflect their roles in the household, and for a striking fear of dirty hands contaminating the food. Shakespeare's plays predictably reflect the wide variations between foods available to people of differing socioeconomic states, although the sugar contained in marchpane suggests that the Capulet's household staff had access to some luxury items those of their position would generally lack. *Romeo and Juliet* focuses most of its attention upon Verona's wealthier inhabitants, but this household scene reveals the comparative anonymity and invisibility of servants, even as they organize everything for one of the most prominent events in the drama. Preparation of the food associated with this gala highlights the inevitable economic and social disparities within this community. The promise of marchpane offers the only suggestion that these workers ever share in the bounty of the Capulet enclave.

In another play, luxury items provide one means for the powerful to demote the status of another. In *Richard III*, Gloucester requests homegrown strawberries from the Bishop of Ely in order to demonstrate his authority: "When I was last in Holborn, / I saw good strawberries in your garden there. / I do beseech you send for some of them" (3.3.31-33). Here, the conniving upstart not only alerts the Bishop that his house is under surveillance, he also reminds him that his personal property, including the bounty from his garden, ultimately belongs to his social and political superiors. Commandeering the fruits from the Bishop's own garden sends a message that Richard is exerting potentially perilous control. The choice of strawberries in this circumstance would be resonant for contemporary audiences. Strawberries were popular during this period, with Paul S. Lloyd, for example, referring to them as "fashion fruits."[5] The manner of their serving varied, however, in accordance with the comparative status of different consumers. Lloyd notes, for instance, that Robert Dudley, then future Earl of Leicester, "purchased strawberries and cream together, signifying an association between these two types of luxurious food."[6] Thirsk, moreover, remarks that strawberries were thought to gain succulence and flavor when they were domestically cultivated, as in the Bishop of Ely's plot at Holborn: "Wild strawberries were plentiful in the woods, but it was readily admitted that they improved when brought into gardens."[7] In addition, Susanne Groome mentions

that Elizabeth Tudor's mother was particularly fond of strawberries and that Anne Boleyn seems to have bequeathed her sweet tooth to her daughter.[8] In 1599, Henry Buttes also comments on the medical efficacy of strawberries, noting that they "Asswage the boiling heate and acrimony of blood and choller. coole the liuer: quench thirst: pro|uoke vrine and appetite: [and] are passing gratefull to the palate."[9] Strawberries clearly attracted considerable attention in this era. Despite the widespread popularity of these treats, however, Richard's mood sours soon after he receives the berries he requested. The Bishop of Ely, accordingly, swiftly transfers his allegiance to Richmond (the future Henry VII), presumably to protect his life and position. This exchange is short, but pithy, and the play quickly turns to other events.

This brief interlude, however, represents the ways that food both reflects and instigates social and political maneuvers in these dramas. As Brears states, "the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw enormous changes in the recipes we use to cook our food [and] another change was just as important, that of newly available foodstuffs."[10] Increased military and exploratory travel, combined with evolving domestic cultivation practices, prompted significant shifts in English culinary experiences such as those Shakespeare references. Given the widespread societal alterations encompassing food availability and preparations, therefore, it makes sense that foodstuffs, like strawberries, can signal important power differentiations, even through a passing reference.

Foods associated predominantly with the affluent are not the only edible focus in this timeframe or in these plays, however. While expensive cuisine was popular with those who could afford it, times when food was hard to come by for many people in England recurred throughout Shakespeare's lifetime, as John Bohstedt details:

> For centuries in times of dearth—scarcity and high prices—driven by gut-feelings of hunger and justice, and steered by memory and calculation,English communities sought forcible remedy, declaring their right to survive, and demanding action from the wealthy and powerful.[11]

The food-related upheavals occurring in *Coriolanus*, therefore, would strike home for many audience members. In the play,

starving citizens blame the corn shortages on governmental policies rather than crop failures:

> *First Citizen:* Care for us? True, indeed! They [the Roman state]
> ne'er cared for us yet: suffer us to famish, and their storehouses
> crammed with grain; make edicts for usury, to support usurers; repeal
> daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more
> piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars
> eat us not up, they will.
> (1.1.77-83)

Since the discontent fueling discord throughout this play had many early modern English parallels, the play reflects Shakespeare's home country as much as it does ancient Rome.

Given England's many periods of food scarcity, it is not surprising that the problems associated with such upheavals appear in some of Shakespeare's comedies, as well as in his more somber dramas. In 1603's *As You Like It*, for example, Orlando threatens violence to Duke Senior and his companions when he is seeking food for himself and the elderly, ailing Adam: "He dies that touches any of this fruit, / Till I and my affairs are answered" (2.7.98-99). He is then surprised when Duke Senior freely offers the food that provokes this disturbance: "Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table" (2.7.104). Orlando's challenging circumstances have kept him largely separate from the social environment enjoyed by others in his family, but his aggressive response may also reflect some awareness of the many contemporary forces restricting charity, such as those presented by Evan Gurney, who describes the conflicted status of charity during the early modern period: "many Jacobean dramatists were likewise skeptical of claims made by supporters of commercial enterprise who often used charity to justify the acquisition of wealth."[12] From this perspective, Orlando is understandably unprepared for the largesse offered at the "court" created by Duke Senior during his exile in the forest. Having fled the cruelty dispensed by his brother and by Duke Frederick, Orlando has little experience with generosity

such as that provided by Duke Senior. Escaping into the forest was unlikely to prove welcoming for typical people during this period, however. While Adam's subsequent disappearance from the text remains unexplained, his urgent need for food and Orlando's lack of confidence in his own ability to procure it reflects the high risk of mortality likely to accompany anyone venturing into such realms in real life. Of course, remaining in the city also carried significant risks. As Bohstedt comments, there had been serious food-related disruptions in the decade before this play appeared on stage: "In the mid-1590s, a series of four bad harvests produced widespread rioting."[13] Audiences viewing Orlando's pugnacious demands for some of Duke Senior's bounty, therefore, would have recognized the complicated conditions leading to this kind of behavior, particularly since his actions correlate with the rationale Bohstedt offers for related early modern outbursts: "food rioters seemed to believe their warrants for action were self-evident: hunger, exports, 'corn being dear,' and hoarding by rich men."[14] Orlando, accordingly, was adopting familiar strategies used during times of need, particularly since Shakespeare's era saw massive disparities between access to food for the rich and the poor, as Steve Rappaport discusses:

> If rising prices and populations threatened to undermine the stability of London and other English cities during the sixteenth century, it is often argued that they did so because the ensuing decline in real income and growth in unemployment drove the majority of townspeople below the poverty line, hastening the polarization of urban society in general and the growth of oligarchy in particular.[15]

The people of London may not have fled to the forest in emulation of Orlando, but they certainly were cognizant of the food inequalities such as those related by Rappaport:

> For a precious few who lived in England's cities the Tudor period offered opportunities for amassing fortunes which rivaled and occasionally surpassed those possessed by peers of the realm. Living in spacious mansions, sealed off from the wretched poverty around them, the rise in prices was little more than a thorn in the side of their opulent lifestyle. But for most townspeople, we are told, a single meal was a fortune, subsisting an accomplishment.[16]

From this perspective, Orlando's and Adam's desperate efforts to obtain sustenance do not speak only to those in the forest, just as *Coriolanus* is not simply depicting deprivation in Rome; the townspeople watching Shakespeare's plays would have either experienced or been told of similar crises in the lives of their extended families and neighbors. As Ian Archer indicates, there was "alarm" at the rising levels of poverty demonstrated during the Tudor period that led to a number of efforts to meet the needs of impoverished London families:

> Central to relief in the capital were the hospitals founded in the mid-Tudor period on a wave of godly enthusiasm and alarm about the growing dimensions of London's poverty. They represented a comprehensive approach to the problem, categorising the poor in terms of the sick and impotent who were to be cared for in St. Thomas' and St Bartholomew's, orphaned children who became the responsibility of Christ's, the unemployed and work-shy who were to be set to work or disciplined at Bridewell, and decayed householders relieved by pensions raised through the poor rate.[17]

London audiences, therefore, would probably nod in recognition at the hunger experienced by many of Shakespeare's characters and the desperate acts they sometimes chose to commit in order to survive.

Such widely varying social conditions and their concomitant influence upon access to food also contributes to the many references to food, particularly to feasting, presented in *Timon of Athens*. As the quote in the title of this essay suggests, close associations between consumables and morality permeate this play, with food marking many of the evaluative disparities between people appearing throughout the drama. Early in the text, for instance, when Timon provides lavish meals to all comers, Apemantus questions the character of the guests. Asked if he is going to Timon's feast: "Ay," responds Apemantus, "to see meat fill knaves and wine heat fools" (1.1.263). The skeptical Apemantus later warns Timon against too close association with those he feeds, telling him:

> *Timon:* I scorn thy meat; 'twould choke me, for I should ne'er flatter thee. O
> you gods, what a number of men eats Timon, and he sees 'em not! It

grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood...
methinks they should invite them without knives: good for their meat and
safer for their lives.
(1.2.37-41)

He further announces that the company at such meals were likely to be murderers:

Timon: The fellow that sits next to him now, parts bread with him, pledges
the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill him.
't has been proved. If I were a huge man I should fear to drink at meals,
Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes. Great men should
drink with harness on their throats.
(1.2.47-52)

By the end of the play, Timon clearly holds a similarly disdainful view about his greedy guests, as he offers them bowls of water to eat, urging them: "uncover, dogs, and lap" (4.1.85). He then expands upon his derision, "May you a better feast never behold, you knot of mouth-friends! Smoke and lukewarm water is your perfection" (4.1.87-90).

Timon's transformation from generous to misanthropic host emphasizes some of the common ways that Shakespeare signals important contemporary social and economic issues through his drama. Culinary allusions in Shakespeare's plays often employ such strategies to reflect the rapid changes characterizing Elizabethan and Jacobean life. When Sir Toby Belch lauds the ongoing importance of "cakes and ale" in *Twelfth Night* (2.3.115), he counters Malvolio's dismissive perspectives on sociability:

Malvolio: Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty but to
gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do you
make an ale-house of my lady's house?
(2.3.88-90)

These views may well mirror those of the Steward's fellow Puritan Dr. James Hart, who criticized the growing taste for sugar near the time of Shakespeare. As Thirsk indicates, "[Hart] suspected that the high death rate in London, as shown in the Bills of Mortality, was

due to merchants whitening sugar with lees of lime."[18] Introducing people at the other end of the social scale, Katharine's thwarted attempts to gain food from Gremio in *Taming of the Shrew*, contain allusions to common expectations of charity for those in need, as Katharine notes:

> *Katharine:* What, did he marry me to famish me?
> Beggars that come to my father's door
> Upon entreaty have a present alms;
> If not, elsewhere they meet with charity.
> (4.3.306)

Dietary issues in these plays thus continually provide valuable information about social status and economic changes during this period, with food structures and access reflecting key aspects of these societies.

Just as food emphasized the societal connotations associated with cultivated strawberries, the critical importance of grain or other sustenance for a hungry and impoverished populace presents close correlations between social and political hierarchies. Whether deemed exotic or commonplace, consumable products regularly signal significant information about those who prepare, serve, provide, or eat these items. The importance of similar distinctions in early modern society appears frequently in historic accounts of the period. The diffuse layers of meaning associated with food and status provides the structure of Lloyd's monograph, which offers chapters entitled "The 'Meaner Sort' and Their Diets," "The Middling Sort and Their Diets" and "The Diet of the Gentry," and which further differentiates between those people, designating them more specifically as "labourers and the poor," "household servants," "wealthy yeomen," or "urban 'professionals' and artisans." Drawing from Keith Wrightson,[19] Lloyd further observes that during this period "Hierarchical structure was thought to promote and stabilize a society in which divisions in wealth, patterns of interaction including duties and obligations, and relative levels of honour and integrity, were essential characteristics of order."[20] Thus, culinary allusions in Shakespeare's plays often reflect the perceived need to establish clear distinctions between people in the upheavals of the rapid changes characterizing Elizabethan and Jacobean life. Feast and famine were equally prominent in early modern England, though affecting different populations,

and Shakespeare's plays keep these issues clearly in view through pointed allusions to significant societal disruptions.

Notes

1. All references to Shakespeare's plays in this paper are taken from William Shakespeare, *The Norton Complete Works*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, Gordon McMullan, and Suzanne Gossett, 3rd edition (New York: Norton, 2015).

2. Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 75.

3. Joan Fitzpatrick, *Shakespeare and the Language of Food: A Dictionary* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Company, 2011), 17.

4. Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 10, 17, 22.

5. Paul S. Lloyd, *Food and Identity in England*, 1540-1640 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 65.

6. Lloyd, *Food and Identity*, 84.

7. Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 73.

8. Susanne Groome, *At the King's Table: Royal Dining Through the Ages* (London: Merrill, 2013), 48.

9. Henry Buttes, *Dyets Dry Dinner* (London, 1599), sig. B4v.

10. Peter Brears, *Cooking & Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Prospect Books, 2015), 20.

11. John Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550–1850 (History of Retailing and Consumption)* (London: Routledge, 2016), 1.

12. Evan A. Gurney, *Love's Quarrels: Reading Charity in Early Modern England*, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 155.

13. Bohstedt, *Politics of Provisions*, 32.

14. Bohstedt, *Politics of Provisions*, 50-51.

15. Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 162.

16. Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 162.

17. Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1991), 154.

18. Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 80.

19. Wrightson discusses related issues in a number of venues, including *English Society 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982) and *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

20. Lloyd, *Food and Identity*, 10.

Gendered Severed Hands and "Acting" Disabled in *Titus Andronicus*

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Throughout its critical history, Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* has been positioned as relentlessly violent and morbidly obsessed with dismemberment to the detriment of the play's interpretive value. While this seeming brutality has been evaluated from various points of view and through an array of theoretical lenses, previous scholarship has not yet seriously discussed the portrayal of intersectional disability in tandem with metatheatrical performance within this play. This essay aims to consider the embodied implications of the characterization of disability and gendered impairment in *Titus Andronicus* with a focus on the contrasting experiences of Titus and Lavinia. In particular, the motif of the severed, gendered hand embodies this concept as it holds significant socio-theoretical weight in addition to physical agentive power. The play establishes and enforces an ableist framework which alienates the disabled body from the agentive body, using disability as a synonym for incapacity in plot-making, which has significant ramifications in staging contemporary performance. Although previous disability scholarship on *Titus* has considered Titus and Lavinia equally through the lens of the traumatized body, this essay seeks to discuss the issue of intersectionality and disability in addition to the way the play interrogates true and performed disability in the text and on-stage.

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Although both Lavinia and Titus experience impairment and disability on a spectrum, the disparity in their performed actions following dismemberment emphasizes the way that gender's intersection with disability identity exacerbates a removal of personal agency. Despite and through his own impairment, Titus uses a performance of disability to uphold the ableist patriarchal framework of the play by "acting" disabled and willfully "putting on" a physical impairment to further enact plot. Through his actions particularly toward the end of the play, Titus presents disability—whether visible or invisible—as something that can be put on as easily as a costume. While the resulting metatheatrical duality between real and performed identity is already a significant point of interest in Shakespeare scholarship, the consideration of gendered embodiment of disability in *Titus Andronicus* furthers this conversation through investigating the experience and the performance of living and acting with a disabled body that is otherwise socially limited or privileged.

To examine the multiple layers of identity performance and disability in *Titus Andronicus*, I utilize a contemporary theoretical framework wherein "disability" applies to the "social category" of people who are stigmatized by their impairments rather than the actual impairments themselves.[1] This consciousness of identification between the body's physical condition and reactionary social barriers proves necessary in clearly navigating portrayals of and reactions to bodily impairment and its impact on characters' agentive abilities. An intersectional approach is also necessitated by the "recent emphasis in early modern studies on gendered and raced bodies and their distinct corporeal materialities" which "enhance conversations in disability scholarship about how to attend more carefully to the deeply embodied nature of impairment."[2]

In the case of *Titus Andronicus*, impairment is especially made visible through social constructions of gender. Hobgood and Houston explain the phenomenon of the disabled body as perceived by claiming that disabled bodies often "are made less visible the more they demand notice, or, as Tobin Siebers offers, "according to the logic of compulsory able-bodiedness, the more visible the disability, the greater the chance that the disabled person will be repressed from public view and forgotten."[3] This repression is heightened by both Lavinia's social category as a woman and

her visible impairment, an idea that Tobin Siebers underscores by explaining that "there is no system of disability without complementary ideals provided by sex-gender and sexuality; these ideals depend on bodily consistency, flawlessness, health, and normative mental states, and anyone who fails to achieve these ideals will immediately attract accusations of physical and mental disability."[4]

While this interpretation of disability's intersection with gender avows that departure from patriarchal and heteronormative idealism results in overstated disabled characterizations, one departure from idealism can heighten the non-normative impact of another in a real rather than representative way. The intersection of disability and gender in the formation of character identity within structures which repress non-normativity then transforms social perceptions of both concepts. In practice, this is demonstrated in the disparity between Lavinia and Titus's experiences of disability contingent upon their social accommodations. Though Lavinia remains on stage for a fair portion of the play, dehumanized as a symbol of dismemberment for the audience to "stare at,"[5] she is also silenced and spoken for to the point that she is treated much less as a character and more as an image of disability. In contrast, while his impairment cannot and should not be dismissed, Titus's identity outside of his visible disability allows him to continue to move in society and to be relatively accommodated. Through his privileged masculine social position, he can manipulate perspectives aimed at his impairment and retain his agentive power as a plot-maker.

Throughout the play, the connection between the body and agentive ability is manifested in the imagery of the hand. While this motif has previously been approached as a literary or symbolic allegory for the fragmentation of the Roman political system, it is necessary to consider hands simultaneously through historical symbolic meaning as well as through the lived reality of disabled identity. In one of the first prominent instances of the hand as a stand-in for action, the Empress Tamora vocalizes the agentive properties of the hand as she violently attacks Lavinia. Addressing her sons, Tamora exclaims, "Your mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong" (3.1.121).[6] By declaring that her own hand will be the very thing to seek vengeance on the Andronici, she isolates agentive power to a center in the body while simultaneously

declaring her own power in action; in her ability to wield her hand, she is an active character rather than a passive one. In contrast with Lavinia's vengeance, enacted later in the play, Tamora is painted as the would-be agent of her revenge while Lavinia must rely on others to enact her supposed desires. In "'I can interpret all her martyr'd signs': *Titus Andronicus*, Feminism, and the Limits of Interpretation," Cynthia Marshall constructs a distinction between the two women as "polarized images of female possibility" hinging upon the way that their sexuality is represented in relation to their utility.[7] Within this argument, too, lies the crucial point that the violent rape enacted against Lavinia isolates her "within the play, within the theater, and within critical discourse, as an object of pity" who, through dismemberment, is "frozen in a posture of dependence and humiliation."[8]

Although a comparison between Lavinia and Tamora's social positioning within Titus is valuable in understanding the play's construction of femininity, this also necessities a much deeper investigation into the positions where their female identities intersect with other social barriers. As active as Tamora seems in comparison to the stifled character of Lavinia, the two women both are defined by power in relation to the men around them rather than through self-determination. Both deal with adversity stemming from their intersectional identities—Tamora as a racially "othered" and Lavinia as a disabled Roman—though to claim a sameness between the two would be disingenuous. As the only other woman in the play that the audience can look to, the Goth queen's violent and deviant role becomes an exaggerated alternate version of female identity that ultimately "leads to Lavinia's being mutilated and eventually killed, lest she evolve into another Tamora".[9] Finally, considering that both women die at Titus's hands at the play's culmination, it seems that silencing—whether through death or disability—acts as a social solution to problematized non-normative femininity and the threat of female agency.

While hands are continually used as a symbol of agency for various characters in the play and as a symbol for Rome itself, Nicola Imbracsio argues "that the symbolic power of the hand is especially acute in its absence, in its performative capacity to determine the disabled body as active and efficacious. Moreover,

when the absence of the hand is replaced with theatrical objects such efficacy is compromised."[10] This is demonstrated as Titus pleads to Marcus, "O handle not the theme, to talk of hands, / lest we remember still that we have none" (3.2.29-30). The repetition of hands "referred to either figuratively or literally nearly sixty times throughout the play"[11] has the rhetorical effect of pointing the audience's focus inescapably toward the role of the body or lack thereof. Therefore, the agentive abilities and symbolism associated with hands are emphasized by removing them.

Although Imbracsio notes that the removal of limbs allows disabled characters in Titus to exercise agency and enact plot, I argue that the continued imagery which calls attention to loss aims at the very opposite. Because the non-disabled characters are so invested in removing the hands of their victims, it seems that this removal is a plot device aimed at incapacitating the body through assuming a lack of accommodation for impairment. This importance is emphasized when Titus asks Lavinia "what accursed hand / Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?" (3.1.67-68). Titus calls attention to the tropic significance of the hand itself as a symbol of personal agency and plot-making action. At the same time, he rhetorically inverts this trope through referring to one hand's agentive exercise as the means of taking away agency, thus creating a dynamic where the non-disabled body is active and the disabled body is passive. This line also calls attention to the significance of disability as perceived rather than inherent to impairment through the lens of Titus's gendered gaze, a concept which is reflected in the theatrical space itself through the audience's viewership.

In the ancient Roman setting of *Titus Andronicus*, the body—centralized in the synecdochical symbol of the hand—is defined by its ability to act in alignment with prescribed gendered ideals and expectations. Rowe's work considering Early Modern symbolic meanings attached to hands reveals a dichotomy between hands as "martial" actors for men and "marital" actors for women while stressing their connection to the "genealogical bonds so much at risk" in the socio-politically charged setting of *Titus*.[12] In the connection between female agentive power and sexual marital value, the violence enacted upon Lavinia becomes even further intertwined with an intentional attack on her utility in the restrictive patriarchal setting of the play. As Lavinia attempts to

escape Chiron and Demetrius's attack, she begs Tamora: "O, keep me from their worse-than-killing lust, / And tumble me into some loathsome pit / Where never man's eye may behold my body. / Do this, and be a charitable murderer" (2.2.175-178). Lavinia's plea to the empress speaks directly to an anxiety around societal perception of the body as simultaneously reliant on gendered value and ability. Rather than fearing for her own life, Lavinia begs that no man will bear witness to her body, whether it is disabled or not. Instead, she approaches trauma and shame with the same bodily concern the play uses to approach dismemberment. According to Bethany Packard, "Lavinia's longing for death indicates continued adherence to Titus's tale of her chaste body. Indeed, part of what she begs to avoid is violent ejection from that."[13] This assertion that Lavinia's focus on the visibility of her body has as much to do with patriarchal ideals as an anxiety towards disability points to the weight of intersectional bodily concerns in the play. Importantly, this seems to indicate that the perception of her body as disabled is as socially damaging as her actual visible impairments. Lavinia's position as an impaired and consequently disabled individual then further complicates her position as a woman whose value is reliant upon her body: rather than facing only one set of prescribed social challenges, she is perceived through multiple layers of passivity and victimization and consequently objectified as such.

Titus's assertion that death would be favorable to this perception of disability contributes to the play's overall ableist mindset aimed at, as Margaret Owens argues, "disempowering and silencing the victim at the physical level."[14] Immediately after they dismember Lavinia, Chiron and Demetrius cruelly vocalize the play's equation between death and disability as similarly non-agentive states of being:

> *Chiron:* And 'twere my cause, I should go hang myself.
> *Demetrius:* If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.
> (2.3.1-10)

In mocking Lavinia's violently inflicted impairments, Chiron and Demetrius reflect a larger understanding of the way that dismemberment impacts personal agency in the play. Their repeated jests aimed at things that Lavinia can no longer do not only point the audience to continually consider the dismembered body and its parts, but additionally explain the ways that Lavinia

has completely lost any plot-making ability as a character. This establishes the idea that the "whole" body, as the play defines it, can enact plot and action, while the impaired body is completely devoid of this power. At the same time, the brothers' brutality towards their impaired victim seems only to affirm their claim that death would be favorable to the dehumanization that they exemplify. Chiron voices this ableist view that death is preferable to disability, though Demetrius's jab at Lavinia's lack of hands figuratively and literally removes even that level of agency. This same sentiment is later echoed in an interaction between Marcus and Titus:

> *Marcus:* Fie, brother, fie! Teach her not thus to lay
> Such violent hands upon her tender life.
> *Titus:* How now has sorrow made thee dote already?
> Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I.
> What violent hands can she lay on her life?
> (3.2. 21-25)

Marcus's reference to the hands as centers of agentive power, even in their conspicuous absence, paradoxically continues the connection between the perception of death and disability as non-agentive states. In response to Marcus's ironic plea, Titus underscores the idea of her disability and dismemberment. This conversation echoes the way that Chiron and Demetrius previously mocked Lavinia for her impairments, especially regarding her inability to end her own life. Even as he identifies with Lavinia's experience of disability through his own impairment, Titus's dismissal of his daughter's remaining social utility enforces the dominant sentiment of personal value in connection to the body's gendered agentive ability. After all, without the ability to benefit the family or political structure through marriage or genealogical continuance, Lavinia no longer serves a patriarchal purpose.

The final scene of the play in which Titus kills Lavinia to alleviate her suffering stresses a preference for dying over living with disability, though this action is based upon Titus's own determinations rather than any desire exhibited by his daughter. Notably, when asking Saturninus whether it was right of the Roman historical figure Virginius to kill his daughter after she had been raped, he emphasizes "his own right hand" as the enactor of the murder while again calling to the martial purpose of clasped

hands (5.3.37). Therefore, Titus, using the agentive object of his remaining hand, enacts the murder of Lavinia in spite, or even because, of his own impairment. While he and Saturninus both justify the moral validity of this murder by casting the shame of sexual violence as unsurvivable, this reasoning points to the necessity of critical application of an intersectional view of disability and identity within the play's patriarchal social structure. If, as Rowe argues, the female hand's value is entirely reliant upon marital action, then Titus's violent action simultaneously saves Lavinia from the shame of letting this role go unfulfilled while "[remaking] dismemberment into a trope of empowerment-by casting it within the conventions of martial emblem."[15] By applying his remaining limb in martial action that upholds gendered ideals through eradicating the non-normative, Titus then upholds not only the values of the Roman polity but the ableist and misogynistic framework that the play performs. Especially considering Titus's role as a disabled individual acting upon his disabled daughter, it is crucial to understand Siebers's claims that "sexuality, sex-gender, and disability exist in multiple reciprocity."[16] The socially isolating categories of gender and disability must not be considered separately and equally, thus creating a false comparison that devalues both experiences, but rather with an intersectional lens that considers their interconnectedness and mutual influence on lived experience. Therefore, while Lavinia's disability identity is independent from her gender identity, within the play's thematic focus on violence, action, and the body her experience of disability is altered fundamentally by the intersectional perceptions of difference aimed at her.

The text points to Lavinia's "shame" and its reflection on her family as the reason for her death rather than her corporeal disability, though it is only through her impairments that the audience and her family alike are continually visually reminded of the cause of her trauma. While Scott justifies the death of Lavinia through considering her as a "ghostly figure" who must be "laid to rest" as part of "an intercessory rite," this identification of Lavinia portrays her as more object than person, prioritizing her disability over her personhood as the text does.[17] Were it not for her physical impairments, Lavinia may have been able to exhibit some agentive action. However, as her active powers are disabled through the

removal of her hands, she is removed from any ability to enact her own desires and finally from the play itself. Lavinia's murder embodies the stance the play takes on gendered disability and the body's agentive purpose and shows a social system where she could not have survived; stripped of her hands (signifying action) and her tongue (signifying communication), Lavinia is left purposeless in a social environment that places her body at the center of her self. With consideration to the tropic significance of hands as centers of gendered agentive power, Lavinia's severed hands point to her loss of personal identity alongside her body.

The definition of the body's value as its utility is illustrated when Marcus initially finds Lavinia hiding in Act 2 scene 3 and notes the visible ways that her body has been impaired. He additionally focuses on "ungentle hands" as the agentive bodies in this scene while Lavinia herself, now dismembered, is the object which has passively been "lopped and hewed" (2.3.16-17). Marcus identifies the value of the body with the values of patriarchal society, in this case pointing to value in the marriage market through characterizing her arms as "sweet ornaments / Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in / And might not gain so great a happiness / As half thy love" (2.3.18-21). If the body is defined by its ability to act, as I have claimed, then Marcus's lament makes it clear that the female body is inherently impaired in a social capacity. In line with Rowe's claims, while male hands are defined by their ability to contribute to Rome in battle and individual action, Lavinia's lost limbs are instead reduced to objects especially for male enjoyment; both before and after they are removed from her body, Lavinia's hands are active only for the sake of upholding patriarchal structures.

As Marcus assesses the damage done to Lavinia through terms of loss, he makes evident the idea that not only is the body defined by ability, but the female body is defined by ability in service to others. In fact, in establishing the agentive value of her lost fingers, he claims:

> *Marcus:* O, had the monster seen those lily hands
> Tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute
> And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
> He would not then have touched them for his life.
> Or, had he heard the heavenly harmony

> Which that sweet tongue hath made,
> He would have dropped his knife and fell asleep,
> As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.
> (2.3.40-51)

Marcus's definition of female value through the body and its sexualized ability continues the tradition of characterizing disability through absence established by Chiron and Demetrius, an uncanny similarity of rhetoric that points to a larger cultural understanding of the value of self through agentive ability determined by bodily function. Marcus's description of gendered bodily ideals is emblematic of the play's claim that the body is defined by agentive ability directly in connection with gendered expectations. Considering this logic, it seems that in brutally losing her tongue and hands, Lavinia additionally loses her individual gendered worth. Lavinia is objectified because of her gender identity, her disability, and the trauma that is caused by (and causes) these social constructions.

Rather than painting the body's value in terms of ability like Marcus does, Aaron—another othered character defined by his enactment of violence—devalues Lavinia's bodily value through objectification as he recalls that Demetrius and Chiron "cut thy sister's tongue and ravished her / And cut her hands and trimmed her as thou sawest" (5.1.91-93). Aaron rhetorically conveys that, once dismembered, Lavinia ceases to be viewed as a woman and is instead perceived as little more than a piece of meat. Although certainly this imagery plays a rhetorical role in alluding to vengeful violence later in the play, this characterization also further establishes a sense of dismemberment as stripping away humanity. Lavinia "is progressively transformed through violence into the focal point of the play's insistent appeals to justice" as the enacting male characters see fit.[18] Lavinia's dehumanization, even as it furthers the central revenge plot, also disables her role as an enactor and casts her as a catalytic object entirely removed from personal identity.

Considering Lavinia's bodily value defined by its active service particularly to men, the simultaneous social incapacity accompanying her loss of purity and the physical impairment embodied in her dismemberment further alienate her use in relation to the patriarchal structures of both the Andronici and

Rome. When Marcus initially presents Lavinia to Titus, an instance which strips her of agency through the very idea that she needs to be displayed, the text moves between objectifying and personifying her newly disabled body. Marcus initially signals a sense of loss through his past-tense reference to Lavinia, "This was thy daughter," which removes her familial position in tandem with the removal of her limbs (3.1.63). While Titus refutes this by shifting to a present-tense understanding of who rather than what she is to him, Lucius voices the physical and rhetorical transformation of his sister to an "object" or spectacle (3.1.65). Lucius's objectification of Lavinia continues throughout the play as he later laments, "Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister, / O would thou wert as thou tofore hast been! / But now nor Lucius nor Lavinia lives / But in oblivion and hateful griefs" (3.1.293-296). This echoes the sentiment that Lavinia's character is entirely altered by her lack of ability to the point that she is considered as good as dead. Although he objectifies himself in the same breath, it is notable that Lucius establishes his own mental and metaphorical loss through and as an appropriation of Lavinia's physical impairment.

Similarly considering Lavinia as a spectral representation of loss and disability through her disfigurement, in "'Groaning Shadows that are Gone': The Ghosts of *Titus Andronicus*," Lindsey Scott argues that "Lavinia herself becomes a kind of ghost after her mutilation and rape" and "through these verbal manifestations of absent body parts."[19] By continuously invoking Lavinia's severed limbs, the text places an obsessive focus on the importance of the body particularly centered in the symbol of the hand. At the same time, the hauntology of the disabled female body echoes Lavinia's previous desire to die rather than face the trauma and shame of rape and bodily dismemberment. In recognizing the social debilitation accompanying the severing of Lavinia's purity from her body alongside her hands, it becomes evident that perceived disability in *Titus Andronicus* is exacerbated by intersectional frameworks of marginalization and impairment. The increased visibility of her impairments created through her intersectional identity, paradoxically, makes Lavinia invisible as an actor. As her displacement from her normative social role becomes more apparent, she is made more invisible. While Bethany Packard

argues that "at some point between Lavinia's plea for merciful murder and her return to the stage, death ceases to be preferable to rape" this may only be because after her dismemberment Lavinia is, for all intents and purposes, a dead character in the eyes of the characters around her.[20] Hauntology points to gendered disability as a social construction created from the perception of impairment rather than the reality of impairment itself, as Lavinia demonstrates in being characterized as so disabled through her impairment that the other characters deem her a non-agentive ghost of her former self.

In Titus' case, the value of his body centered in the symbol of the "martial hand" is defined through what it has accomplished for Rome in battle, action, and "political power."[21] This masculine agentive body is exemplified in Lucius's declaration in the debate of who should sacrifice their hand for the lives of Quintus and Martius Andronicus. Lucius emphasizes the worth of the hand in its agentive power through the assertion that Titus's limb is more valuable because of its use in battle "for that noble hand of thine / That hath thrown down so many enemies / Shall not be sent" to the Emperor (3.1.163-165). In establishing the idea of the body only as a means of performing action, the play reflects and enforces the ableist and patriarchal concept that the body's value is contingent on its ability. Although Titus's sacrifice comes with the anticipation of disability through dismemberment, it is also necessary to note that these characters expect to use this dismemberment to further a goal of the plot in contrast to Lavinia's senseless loss. Impairment and disability in this scene, in contrast with Lavinia's violent and involuntary dismemberment, is characterized by choice and the decision to willfully utilize the body for a purpose.

As a result, in discussing the gendered nature of disability linked to agentive power, I argue that—even impaired—the male body in *Titus* is not fully disabled in the same way, that the female body becomes a narrative ghost. This is a direct result not only of the physical difference in impairments between the two characters, but of accommodations magnified by social privilege in line with gendered agency. Lavinia's experience of disability, then, is entirely different from her father's as Scott cautions that "readers and spectators of Shakespeare's play should not equate the dismemberment of Titus's hand with the loss of Lavinia's."[22] While

Lavinia is forcefully dismembered, it is necessary to acknowledge that Titus willfully gives up one of his hands in telling Aaron to "Lend me thy hand and I will give thee mine" (3.1.187-188). When Titus sacrifices his hand, he enacts his own claims from earlier in the scene and complicates the concept of disability by using the body to actively transact. Although Aaron's hand is the agentive body which removes ability from Titus, Titus ultimately is the one who makes the decision to sacrifice his agentive hand. While this willful dismemberment continues the portrayal of the "whole" body as agentive and the dismembered body as disabled and non-agentive, it additionally muddles the understanding of gendered disability as performance through Titus's previous expression of desire to mimic Lavinia's impairment as a means of solidarity and revenge. This scene and the play as a whole then reinforce utility as power through displaying performed disability; through this, the biased perception of disability becomes the central issue rather than physical impairment. Because of Titus's already agentive masculine identity, he faces a less dire lived experience as a disabled individual and instead can use perception to his advantage as he intentionality performs disability to alter interpretations.

Titus additionally demonstrates complicated gendered disability through the way that he metatheatrically "puts on" a performance of disability in addition to his physical impairment. In reaction to Lavinia's mutilation, he orders: "Give me a sword, I'll chop off my hands too" (3.1.74). The symbolic value of hands as instruments of political utility is exemplified in the idea that "one will help to cut the other" and mirrors the contrast previously created in Marcus's lament over Lavinia's lost abilities (3.1.79). However, even as Titus claims that he should cut off his own hands, it seems that he does not note the privilege of his ability. Not recognizing the importance of choice, Titus exclaims that Lavinia should also be glad to be dismembered, "For hands to do Rome service is but vain" (3.1.80-81). Not only does Titus use the event of Lavinia's dismemberment to rhetorically disparage Rome and his own enemies, but he utilizes her experience as a reference for what it might mean to him to be disabled. In interpreting her disability, he then reveals the beginnings of a plot to costume himself in disability. This same idea is repeated when Titus questions:

> *Titus:* Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
> Or shall we bite our tongues and in dumb shows

> Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
> What shall we do? Let us that have our tongues
> Plot some device of further misery
> To make us wondered at in time to come.
> (3.1.128-136)

Like his previous threat to cut off his own hand, Titus suggests that he and his family should perform disability in an effort towards solidarity with Lavinia's loss. However, this idea of mimicking her impairment points to the idea that disability can be performed by non-disabled characters and demonstrates the non-disabled male agentive body's treatment of dismemberment as a sort of costume. Although Titus is in fact impaired in the course of the play, I argue that his performance of disability is performed rather than genuine. To step back from the text and to consider the ramifications of this idea in the theatrical setting, actors often perform disability for the sake of the play. The idea of gendered impairment and performance of disability is thus central to a critical understanding of mutually constructed characterization and audience perception.

Titus's continued active role in the play, despite his impairment, is asserted by Caroline Lamb who argues that handlessness, or being an amputee, becomes an equally viable condition for agency as the "normatively 'complete' body."[23] In fact, pointing to Titus's plot-making throughout the play as evidence, she argues that "post-trauma, the handless Titus" can "empower himself and right his family's wrongs" by "[adapting] to, or [working] to develop, new bodily possibilities."[24] This argument hinges on the way that characters in the play adapt to their impairments and seek access through this adaptability, though Titus seems to be much more successful in achieving this than his daughter who is socially restrained by her gender. Shawn Huffman also articulates that, although Lavinia's exercise of "spectral agency" "seems limited to the identification of her assailants," something which is made accessible or necessary through her family's desire for revenge, Titus's tropic hand "appears in order to strike back."[25] The necessary difference between Lavinia's exercise of personal agency and Titus's centers upon the difference between gendered exercises of agency.

Because Lavinia's experience of disability intersects with her non-agentive gender identity, her impairment remains largely unaccommodated throughout the play. Although Lavinia

ultimately "transforms herself into a writing instrument, distorting herself" to condemn her rapists to seek some type of retribution, she is hindered in contributing to determining how this retribution will be exacted.[26] Through her transformation into an object that acts only as a "conduit for her father's emotions, as she has been conceived of throughout as the conduit for other's desires," Lavinia exemplifies unaccommodated disability to the point of a dehumanization which justifies "her own slaughter."[27] She is continually directed to act in place of others as an object rather than allowed to make her own decisions following her traumatic dismemberment, a position which doubly erases her individual visibility. Titus's impairment, in contrast, is a performative echo of Lavinia's disability, accommodated by his agentive gender role as a plot-maker in the play. While Titus shares some of Lavinia's experience of impairment, he remains more accommodated through his remaining hand and ability to communicate. With this in mind, he manipulates the play's and the audience's perception of disability to achieve his revenge.

This contrast between the two characters and their disparate experiences is most strikingly evident in the morbid scene where Titus orders his daughter to carry his severed hand in her mouth. This passage continues to portray the body in the light of ability and activity as Titus declares: "And, Lavinia, thou shalt be employed: / Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth" (3.1.282-283). The focus of the body continues to center on its ability to act: as Lavinia carries Titus's impairment and the burden of it, she exemplifies gendered disability in the play and within patriarchal ableist structures. That Titus uses his ability to force his daughter to carry his own severed hand raises a question of how deeply he resonates with her experience as a non-agentive disabled character in the play and continues the ableist view toward Lavinia's actual ability in contrast with her perceived ability. While he calls for his daughter to be an active participant in the plot, this activity accommodates Titus's impairment in a modified continuation of the female body's active purpose as service. Because of this gendered portrayal of disability, I argue that—though he is impaired—Titus's privilege allows him to remain largely non-disabled in the context of the play and its theatrical setting. As the social burden of his impairment instead falls on Lavinia who is socially and corporeally

impaired, the audience then must consider spectrums of disability, performativity, and its implications on and off stage.

The construction of the body's value as contingent on its ability is underscored in Titus's question: "How can I grace my talk, / Wanting a hand to give it action?" (5.1.17-18). Titus depicts the disabled body as incapable of enacting "talk" because of dismemberment, though this same sentiment in extension to Lavinia portrays her as fully non-agentive. Because her abilities to act and to communicate are both disabled by the lack of accommodation for her impairment, Lavinia is fully barred from the potential to exercise agency. Instead, she takes on the dehumanizing role of carrying the weight of disability as a theme. Further, Titus's lament about the disparity between talk and action is performative. The plot demonstrates that, though he is impaired, Titus faces no barriers to enacting his revenge. By considering this idea through the play's ableist patriarchal framework, it becomes clear that the concept of disability has ramifications not only for a characters' ability to have value in the making of plot, but also in perception of performance.

Finally, gendered performance of disability is embodied in the play as well as rhetorically present through the performance of invisible mental disability. Lavinia's behavior, connected to actual mental disability or not, is perceived as madness by Young Lucius who exclaims that "some fit or frenzy do possess her" through the reasoning that "Extremity of griefs would make men mad" (4.1.17, 19). While the consensus seems to be that Lavinia's fervor is attributable to her desire to communicate, the way that an audience interprets her is the ultimate manufacturer of disability rather than the proof of impairment. Again, it must be noted that Lavinia's intersecting social identities within the play construct her role as a silent victim on which meaning is projected by the accommodating characters and the complicit audience alike. Not only is the act of determining whether a character has a mental disability or not rife with reliance on stigma and ableist bias, but the actuality of mental impairment is unnecessary to a discussion of disability. While an argument can be made that Lavinia and Titus alike experience mental impairments in reaction to trauma, I argue that the very question warrants a discussion of both the portrayal of disability and the curiosity of the audience.

Titus evidently represents the performativity of disability in his representation of "madness" which, real or fabricated, he continually manipulates in order to achieve his own agentive goals. Titus declares to both Tamora and the audience, "I am not mad, I know thee well enough" while simultaneously portraying madness (5.2.21). While the truth of his invisible condition cannot be determined with any certainty, the stigma that he manipulates in line with mental disability allows him to "masquerade [...] as a device" to "[embody] disability in the face of power."[28] While Titus can effectively "pass" as non-disabled, he additionally can "pass" as disabled to his own ends. This is because, as Siebers claims, "people with a disability understand better than others the relation between disability and ability in any given situation," though I additionally posit that his portrayal of mental disability comes from an appropriated perception of Lavinia's "frenzy."[29] Although he certainly experiences impairment through the loss of his limb, Titus also utilizes the ableist viewpoints of other characters and himself, observed in reaction to Lavinia's disability, in order to enact his own plots through "acting" disabled according to "skillful [interpretations] of everyday life and its conventions."[30] The success of this performance is evident as Tamora affirms that "This closing with him fits his lunacy" (5.2.70). While Titus performs mental disability, Tamora's preconceived biases confirm this performance and reflect the way that an audience's stigmas contribute to a performance's overall construction of disability.

In the theatrical space, the dynamic performance of disability within *Titus Andronicus* calls contemporary productions to further examine the portrayal of social and physical disability on stage and the effect of portraying or denying binary or ableist stigma. While the text itself establishes a structure that works against characters like Titus and Lavinia through its patriarchal and ableist setting, performance offers an opportunity for subverting this constructed dynamic of difference by denying the desire to "prop" or look away from gendered disability. The stakes of performing disability on stage, as scholars like Imbracsio, Siebers, and Mitchell and Snyder argue, are equally contingent upon theatrical spectacle and the text. Indeed, the staged intention of Shakespeare's text and the stakes of public performance are what necessitate an investigation of the play's metatheatrical performance of gendered disability at all. It is

useful to recognize that "the fully dismembered bodies of Lavinia and Titus are able to perform gestures and commit actions—often bloody and violent—yet such efficacy is often undermined in twentieth-century performances."[31] Imbracsio argues against modern interpretations which "rely upon theatrical prosthetics to 'prop' Lavinia and Titus,"[32] noting that productions like this reflect modern concerns and anxieties about disability rather than the anxieties of the text itself. In stage performance, this idea rings true as actors perform the loss of limbs rather than actually become dismembered. Imbracsio notes that "we cannot ignore that these acting, avenging, fragmented, and disabled bodies are in fact able-bodied actors who are performing disability."[33] Titus's textual desire to be wondered at reflects theatrical performance and spectacle as Siebers argues that "overstating or performing difference, when that difference is a stigma, makes one into a target, but it also exposes and resists the prejudices of society."[34] Although performing disability, as a non-disabled character or an actor, suggests that stigma is reliant upon stereotype, Siebers notes that the portrayal of stigma on stage additionally exposes the social framework of disability and disability studies. This exposition allows for an opportunity to reframe the way that disability as perception in contrast to impairment can be interpreted and staged. With particular focus on Titus's performance of disability, which both appropriates Lavinia's trauma and demonstrates his own agentive ability in spite of impairment, the opportunity to consider the play's characters through an expanded and reality-driven attention to humanity is ample and insofar largely untapped.

It is also necessary to avoid the inclination to "embrace a standard-bearer who suggests that power lies within the gasp of disabled people."[35] While *Titus Andronicus* presents at least one character who exercises agentive power despite and perhaps because of his disability, it is necessary to avoid excusing Titus's actions because of stigma. This is to say that Titus should not be praised for enacting violence because of the perception of his disability identity. Instead, considering his simultaneously performed and genuine displays of disability, Titus's actions and identity warrant a critical response aimed at characterization of the whole rather than only selected parts. The same must be said considering Lavinia's silenced character, which must be viewed within the silencing

context of the play's text as well as the continually ableist society in which it is performed. I argue that the play complicates the portrayal and performance of disability through not only blurring the boundaries between impairment and performance, but also presenting an intersectional example of disability embodied in Lavinia.

The play itself presents a framework which employs both ableist and patriarchal structures to inhibit the agentive actions of its characters, and these constraints on Lavinia ultimately reduce her character to a non-agentive object. In contrast, Titus can rely on patriarchal establishments and his ability to "pass" as non-disabled in order to continue enacting plot. An intersectional view of disability thus opens an entirely new opportunity for examining the degree to which gendered social impairment stands against physical impairment. Keeping in mind the stakes of theatrically staging disability, a contemporary staging of *Titus Andronicus* might attempt performances which demonstrate the ways that gender influences social disability especially in respect to Lavinia by using increased contrast or even reversal. To emphasize crucial differences between impairment- and perception-caused disabilities, an intersection-focused performance might feature a notably self-aware Lavinia who continues to present her humanity despite the other characters' insistence on turning her into a prop. Performance of disability might also be elucidated through a particular attention to the way that Titus evidently mimics Lavinia's presentation of trauma and impairment. In investigating this idea of disability masquerade and its attachment to gender within this play, I hope to present the opportunity for further consideration of Titus's dynamic social attention to disability and disenfranchisement within its larger scholarly importance as a text aimed at the "other."

Titus Andronicus's definition of the gendered body, especially the gendered impaired hand, relies on the concept of personal agency and action as determinants of individual value. The play's occupation with the hand as a symbol of agency in contradiction with the dismemberment of these hands not only others the characters who experience disability but places a level of importance on what those hands can or cannot achieve without significant accommodation. Additionally, the intersections between gender and disability allow

certain characters to perform their disability more intentionally than others, pointing to a complicated understanding of when and why disability might be socially performed to certain ends. The inclusion of intersectionality in the conversation about disability in *Titus Andronicus* enriches previous scholarship on the play's violence which has historically relied on symbolic textual analysis to uncover the meaning behind dismemberment. Instead, I seek to consider a critical interpretation beyond symbolism which centers upon embodied intrinsic biases toward impairment and their implications on agentive power when unaccommodated. *Titus Andronicus*'s definition of the gendered body, especially the gendered impaired hand, relies on the concept of personal agency and action as determiners of individual value, and an analysis of the play which additionally employs an intersectional examination of gendered disability and disability masquerade enhances the text's scholarly and performative potential.

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Converging Polarities in Shakespeare's *Othello* — A Generic Approach to Othello and Iago

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Scholarship has largely discussed the genre of *Othello*, a tragedy that challenges a simple definition because it creates a kind of singularity out of a range of different genres. Like many Renaissance and Elizabethan dramatic works, *Othello* is a synthesis of influences resulting from the adaptation of Roman drama, epic sources, non-fictional treatises like Machiavelli's *Il Principe,* and a dramatic tradition ranging from festive performance cultures to revenge tragedy.[1] This complex generative process has led to new generic definitions, such as "Satiric Comedy Ending in Tragedy" (Richard Whalen), "Comedy of Abjection" (Michael D. Bristol), and "Comedy of Judgement" (Jason Crawford), which might look like an antithesis to the classification of tragedy and call for a re-evaluation of the genre conventions present in the play.

Arguably, the greatest appeal of the play lies in the ability of the playwright to make opposites meet only to show at the end that principles such as truth and lie or comedy and tragedy are collapsible and comprehensive. The aim of this paper is to explore the major genres wrought into *Othello* to shape the antithetic and at the same time symbiotic relationship between Iago and Othello. Without making any claim to completeness, a few representative examples of generic hybridization will be discussed here using Northrop Frye's genre theory and Gérard Genette's concept of

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"transmodalization," a particular form of transposition of modes (i.e., genres).[2]

In the first part, the transposition from epic to drama ("intermodal transmodalization") is addressed by comparing the Italian source text, a romance of jealousy by G. B. Giraldi Cinthio, to *Othello*. This will reveal aspects common to these two genres and draw attention to the novelties added by Shakespeare in order to give more credibility to characters and plot; one relevant change is Iago's initial motive of envy. In the second part, "intramodal transmodalization" within drama comes into focus. I argue that Shakespeare fruitfully adapted elements of classical tragedy, updated as revenge tragedy, the morality play, and popular comedy to create an unconforming hybrid which resists the definition of tragedy because it produces an incomplete catharsis. Against this background, Othello and Iago function as case studies that provide insight into the process of dramatization (literally of turning other genres into drama) as a product of adaptation, transmodalization and redefinition of genre and character polarities.

Intermodal transmodalization: From romance to drama

In *Palimpsests*, Gérard Genette sets up a theory of transtextual relations, the most important of which is hypertextuality. Hypertextuality is literature "in the second degree," a text derived from a pre-existing text which it either transforms (directly) or imitates (indirectly).[3] Hypertextual transpositions comprise translations, quantitative transformations and "transmodalization," defined as "any kind of alteration in the mode of presentation characterising the hypotext." The latter can either be "intermodal transmodalization" which describes a shift from one mode (or genre) to another, or "intramodal transmodalization," a change of the internal functioning while still within the same mode, for instance from drama to drama.[4] Dramatization and narrativization are antithetical instances of Genette's "intermodal transmodalization" and essential to describing the first step in creating *Othello*, namely the transition from an epic to a dramatic genre ("intermodal transmodalization").

Shakespeare's *Othello* is notably based on an Italian source, the seventh novella of the third decade of G. B. Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, published in Venice in 1566 and translated into French in 1584. Both plots are set in Venice and Cyprus and revolve

around a handkerchief stolen from Disdemona/Desdemona to give her husband "ocular proof" of her alleged infidelity. After making him exceedingly suspicious, Cinthio's Ensign, like Shakespeare's Iago, has the Moor witness a conversation but without hearing it and thus convinces him of his wife's guilt. In the novella, the Ensign's deluded love for Disdemona turns into jealousy and hate for the Corporal, a handsome soldier favoured by the Moor and therefore, following the Ensign's logic, also by Disdemona. In contrast, Shakespeare accentuates the conflict between protagonist and antagonist by transferring the Ensign's jealousy onto Othello, who ultimately turns against himself and the ones he loves. Iago's initial motive is not love but envy for Cassio's lieutenancy, a seemingly weaker reason to seek revenge but which nonetheless allows more interpersonal relations. In fact, the lustful element is shifted onto Roderigo, a rich and foolish suitor who allies himself with Iago in the hope of possessing Desdemona without realizing that he is just an instrument of revenge. Likewise, Iago "ensnares" Cassio in a platonic friendship with Desdemona to provoke Othello's jealousy and obtain the lieutenancy. The changed motive is crucial not only for the characters, their mind-set and relations, but also for the outcome: in Cinthio, the Moor consents to murder the Corporal, and Disdemona is beaten to death by the jealous Ensign. Repenting of his crimes, but still unaware of Disdemona's innocence, Cinthio's Moor is killed by Disdemona's family, while the Ensign is tortured to death for murder. Conversely, Shakespeare's Iago provokes such an intense jealousy in Othello that he chokes his innocent wife to death. Realizing his terrible mistake, he commits suicide and leaves Iago to the hands of justice. As Dennis Austin Britton sums up, Othello is not an outsider in Venice and his identity is legitimized by his Christianity and marriage to Desdemona, but Iago "re-turns" Othello from a romance hero to his real Muslim identity using a romance of jealousy,[5] a sort of tribute to epic within the play.

As far as "intermodal transmodalization" is concerned, the generic transposition of the novella onto a drama entails several adaptations while still maintaining structural similarities to the original and to the genre of romance. In the transition from Cinthio's epic to Shakespeare's drama, diegetic instances like the omniscient narrator are substituted by mimetic performance

(*mimesis*) and more lively forms of diegesis such as dialogues, though many instances of "storytelling" remain (for instance the story of the magical handkerchief).[6] Still, dramatization means more than just turning narration into dialogue and gesture. In updating Cinthio's novella, Shakespeare reworks structural elements common to drama, epic, and romance. Cinthio himself reflects on genre theory in *On Romances*, asserting that the principles of the Aristotelian tragedy—*peripeteia, anagnorisis*, and *catharsis*—need not be limited to tragedy; especially the recognition of "the terrible, of the pitiable, of the change from a happy to an unhappy state and vice versa, and of the marvellous [...] is no less excellent than tragedy."[7] Similarly, in *Anatomy of Criticism* Northrop Frye compares the three main stages of romance to the structure of an Aristotelian play in analogous terms: the perilous journey (*agon*), the death-struggle (*pathos*) and the discovery or recognition (*anagnorisis*) of the hero—even when he does not survive the conflict. As to the hero, he can be human in romance, or divine or semi-divine in myth, and usually confronts a demonic antagonist.[8] In both the novella and tragedy, there is the journey (*agon/peripeteia*) in the sense of a hero removed from his initial state due to manipulations and machinations, the struggle (*pathos*) between good and evil, and the final recognition (*anagnorisis*) of the evil plan, which should lead to *catharsis* (purification) for the audience. The main difference between the genres lies in the type of recognition. On the one hand, tragic recognition occurs when the hero correctly identifies the self and his predicament, as in Shakespeare. The tragic aspect is that it happens too late, making redemption or a tragicomic denouement impossible. On the other hand, romance recognition occurs when the hero discovers the truth just in time to avoid a catastrophe. The case of Cinthio's Moor shows another form of romantic conclusion, with no real recognition but a just punishment. Although in both cases the truth about someone's identity is reasserted after misunderstandings, the outcomes are diametrically opposed. A timely recognition of Iago's and Desdemona's true natures might have led to a happy ending. In dramatic terms, *Othello* could have been a comedy, but mischance or rather misrecognition turns Othello's romance into tragedy, albeit with an incomplete *catharsis*, as we shall see. In my view, the tragically late recognition gives the prose epic a dramatic

potential expanded in Shakespeare's play by the changed motive which heightens the conflict between the main characters.

Here we enter the realm of "intramodal transmodalization" to detect borrowings within the genre of drama and reflect on the effects of hybridization on Othello and Iago. Thomas Rymer was the first to observe that the spotless nobility of Othello virtually calls for a villain of supernatural powers:[9] an amoral Machiavel personifying "rationality, self-interest, hypocrisy, cunning, expediency, […] latent homosexuality and deep-rooted misogyny," as Norman Sanders suggests.[10] The juxtaposition of an almost divine protagonist and a demonic antagonist, already mentioned by Frye in relation to romance, was reworked in dramatic form by Shakespeare on the basis of other (dramatic) genres. For the perfect hero fighting a tragic fate the playwright could draw on classical tragedy, the direct model of Elizabethan revenge plays, and for the devilish manipulator he could rely on the morality play and the festive tradition surrounding it.

Intramodal transmodalization I: The classical hero within a revenge tragedy

In early modern drama, the generic concept of classical tragedy based on the translation of the works of Seneca developed numerous subgenres, such as the revenge tragedy or domestic tragedy, which are not primarily Aristotelian but reflect a national interpretation of the Greek concept. A fundamental trait is the classical hero as the centre of the plot. For Frye, tragic heroes "seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divine lightning."[11] The idea of heroes being "instruments as well as victims" of their own power is particularly fitting for Othello as he becomes Iago's instrument of revenge and in a certain sense a victim of his own impeccable nobility. Frye explains that in classical tragedy the hero cannot escape his fate and faces a tragic and insoluble conflict leading to catastrophe. The climax coincides with the moment the hero realizes that the available options are irreconcilable, even though he still has to take responsibility for his choice. Once the decision is made, the downfall is out of his control—as expressed by Othello himself: "Who can control his fate?" (5.2.263).[12]

In the beginning of the play, Brabantio's warning about

Desdemona sounds like a prophecy of Othello's fate of being deceived:

> *Brabantio:* Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
> She [Desdemona] has deceived her father and may thee.
> *Othello:* My life upon her faith!
> (1.3.288–90)

Interestingly, the idea of fate is present even in Desdemona's name, which means "ill-fated" in Greek[13] and seems to be a premonition of Othello's inability to properly "look to her." Instead of remaining faithful to his oath, "my life upon her faith," Desdemona's life is immolated for *his* faith, turning Iago's thirst for revenge into a domestic tragedy. The villain Iago simply fuels a latent suspicion on the grounds that Desdemona deceived her father for love and might do so again with her husband.

> *Iago:* She did deceive her father, marrying you;
> And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks
> She loved them most.
> (3.3.208–10)

Considering Othello's estrangement from his wife in favour of Iago's "honest" friendship, Rebecca Ann Bach's definition of domestic tragedy as a genre that works to "praise men who value male-male alliances above relations with women" is particularly fitting.[14] The domestic tragedy being a subgenre of the revenge tragedy invites us to look at how the tragic hero was inserted in one of the most popular genres of Elizabethan theatre.

According to Fredson T. Bowers, in *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy*, the prime movers of revenge and murder are usually jealousy, pride and ambition, which can lead to murder and the subsequent revenge of this murder, or to murder as revenge for an unsatisfied desire, as in the case of *Othello*. *Nemesis* is achieved when order and balance are restored again, usually after the hero's death.[15] Throughout the tragedy, external fate and individual free will tear the hero in two and this conflict is emphasized in Shakespeare by giving Fate a personality with direct power over Othello—Iago. Resentful, sceptical and disillusioned, Iago orchestrates his own anti-romance to destroy Othello with a "dual revenge," as Lauren Cressler calls it: an outer political and military plot concerning the war against the Turks in Cyprus, where Othello chooses

Cassio as his lieutenant over Iago; and an embedded personal and domestic revenge out of envy, even after Iago obtained his wished-for position. In this sense, Cressler argues, although *Othello* is not a typical revenge tragedy, Iago comes close to the numerous Elizabethan Malcontent figures, who can never be satisfied because the genre of revenge tragedies requires it.[16]

This might be true for Iago, but Othello is not just a passive puppet in his hands like other protagonists of revenge tragedies or history plays because he possesses numerous attributes of the classical hero, as the following quote shows:

> *Lodovico:* [after Othello's public slandering of Desdemona]:
> Is this the *noble* Moor whom our full senate
> Call *all-in-all sufficient*? Is this the nature
> Whom *passion could not shake*? Whose *solid virtue*
> The shot of accident nor dart of chance
> Could neither seize nor pierce?
> *Iago:* He is much changed.
> (4.1.255–60, emphasis added)

Lodovico's description of the former Othello echoes that of the classical hero, whose nobility, power and importance place him above average humanity, even in the poetic language he uses. However, like most tragic heroes, Othello too must cope with an inner character trait that causes the fatal tragedy. Frye explains that Aristotle's *hamartia* "is not necessarily a wrongdoing, much less a moral weakness: it may be simply a matter of being a strong character in an exposed position" e.g., leadership.[17] Isolation in Cyprus, a constant state of alert and a misled interpretation of reality through Iago's "surmises," "inferences" and "close dilations" have, at that point, "much changed" noble Othello.

At first sight, Othello's most evident frailty or miscalculation (two possible translations of *hamartia*) seems to be jealousy, but this feeling is not a natural part of his character, as confirmed by Desdemona:

> *Desdemona:* […] my noble Moor
> Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
> As jealous creatures are.
> (3.4.21–3)

Jealousy alone would not have had the power to change his perception and personality, had not an external agent planted this seed on a fertile ground. Although Doctor Johnson diagnoses him

with excessive credulity,[18] Othello struggles (*agon*) and needs proof before he can give in to Iago's lies, for he senses that without love his life would end in chaos as it ultimately does: "[…] and when I love thee [Desdemona] not, / Chaos is come again" (3.3.91–2). As Samuel Taylor Coleridge asserts, Othello acts more out of disappointment than out of jealousy[19] and cannot overcome the terrible suspicion that disrupts everything he ever believes in, namely pride and honor. These virtues are so deeply rooted in his soul that they become fatal (*hamartia*) to Othello, who, trained as a soldier, cannot stand the shame of being a cuckold. His inflexible self-image leads him to say: "A honourable murderer, if you will; / For naught I did in hate, but all in honour" (5.2.291–2) even after committing a murder in order to protect his reputation (*pathos*). This profoundly disturbing confession for the audience is only atoned for by his suicide, which partly restores his humanity.

Despite being provided with the qualities of a classical hero, Othello's impeccable façade slowly begins to deteriorate once he is "struck by lightning" (quoting Frye). In Shakespeare, the downfall is aided by a counterpart actively drawing the hero to catastrophe and appealing to his "flaws": the villain Malcontent from revenge tragedies who reprises a demonic figure from an earlier dramatic genre—the morality play.

Intramodal transmodalization II: Everyman, Vice and the motive of jealousy

The fifteenth-century morality play presents an allegorical contest for the spiritual welfare (*psychomachia*) of a hero who represents mankind surrounded by allegorical characters that represent Virtues and Vices. With the development of Renaissance ideas of self-determination and individuality, this genre declined but was still well-known in Shakespeare's day. As Frye puts it, "Shakespeare is particularly fond of planting moral lightning-rods on both sides of his heroes to deflect pity and terror"[20]—two essential components of *catharsis*. In the case of Othello, he is "flanked" by Desdemona and Iago who cause mixed feelings of pity and terror in the audience and echo the inner conflict at the core of morality. Like Everyman, Othello is tempted by a demonic character similar to Vice, moved by "motiveless malignity," as Coleridge notes: "[Iago] is being next to the devil, only *not* quite

devil."[21] Othello calls him "that demi-devil / Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body" (5.2.298–9) in one of the frequent angel-devil metaphors which occur throughout the play and hark back to the religious background of morality plays.

By presenting himself as something he is not, Vice is the first character to consciously play a part in moralities and the same is true for Iago. The conspiracy of vice disguising itself as virtue is a stock episode of morality plays.[22] Similarly, Iago is both a hypocritical actor with a "fictional selfhood," as Daniel Derrin calls his "honesty," and a playwright staging an illusion.[23] Iago actively refers to theatrical metaphors and deliberately "turns virtue into pitch" to "enmesh" Othello and all the other characters gravitating around him.

> *Iago:* When devils will the blackest sins put on,
> They do suggest at first with heavenly shows
> As I do now. […]
> So will I turn virtue into pitch,
> And out of her own goodness make the net
> That shall enmesh them all.
> (2.3.318–29)

This conscious art of dissimulation ("IAGO: I am not what I am" 1.1.58–66) works both on a metatheatrical and on a stylistic level with different poetic registers. While Iago—like Vice—is the master of rhetoric and seductive language, Othello—like Everyman—is a more human and failing figure, too pompously eloquent and not sceptical enough, as Ken Jacobsen observes.[24] Next to these parallels between Iago-Vice[25] and Othello-Everyman, there are other typical features of the morality genre visible in Shakespeare's play: the formal confession and repentance of the protagonist, and the unmasking and punishment of Vice. In the final act, Emilia reveals the truth, and both Othello and Iago are punished—one by himself and the other by justice. Unfortunately, and that is the point that makes it a tragedy, this revelation occurs too late for salvation. A further departure from the morality play pattern is the fact that Iago's persuasive power over Othello is stronger than the force of Desdemona's virtue because Othello is so deceived by jealousy, the "green-eyed monster which does mock / The meat it feeds on" (3.3.168–9), that he mistakes Vice for Virtue. Jealousy is personified here, almost like an allegory which links Othello to Iago.

Although initially jealousy is alien to Othello, it reflects Iago's own jealousy and envy subsequently shifted onto the cause and victim of his revenge. As Peter N. Stearns explains, "jealousy is also close to envy. […] jealousy involves reaction to loss or threat of loss, and envy a desire to have what someone else has."[26] Werner Gundersheimer adds that the envious component in jealousy causes malevolence, desire, inferiority and vulnerability.[27] These attributes can be found in Iago whose initial motive of envy for Cassio's lieutenancy entails jealousy for Othello's relationship with Cassio or even with Emilia. Through this same jealousy he estranges Othello from himself and leads him to destroy his own happiness. Iago's opening statement: "Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago" (1.1.58) reveals that he exists merely in relation to the Moor, as his negative alter ego. In this role he resembles W. H. Auden's "practical joker" who "despises his victims, but at the same time he envies them […] there is always an element of malice, a projection of his self-hatred onto others."[28] In this ambit, Janet Adelman asserts that "Iago successfully attempts to rid himself of interior pain by replicating it in Othello."[29] In this alter ego reading, the two antithetic characters from classical drama and the morality play converge, driven by envy and jealousy, which are two facets of the same feeling. Iago splits Othello the way he is split himself and Othello readily responds to this affiliation by soon being as obsessed with Iago as Iago is with the Moor. The tragic irony is that Othello believes he is in the right and tries to justify his behaviour until the end. His testament is that "Of one that loved not wisely, but too well; / Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought, / Perplexed in the extreme" (5.2.340–2). In carrying out his revenge, Iago, like Vice, "wrought" the Everyman-hero Othello to such a degree that they became one and thus, by killing himself, Othello at once frees himself from Iago and symbolically "kills" him, too. After his *nemesis* is complete, Iago falls silent and inert because he has no purpose left: he killed Emilia and Roderigo and contributed to the killing of Desdemona and Othello. There is neither a sign of redemption, as in a morality play, nor a satisfying *catharsis* in the audience, as in classical tragedy. One reason could be that *catharsis* is impeded by genres far removed from tragedy which shine through in the play.

Contrasting Feelings / Convergent Genres: Comic and Festive Traditions

As we have seen, Vice is not a completely negative character although the Christian perspective would like to render him one. On stage, the demonic figure is fascinating, captivating, cynical, elusive, and witty—at times even in a ridiculous way, as Bernhard Spivack points out.[30] To a certain degree, the audience can sympathize with the clever plotter and laugh at his explicit language, which makes him appear more down-to-earth and human than the virtuous characters. Just as the classical hero Othello is humanized by *hamartia*, Iago's "malignity" is not utterly "motiveless" as the play provides enough background information to give him the self-assigned right to seek revenge. Once he obtains Cassio's lieutenancy, however, Iago continues to employ his versatile inventiveness to make Othello the instrument of his own revenge. In this context, Frye draws a parallel between Vice and the Machiavellian villain of Elizabethan drama who,

> like vice in comedy, is a convenient catalyser of the actions because he requires the minimum of motivation, being a self-starting principle of malevolence. Like the comic vice, too, he is something of an *architectus* or projection of the author's will. In this case for a tragic conclusion.[31]

The quotation seems to imply that with his minimally motivated (though not motiveless) malevolence Iago functions as a "projection of the author's will" towards a tragic conclusion. The conclusion is indeed tragic, but is that enough to make *Othello* a tragedy? A possible answer can be found by exploring the less evident genres inherent to the play, as in the following example.

The centrality of scene 3.3 marks Iago's control over Othello's mind/soul ("Let him [Iago] command" 3.3.468) in a dramatic climax. Convinced of Desdemona's affair with Cassio by means of a misleading "ocular proof" (a dumb show between Iago and Cassio only seen and not heard by Othello), Othello kneels down to summon "black vengeance" and seals a murderous pact with the Iago: "OTHELLO: […] Now art thou my lieutenant. IAGO: I am your own for ever" (3.3.476-9). In strong contrast with this "bloody business," which vaguely echoes the pact with the devil of cautionary tales, the scenes is followed by a clown joking with Desdemona and a short dialogue between Desdemona and Emilia

about the lost handkerchief, only moments before Othello enters to request that magical love token in a narrative monologue. Revenge tragedy, epic genres like romance and cautionary tales, and the clown's antics are just a few of the genres that coexist in a multilayered structure apt to present the oppositional and symbiotic relationship between Othello and Iago. In other words, the extremely mixed feelings on stage require mixed genres.

In terms of "intramodal transmodalization," I would like to draw attention to the comic traditions which pervade *Othello*. Susan Snyder defines it a "postcomic" play because it begins where most comedies end: with the romantic union of two lovers against one of their fathers' will.[32] However, in Shakespeare this plot is preliminary to tragedy, though with lingering signs of "almost-comedy." If evitability is the distinguishing principle between comedy and tragedy, as Snyder suggests,[33] Desdemona's death is the inevitable consequence of a wrong cause—"It is the cause," Othello says in 5.2.1. Caught in the dichotomy between love and (manipulated) reason, Othello turns away from Desdemona and is ultimately disjoined even from his alter ego, Iago. Interestingly, there is no comic subplot as in other tragedies like *Hamlet* and even the clown is a marginal figure soon eclipsed by Iago's obscene antics reminiscent of Vice and the festive tradition.

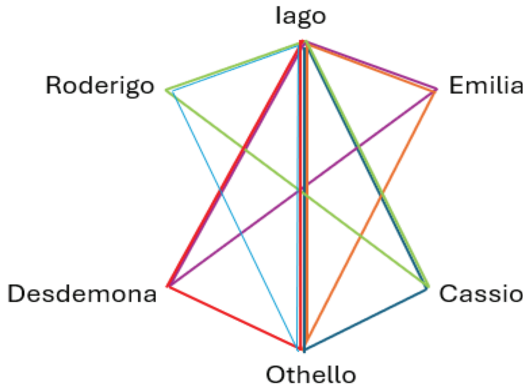
Next to the "postcomic" structure, there are numerous other references to comedy and tragicomedy, a "mixed genre" derived from the Pastoral so *en vogue* in Shakespeare's day.[34] Most notably, the use of character "types" with fixed attributes in *Othello* is not only inherited from Cinthio's nameless and rather flat characters, identified only by their appearance or position (apart from Disdemona), but is common to tragicomedy and social satires in general. Domestic and revenge tragedy feature similar stock characters—the revenger, the Malcontent, or the Machiavel—based on the Latin comedies of Plautus and the allegorical figures of the morality play. Other stereotypes of universal human foibles were influenced by citizen comedies and Italian Commedia dell'Arte, two popular genres which seeped in from the Continent. Referring to *Othello*, Richard Whalen points out that this "Satiric Comedy Ending in Tragedy," is a synthesis of the main characters of Commedia dell'Arte, all condensed in one play.[35] Indeed, Othello is not the only "flawed" character on stage: Iago is a villain, Cassio is a drunkard, Brabantio is a dupe, Desdemona is an undutiful

daughter, Bianca is a limpet, Emilia is a thief, and Roderigo is a fool. These traits render them life-like, but are too excessive to appear realistic, as in comedy. Moreover, the play takes up the generic pattern of the citizen comedy with socially heterogenous characters involved in morally ambiguous intrigues (minus the setting in the city of London, which is replaced by Venice and Cyprus). There are also mirroring scenes frequently found in these genres, for example the initial and final trial of Othello, and numerous moments of almost-denouement, chiefly connected to Emilia who repeatedly but vainly tries to avert tragedy and steer towards comedy.[36] She recalls the witty maidservant (*servetta*) of Commedia dell'Arte, but her part in the love intrigue does not contribute to a happy ending. Just like her role is turned on its head by Shakespeare, the whole tradition of comedies dealing with cuckolded husbands—from Greek New Comedy over Plautus to Commedia dell'Arte and citizen comedy inspired by epic jest literature and Boccaccio's novella—is redefined in tragic terms. As Sir Philip Sydney states in *An Apology to Poetry*, comedy "is an imitation of the common errors of our life, […] presented in the most ridiculous and scornful sort" for the amusement of the spectators.[37] A common laughingstock in comedy is the jealous husband unaware of his cuckoldry. If we adopt the perspective of the cuckold who painfully realizes or just suspects his shame, however, the comic potential immediately turns into a personal tragedy, even more so if his suspicions are ill-founded and lead to fatal consequences.

For this reason, it can be argued that *Othello* reassesses not only comic assumptions of love and reason but also generic conventions. This has led to various redefinitions of the genre of the play, depending on the influence of its hypotexts. For instance, Jason Crawford describes *Othello* as a "Comedy of Judgement" rooted in early modern cautionary tales about damnation but with a tragic ending due to the absence of Divine Providence.[38] Conversely, Michael D. Bristol calls *Othello* a "Comedy of Abjection" by which he means a dramatic adaptation of the early modern social custom of *charivari* ("ordeal of shame"), with the Lord of Misrule/Iago—a close relative of Vice—plotting a farce to derange and unmask a transgressive marriage. Although the first definition insists on the moral and religious heritage while the second refers to festive

rituals, both agree on the latently comic genres present in the tragedy, as do Whalen's "Satiric Comedy Ending in Tragedy" and Snyder's "postcomic" plot.

Satire, festive traditions, allegories, and laughable stock characters find their way into *Othello* and increase the central conflict between the Renaissance twin powers of *ratio* (rational thought) and *oratio* (persuasive language), as Jonathan Bateman sums up.[39] Through this inter- and intramodal combination of genres and the different development of the plot with more complex characters due to the changed motive of extrinsic jealousy, *Othello* surpasses its romance source by far. A jealousy caused by envy in Iago and transferred onto the cause of his own jealousy, Othello, enables a sophisticated interplay between the main characters. As the diagram shows, the constellation of contrasting personalities often involved in a three-sided relationship entails a certain symmetry or convergence along the Othello-Iago axis.



Ultimately, Shakespeare follows the same trajectory of self-destructive jealousy found in Cinthio but gives a comic and farcical twist to his tragedy by playing with genre conventions and multilayered "extreme" characters. Thus, Iago appears as an appalling demi-devil and appealing tempter, while Othello's degraded pride and nobility make him at once pitiably pathetic and frighteningly pathological. In this sense, the convergence of polarities is a key factor to understanding Shakespeare's process of dramatization and his redefinition of genre conventions.

Transmodalization as convergence of polarities

Given the generic flexibility typical of the early modern stage and its favorite source of romance, which was neither wholly comic nor tragic, *Othello* presents a comprehensive and composite pattern in-between romance, classical drama, revenge tragedy, morality play, citizen comedy and other festive traditions. Instead of attempting a redefinition of *Othello*'s genre which takes into account all the influences that shaped it (a virtually impossible task), this analysis of the genres within the play is subdivided into three steps in order to shed light onto the creative potential of hybridization. Firstly, "intermodal transmodalization" from romance to drama with special attention to the revenge motive of jealousy; secondly, "intramodal transmodalization" of the main dramatic genres that give Othello and Iago their peculiar characteristics (classical drama, the morality play, revenge tragedies); and finally "intermodal transmodalization" of mixed comic genres which inhibit *catharsis*. This has led to the following considerations.

The most striking difference in the transition from the Italian novella to the dramatic adaptation ("intermodal transmodalization") is that unlike the Ensign, whose jealousy is motivated by his love for Disdemona, Iago is motivated by envy and jealousy caused by Othello who is punished with the same "poison." Although the common structural elements of epic and drama are maintained, the flat characters of Cinthio's romance come to life in Shakespeare thanks to personal traits hybridized from different dramatic genres ("intramodal transmodalization"). By projecting his own feelings of jealousy, envy and hate onto Othello, Iago becomes his alter ego and orchestrates a disproportioned revenge. With devilish cunning and rhetorical skill Iago, like Vice, exploits the classical hero's fatal misconception and parades as Virtue, i.e., "honest" Iago, to bring his excessively noble rival to fall. The result of the changed motive of jealousy instilled by the diabolic plotter in the imperfect hero is to denature Othello's initial romance into a domestic tragedy of revenge devoid of moralistic aims. In this sense, *Othello* resembles a perverted morality play with a self-determined classical hero who unknowingly becomes the agent of the villain's revenge. Another parallel to the morality play is the hero's inner conflict, which, according to Robert Watson, renders

Othello an "inclusive Everyman" figure, both "animal and angel, Christian and pagan, black and white, soldier and lover, foreigner and patriot"—a whole range of dichotomies.[40] Unlike the morality play, however, the tragedy in *Othello* does not imply any form of salvation for the protagonist since the final insight (*anagnorisis*) is obtained too late to produce either the Christian redemption of a morality play, the satisfactory cathartic restoration of classical drama, or the comic relief of a happy ending. At the same time, the coexistence of comedy and tragedy recalls the "mixed genre" of tragicomedy, albeit turned on its head. Considering that comic elements ultimately lead to tragedy and not the other way around like in tragicomedy, we might perhaps speak of a "comitragedy." In line with this amalgamation of genres, the classical hero Othello and the Vice-like Iago are not opposed but complementary characters—as are the genres within this heterogenous play. Thus, Shakespeare creates a synthesis of antitheses in which numerous dramatic genres converge and offer a new perspective on the permeability of polarities in early modern drama.

Notes

1. See Anthony R. Guneratne, *Shakespeare and Genre: From Early Modern Inheritances to Postmodern Legacies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

2. The idea of applying Frye's genre theory to Othello owes to an essay by Sabine Coelsch-Foisner in which she defines the play as a hybrid between the Classical and Christian archetypes of tragedy apt to bring the protagonist closer to a Jacobean audience. However, she does not analyze influences of other genres as I do here. See Sabine Coelsch-Foisner, "Wenn Männer zu sehr lieben: Die Tragödie am Beispiel von Othello," in *Leidenschaft und Laster*, eds. Sabine Coelsch-Foisner and Michaela Schwarzbauer (Heidelberg: Winter, 2010), 19.

3. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Dobinsky (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1997 [1982]), 3–7.

4. Genette, *Palimpsests*, 213, 277, and 284.

5. Dennis A. Britton, "Re-'turnin" Othello: Transformative and Restorative Romance," *ELH* 78.1 (2011): 32.

6. Genette, *Palimpsests*, 304.

7. G.B. Giraldi Cinthio, *On Romances: Being a Translation of The Discorso Intorno Al Comporre Dei Romanzi with Introduction and Notes*, trans. Henry L. Snuggs (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), 72.

8. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 187.

9. Nigel Alexander, "Thomas Rymer and Othello," *Shakespeare Survey* 21 (1968): 69.

10. Norman Sanders, ed., *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: Othello* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

11. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 207.

12. All quotations from *Othello* are taken from Sanders, ed., *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: Othello*.

13. From the Greek δυσδαιμων (dysdaimon). Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, vol. 7*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 208.

14. Rebecca A. Bach, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature before Heterosexuality* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 108.

15. Fredson T. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University P, 1940), 21; and Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revival: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theater, 1576-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

16. Loren Cressler, "Malcontented Iago and Revenge Tragedy Conventions in Othello," *Studies in Philology* 116.1 (2019): 75.

17. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 38.

18. W. K. Wimsatt, ed., *Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare* (New York: Hill & Wang 1960), 114.

19. Terence Hawkes and Alfred Harbage, eds., *Coleridge on Shakespeare: A Selection of the Essays, Notes and Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the Poems and Plays of Shakespeare* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 165.

20. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 211.

21. Hawkes and Harbage, eds., *Coleridge on Shakespeare*, 180.

22. Robert Potter, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1975), 124.

23. Daniel Derrin, "Rethinking Iago's Jests in *Othello* II.i: Honestas, Imports and Laughable Deformity," *Renaissance Studies: Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies* 31.3 (2017): 368.

24. Ken Jacobsen, "Iago's Art of War: The 'Machiavellian Moment' in Othello," *Modern Philology* 106.3 (2009): 502.

25. For a comparison of Iago and Vice see Anne Barton, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1962), 96 and 184; A. P. Rossiter, *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans: Its Background, Origins and Developments* (London: Hutchinson, 1950), 92; and David M. Bevington, *From 'Mankind' to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), 227.

26. Peter N. Stearns, "Jealousy," *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2012), 480.

27. Werner Gundersheimer, "'The Green-Eyed Monster': Renaissance Conceptions of Jealousy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 137.3 (1993): 321.

28. W. H. Auden, *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (New York: Random House, 1962), 257.

29. Janet Adelman, "Iago's alter ego: Race as projection in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.2 (1997): 127. The idea of the alter ego is indebted to her essay though not used to discuss racism.

30. Bernhard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to his Major Villains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 421.

31. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 217.

32. Susan Snyder, *The Comic Matrix of Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 74.

33. Susan Snyder "The Genres of Shakespeare's Plays," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, eds. Margareta De Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 85.

34. Giambattista Guarini, author of the tragicomedy *Il Pastor Fido* ("The Faithful Shepherd," 1590) describes the genre thus: "A tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect of its want of deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy." Quoted from Fredson T. Bowers, ed., *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 250.

35. "Among the principal stock characters in Commedia dell'Arte were the Zanni [Iago], the secondary Zanni [Othello], Pantalone [Othello/Brabantio], the Capitano [Cassio], Pedrolino [Roderigo], the innocent woman [Desdemona], and her lady-in-waiting or maid [Emilia]. These seven stock characters are mirrored in the seven principal characters in *Othello*." Richard Whalen, "Commedia dell'Arte in Othello: A Satiric Comedy Ending in Tragedy," *Brief Chronicles* 3 (2011): 115. For further parallels between Shakespeare and Commedia dell'Arte see Caterina Pan, *Popular Theatre in Early Modern England, Germany and Italy (1570-1640): A Study in Intercultural Theatricality with an Analysis of "Engelische Comedien und Tragedien" (1620)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2023).

36. Emilia unknowingly provides the proof of Desdemona's supposed unfaithfulness, i.e., the handkerchief (3.3), warns Desdemona of Othello's jealousy (3.4), suspects an intrigue against Desdemona (4.2), and finally exposes Iago (5.2) before he kills her. For the genre of the citizen comedy see Alexander Leggatt, *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

37. Sir Philip Sydney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Peter C. Herman (Glen Allen, Va.: College Publishing, 2001), 89.

38. See Jason Crawford, "Shakespeare's Comedy of Judgement," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 52.3 (2022): 503–31.

39. Jonathan Bate, "Introduction to *The Tragedy of Othello*," in *The RCS Shakespeare: William Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 2060.

40. Robert Watson "Tragedy," in A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 338.

Knowing Women: Disrupting the Traffic of Male Epistemologies in *Pericles* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*

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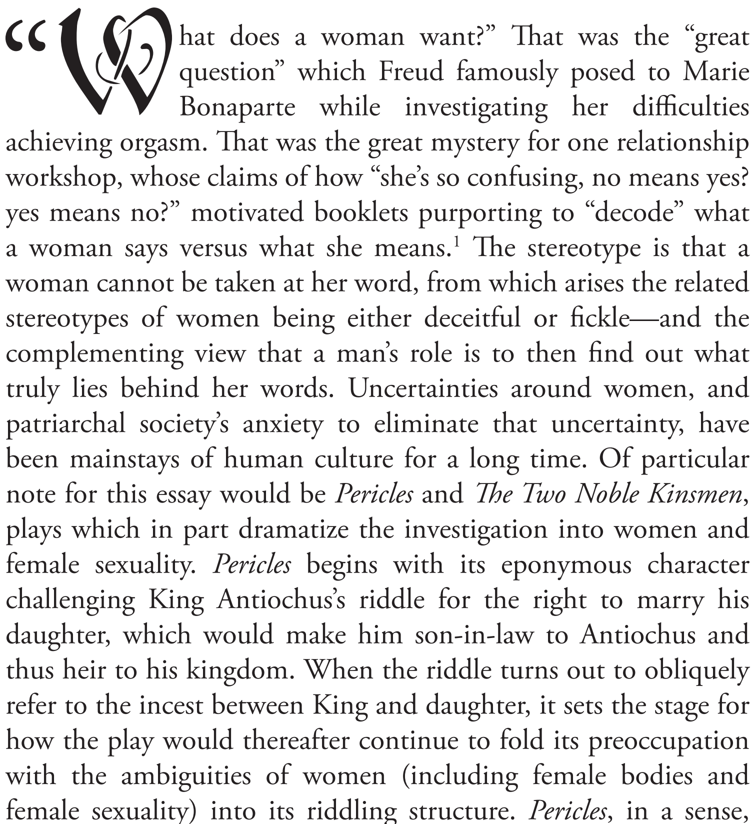

“What does a woman want?” That was the “great question” which Freud famously posed to Marie Bonaparte while investigating her difficulties achieving orgasm. That was the great mystery for one relationship workshop, whose claims of how “she’s so confusing, no means yes? yes means no?” motivated booklets purporting to “decode” what a woman says versus what she means.[1] The stereotype is that a woman cannot be taken at her word, from which arises the related stereotypes of women being either deceitful or fickle—and the complementing view that a man’s role is to then find out what truly lies behind her words. Uncertainties around women, and patriarchal society’s anxiety to eliminate that uncertainty, have been mainstays of human culture for a long time. Of particular note for this essay would be *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, plays which in part dramatize the investigation into women and female sexuality. *Pericles* begins with its eponymous character challenging King Antiochus’s riddle for the right to marry his daughter, which would make him son-in-law to Antiochus and thus heir to his kingdom. When the riddle turns out to obliquely refer to the incest between King and daughter, it sets the stage for how the play would thereafter continue to fold its preoccupation with the ambiguities of women (including female bodies and female sexuality) into its riddling structure. *Pericles*, in a sense,

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makes woman a riddle to be solved. The riddle that *Kinsmen* takes up, meanwhile, is that of whom the heroine Emilia would prefer to marry, between the titular Arcite and Palamon, who must then fight to marry her and to be recognised by her kingly brother-in-law Theseus.

Considering that the resolution of the riddle is yoked to the play's regarding marriage, knowledge quests into female sexuality seem precursor to matrimonial stability. Most people seem to have some intuitive sense of this: that a woman is attractive to men for her ability to "keep him guessing," that in his attraction the man is like a detective amidst the "thrill of the chase."[2] Why is the desire for women is so often framed as a desire to solve woman? One might throw more light upon this curiosity if one begins by asking why so much of the dramatic action in *Pericles* and *Kinsmen* involves men grappling with the unknowability of women before the plays are allowed to reach resolution in marriage. What do men really want, wanting to know what women want? What then does this all say about the unexpected *answers* women might give to the men in their lives? Drawing on feminist criticism on female sexuality in relation to kinship and the male gaze, this essay argues that female unknowability in *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Pericles* generates anxiety about how the epistemic instability around women could threaten the stability of patriarchal authority and its generational continuity. When the transmission of masculine authority and identity from patriarch to male heir depends on viewing woman as a mere vessel for the reproduction of society, the fundamental unknowability of women defying male certitude becomes a potential threat to patriarchal continuity itself.

I begin with the feminist theories that form the analytical framework for this essay, particularly theories showing how women are objectified within the systems of kinship and marriage, and how these in turn rest upon systems of male epistemology mobilized through the male gaze. Thereafter, I explore how the male characters in *Kinsmen* and *Pericles* make use of their female kin as the medium through which they transmit and preserve male power. Before this process can take place, however, a man must ascertain a woman's suitability to perform such a role. Not all women are suitable, depending on where they fall between patriarchy's polarization of women as marriageable or non-marriageable.

Accordingly, the following section turns to the methods by which men know women: namely, the investigatory and objectifying male gaze mobilized towards the making known of women within a dichotomous male epistemology. For, as the final section will observe, if woman must be unambiguously known to man in order that the latter can be unambiguously assured of the preservation of male power through her, then her ambiguity soon makes the continued future of patriarchy equally ambiguous, uncertain, and unknowable. Insofar as patriarchal continuity depends upon male inquests into women for certain knowledge that the appropriate female bodies and sexualities are being appropriately used for the transmission of male authority from one generation to another, the epistemic instability around women in *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Pericles* threatens the very stability of patriarchal authority transacted through them.

Transacting Power through Women

Drawing on anthropological studies of how marriage organizes kinship, and psychoanalytical theories as to how kinship organizes gender relations, Gayle Rubin's "Traffic in Women" aims to explain the origins and nature of women's objectification under patriarchy, including the constraints placed upon autonomous female sexuality. Where kinship is transacted through gifts, Rubin argues that marriage transacts kinship through the circulation of women as gifts, which accordingly necessitates their objectification. In this system, the restraint on women's sexuality "responded to the desires of others, rather than … actively desired and sought a response."[3] But young males are also met with a restraint on their own sexuality. Where Lacan explains the incest taboo as a transgression against paternal authority and the organization of kinship around that authority, Rubin specifically characterizes the son's incestuous desire as a transgression against the paternal authority to manage the trafficking of female kin for the transaction of kinship and power.[4]

The value of "Traffic" lies in how it explains the durability of gender roles and sexual taboos as forcefully impressed upon the psyche, while also locating those psychic relations within a larger social structure.[5] By explaining women's position in patriarchy as "socially rather than biologically determined," "Traffic" opens

up the possibility that a change in social structure could change gender relations.[6] Certainly, "Traffic" ends with Rubin's call for an imagining of alternative sexual and gender relations. Carol Parrish Jamison has attempted to answer that call by exploring how women in Germanic literature variously respond to being objectified as gifts within marriage diplomacy, for the preservation of (male-ruled) nations.[7] This essay takes Jamison's cue to explore how men and women in *Pericles* and *Kinsmen* navigate the circulation of women and of male power through women. However, I would also like to specify the particular apparatus and methods upon which that system of circulation depends—that is, the parts of the system most vulnerable to strain.

Male Epistemologies

Before men can transact power between them through a woman, the woman in question must be reduced to an object of the quest to determine her suitability as a vessel for that transaction. That is to say, a would-be male heir finds that not all, and only some, women will allow him to successfully achieve a bond with a male father figure desirable for the power and inheritance it would grant him. This explains patriarchal society's attempt to make women intelligible through polarizing them into, essentially, marriageable and non-marriageable women. The Madonna/Whore dichotomy draws the line between a woman with whom long-term sexual relations bring the benefit of relation to her male kin, perhaps in terms of money or power, and one who exists only to fulfil short-term desire, but at the least carries with her no need to fight for fatherly or brotherly approval. Another more subtle dichotomy is that of the Mother/Not-Mother dichotomy. Since Mother is a woman that already belongs to Father in an affirmation of his own right to possess women, she is off-limits to the Son hoping to endear Father into making him heir. Instead, the Son must know to "renounc[e]" his mother and wait for Father to "provide him with a woman of his own" through which his own rights over women and his own male power will be realized.[8] Imperative for sons seeking to be the heirs to their fathers' power and authority, then, is an investigation into the women they would court to determine where they fall in the Madonna/Whore, Mother/Not-Mother, marriageable/not-marriageable scheme through which patriarchy makes women intelligible.

There is, in other words, a connection between a woman's perceived marriageability and her ability to be known, if only because one must first *know* if a woman is marriageable according to the purposes of marriage and women within patriarchy before one can marry her. The resonances among the marriageable/non-marriageable, Madonna/Whore, knowable/unknowable dichotomies are explored by Tania Modleski, in her study on how men study women in film noir. Particularly, Modleski notes how a *femme fatale*, initially an improper object of desire due to having an unknown number of past sexual partners, might gradually yield herself up to the investigatory gaze of the male detective, a yielding to being-known which simultaneously makes her into a proper object of desire.[9]

Of course, one might say that the unknowability of any mind other than one's own is a source of anxiety, so that Lisa Zunshine's general concern in *Getting Inside Your Head* is how individuals deal with the unknowability of other minds through fiction and other cultural products. Zunshine, however, also notes that even within this general anxiety about other minds, "every period in human history" seems to express a specific anxiety that women are unknowable, perhaps because their bodies "do not advertise their sexual intentions," while the nature of female reproduction and childbirth "makes it impossible for men to be certain about paternity," and so impossible for them to be certain of their "partners' intentions of staying faithful to them."[10] Rosi Braidotti makes a similar observation: the "morphologically dubious" female body, with an appearance which varies unpredictably in childbirth and pregnancy, becomes "troublesome" in a society where the gaze is the primary instrument of knowledge.[11] For it is indeed the male gaze that provides men with a way of knowing women, and accordingly, the operability of this gaze that makes or breaks the system for the preservation and transmission of male power through knowable women.

The Male Gaze

Introducing a gendered perspective on Freud's conception of the "controlling and curious gaze" which takes pleasure in reducing other people to "objects," Laura Mulvey describes how the male gaze positions man as active agent while woman remains

a passive object in her "to-be-looked-at-ness."[12] But apart from extracting voyeuristic pleasure from the spectacle of women, this male gaze also indulges in the fantasy of a powerful, omnipotence which neutralises the threatening possibilities raised by the female. Specifically, in psychoanalysis, the view of the female as castrated male forces upon the gaze a reminder of the castrating power wielded by the father whose law is absolute within the symbolic order. To compensate for this anxiety, the male gaze might investigate the woman, so reasserting male power as the power to investigate and punish women.[13] The phallus and castration, of course, represent male power and the anxiety of being deprived of it. Coupled with Rubin's insights, one can specify this as the power of the father and patriarch to organize the transmission of male power through the organization and circulation of his female kin; one can also specify, following Modleski, that the investigation into women is the investigation as to which , deemed marriageable, would grant participation in, rather than exclusion from, this circulation of power-through-women.

Knowing Women as Vessels for Male Power

I begin by exploring how man's knowledge of his place and identity within patriarchy depends upon certain knowledge about the women whose sexuality and reproductive processes organize men's positions and power relative to each other within a patrilineal social order. Knowledge of oneself as heir to patriarchal power requires both Father and Son's knowledge of the latter's maternal origins. Similarly, knowledge of oneself as heir to Father-in-Law's patriarchal power requires both men's knowledge of Father's Daughter's sexual fidelity. But what exactly is a man's inheritance? It is Father's prerogatives as supreme patriarch: primarily, the male right to own or give away women, manifested as the right to arrange and approve the marriages of female kin like daughters and sisters when such women have no rights to themselves; secondarily, the male right to that which can be exchanged for women (wealth, kingship, and so on), manifest as the men being the dominant agents in systems of political and economic exchange, wherein women are only the objects of exchange. What the Son inherits is the right to become a Father, which includes the right to make other Fathers, thereby preserving patriarchy through generations.

Yet the paradox is that inheritance of this patriarchal power "must go through the woman-in-between." This power is transmitted through the sexuality of women who, in dictating kinship between father and son, between mother's brother and sister's son, between father-in-law and son-in-law, dictate the lines of inheritance through which male power is transmitted, from father to son, from mother's brother to sister's son, from father-in-law to son-in-law.[14] Male inheritance is decided by kinship as decided by women—so that a surety of women is necessary for any sense of certitude as to one's inheritance, and all the implications for identity and societal role that inheritance has. This then explains the society-wide fixation upon virginity and female fidelity and the obsessive investigations into female sexuality, female bodies, and female desires. All manifest how patriarchy needs to *know* women to be sure of itself and the means of its own preservation and transmission.

The gaze of desire is so often the investigatory gaze because, though the desire of woman is prerequisite to successful biological reproduction, it is the knowledge of woman that is necessary to determine if she is an appropriate object of desire, this appropriateness being measured in terms of her utility for the social reproduction of patriarchy. Pericles's inquest into the sexual relations between Antiochus and his daughter is in fact an inquest into the daughter's sexuality, meant to judge whether hers is a sexuality through which Antiochus's power can be transmitted from him to Pericles, and the patriarchal structure of that power thus preserved from one generation to another. The princess is the riddle: Pericles desires Antiochus's Daughter as "the book of praise, where is read / Nothing but curious pleasures" even as he is investigating the sealed riddle about her that, when "read," reveals the "curious pleasur[e]" of her incestuous relations with her father (1.1.16-17).[15] Compared to its predecessors, Shakespeare and Wilkins' adaptation of the riddle sharpens the focus on Antiochus's daughter rather than on Antiochus, such that the true hidden referent to the riddle, as Phyllis Gorfain claims, is "not 'Incest', but the name of Antiochus's nameless daughter."[16] The true object of Pericles's quest for knowledge is to resolve the unknowability of daughter. Although the *secret* to be known is about how Antiochus has usurped marital pleasures rightfully "reserved for a future

son-in-law" in an interruption of the normal progression of time, ancestry, and inheritance,[17] the *riddle* to be solved centers on the daughter's part (willing or unwilling) in the incest, centers on definitively knowing her sexuality as either useful or not useful for purposes of patriarchy. In that sense Pericles does arrive at the answer, since knowledge of the Princess's sexual history with her father, Antiochus, makes him quite certain that her sexuality is not one which would transmit an inheritance from Antiochus to Pericles. In Pericles's discovery that the woman he would have wanted for a wife has already been claimed by the man whom he wishes for a father, is the tortured Oedipal recognition that Mother, already belonging to Father in an affirmation of his patriarchal right to possess women, is off-limits to the Son, who can only defer his hope that Father would eventually make him heir of that patriarchal right.

Pericles's revelation that the princess has been "played upon before [her] time" (1.1.84) is a necessary precedent to him recognising that it is the Father in Antiochus who, in playing this "fair viol" makes the "lawful music" of who is entitled to play said music and who is entitled to make the laws, elsewhere manifest as the near-tyrannical authority with which he orchestrates "Music!" and the other characters' actions onstage (1.1.6). Pericles must come to know that the princess is the instrument of Antiochus's patriarchal power to recognise how his own role in relation to Antiochus is that of an obedient listener before Father's laws. In this, Antiochus is counterpart to Prospero, whose authority to choreograph "solemn and strange music" (3.3.22-50)[18] and other characters' roles on stage is one with his patriarchal authority to choreograph the marital and sexual relations between his daughter Miranda and Ferdinand—one with his authority as Father to decide where and when to "provide [the son] with a woman of his own,"[19] while Ferdinand the Son can only wait and listen. Antiochus is far less amiable, such that even though Pericles has no hopes of receiving from Antiochus a woman of his own, he must nonetheless still recognise Antiochus's right to possess, give away, or withhold women, if only to survive long enough until he can come into that right through other means (another woman, and another relationship with another Father transacted through that woman). Pericles must claim to "care not" to possess the princess

already possessed by Father (1.1.86). He must "renounce" his own claim to her out of "fear that otherwise his father would castrate him" and punitively "refuse him the phallus [symbolising male power],"[20] out of fear that Antiochus would make him entirely unable to possess women at all through death as the most extreme of castration—out of fear that he would be excluded utterly from the patriarchal line of inheritance. The riddle of the princess dramatizes how the quest for knowledge of women's sexuality has incredibly high stakes for the patrilineal male kinship organized by that sexuality. In knowing the princess, he knows that Antiochus's ownership of her makes Antiochus patriarch and knows himself as a son subject to Antiochus's patriarchal rule for as long as Antiochus refuses Pericles the right to become a patriarch himself.

Still, in most circumstances, to know a woman as demonstrative of the patriarch's prerogative over women is eventually to come to deserve that right, as Pericles finds out with Simonides. If the initial riddle of the princess is answered with the unwelcome knowledge that she is reserved for the Father and not the Son, the riddle of Thaisa reveals her availability as a wife for the Son, and thus her suitability as a vessel for Simonides's male power to be transmitted through her to Pericles. As with the princess, Thaisa's sexuality passes in the exchange from Simonides the Father to Pericles his Son-in-law in the form of riddling texts to be unsealed, investigated, and brought to the light of (male) knowledge. As a letter which passes from her hand to Simonides's to Pericles's (2.5.40), Thaisa and her supposed desire for Pericles becomes, from Pericles's perspective, a mystery for the latter to solve. In Pericles's anxious declamations that he has "never aimed so high to love [Simonides's] daughter," the uncertainty as to Thaisa's sexual desire is one with Pericles's uncertainty as whether Simonides means Thaisa to be the woman for him or means "to have [Pericles's] life" (2.5.43-46), one with the Son's anxiety as to whether this woman is a woman Father means for him to have. From Antiochus, Pericles learns that recognition and knowledge of Father's female property is necessary to prevent unknowing transgressions upon said property. But now, when the riddle that is female desire is "[r]esolve[d]" by woman's explicit declaration that being made love to by Pericles "would make [her] glad" (2.5.66), it is simultaneously brought to resolution that this woman is indeed one Simonides means for Pericles to have—that

this woman's desire is appropriate and suitable for the purposes of the transmission of patriarchal authority from Simonides to Pericles. Pericles comes into knowledge of Thaisa's desire to have him as a husband in the same moment he comes into knowledge of Simonides's desire to have him as a son-in-law, because it is the two together that brings certain knowledge of Thaisa's sexuality as one appropriately "respond[ing] to [male] desires" with regards to the males being desired as kin and to the desired lines of patriarchal inheritance.[21] On Simonides's end, certainty that "[Thaisa's] choice agrees with [his]" (2.5.17) gives him certainty that, although his own desire for Pericles to be his son-in-law "resist[s]" him like the appetite for "cates" that cannot be directly satiated within his (male) body, Thaisa's desire for Pericles to be her "meat" makes her body newly useful as a vessel through which Simonides's desire for kinship with Pericles passes through Thaisa's body towards fulfilment. She becomes the literal go-between "say[ing] [Simonides] drink[s] this standing bowl of wine to [Pericles]" (2.3.63). Through Thaisa, wine flows from Simonides to Pericles as "great … blood" and might flow from Father to Son (2.5.78), between the two who have so thoroughly investigated her for the reassuring certainty of seeing that flow pass unimpeded through a body made utterly transparent.

This relationship between Simonides and Pericles reaches fruition when the riddle sealed in with Thaisa's coffin is "[f]rom first to last resolve[d]" at Diana's temple (5.3.37). Recalling the tetrameter couplets of Antiochus's riddle, the riddle in the coffin is a riddle of female identity as well as that of the "morphologically dubious" female body,[22] capable of hovering between life and death. When resolved, the revelation of Thaisa's identity coincides with news that "[her] father's dead" (5.3.73), so that Pericles inherited through his "queen" his claim to his father-in-law's "kingdom" (5.3.80-83). Now Pericles is patriarch in his own right, having produced, through his relations with Thaisa, a child whose birth coincides with another delivery of a letter (3.0.14). This revelatory letter symbolizes how the knowing of women in relation to men transacts between men the right over women. As knowing Thaisa is a necessary prerequisite for the right to possess Thaisa to pass from Simonides to Pericles through Thaisa, knowing Marina becomes a prerequisite for the right to possess Marina to

pass from Pericles to Lysimachus through Marina. Once Pericles has identified the correct woman (Son's Wife and not Mother who is already Father's Wife) through which he can inherit Father's right to own woman, he becomes a patriarch sure of himself and his capacity to make other patriarchs of his sons. According to Janet Adelman, the play begins with a female body faulted for how it "confounds distinctions" and so obscures the masculine identity Pericles seeks through a father-son relationship, progresses by purifying the maternal source of identity of such ambiguities, and concludes with a masculine identity newly clarified.[23] Another way of looking at it would be to say that Pericles's increasing knowledge about women is proportional to increasing self-knowledge as to his own identity and place in society. The less mystery there is to how he relates to women like Thaisa and Marina, the surer Pericles becomes of himself as a man in a man's world—and particularly, as a man charged with maintaining that man's world.

The epistemic instability around women as it relates to the instability or stability of male inheritance and identity is also thematized in *Two Noble Kinsmen*, where the questions of Emilia's sexual preference between the titular kinsmen double as questions as to whom, in receiving the right to Emilia, would be the rightful heir to Emilia's kingly brother-in-law, Theseus. Much of the conflict turns upon the question as to which of the two, Palamon or Arcite, "saw her first" and so has the right to claim her for himself (2.2.160-163).[24] At first, the object of inquiry seems to be not Emilia, but the men, particularly their male desire for Emilia as expressed through their gaze upon her. Yet the gazes of Palamon and Arcite differ little from Pericles's. Once again, a gaze investigates a woman, her body, and her sexuality to unravel the riddle of the hidden stakes of man's investigation into woman. For Valerie Voight, Palamon and Arcite's voyeuristic sighting of Emilia in her private garden is an instance of male surveillance eliminating the mystery of the all-female space and its ambiguous threats to heteronormative reproduction. The stakes of this surveillance are suggested in how it immediately precedes the prisoners regaining the bodily freedom more typical of male autonomy and how it sets in motions the events by which Emilia is "tamed."[25] Still, the final goal behind the investigation and taming of Emilia is really to more thoroughly ascertain and define the role she is to play as a wife, transmitting

power from Theseus to the liberated Palamon. Palamon and Arcite take pleasure in gazing upon Emilia as part of the masculinist impulse to "investigate the woman" and "demystify her mystery,"[26] specifically in Palamon and Arcite's case, the mystery of how she will organize the circulation of power between paternal authority and the would-be male heirs aspiring to his authority. If seeing and being seen is an inquiry into rank and nobility when trained upon men,[27] when trained upon women it becomes an inquiry into how female bodies transmit that rank and nobility from one man to another. The question as to who "first saw her" decides who is to be "First" to "[take] possession" of Emilia *as well as* "all those beauties in her," including the right to inherit from Theseus the beauteous power to possess women such as Emilia (2.2.169-171). When they gaze upon Emilia in both desire and curiosity, they investigate who has "a just title to her beauty," which they equate with the title accorded to one "That is a man's son" (2.2.181-185). Emilia's comparison between their contention for her hand and the contest for the "title of a kingdom" then belies the literal contest for the title of son and heir to Theseus's kingdom (5.3.33-34). Once more the problems of male inheritance and identity are inseparable from inquests into the female body.

The woman most favored for patriarchy's purposes would be the woman most knowable, transparent as glass and so impeding nothing of the clear light penetrating from father to son. Knowing women, then, becomes indispensable for men to ascertain if and how a woman will confer upon him the benefits of male kinship. If the inquest discloses knowledge that a woman is unsuitable for desire or marriage, such as Antiochus's daughter, who is already spoken for by the Father determined to keep her for himself, the Son must renounce her in order to retain his place, however subordinate, within the patriarchal social order. Conversely, with enough knowledge to identify the woman suitable for marriage, one secures a new place as potential heir to her male kin's power and prestige, as when Pericles identifies Thaisa as a bridge to her father Simonides's power. To know a woman is to know how one is to relate to other men in the patrilineal organization of relations, such that the investigations into Emilia's sexuality is overlaid with investigations into questions of primogeniture and the rights of the firstborn in relation to inheritance. Either way, the patrilineal

organization of male kinship through which patriarchy is preserved across generations is clearly dependent upon men performing inquests into women to make them known in terms intelligible to a male knowledge of the system wherein women are either marriageable or non-marriageable, dependent upon women being knowable to men.

Unknowable Woman

The problem, then, is that women are rarely so reassuringly knowable to men, regardless of how hard men try to know women and regardless of how much men need to know women. That is, the apparatus of seeing through women becomes suspect if women make themselves known through means other than sight. It might seem that in *Pericles* and *Kinsmen*, woman as riddle is eventually resolved into controllable certainty through the men's efforts, and resolved in concurrence with the resolution of the narrative and with the restoration of the patriarchal order. Yet the great exertions the men display in their investigations of women are stalked by a persistent undercurrent throughout the plays: a fear that, for all that, women, their bodies, and their desires remain fundamentally unknowable.

If obsessive investigations into female virginity, chastity, and fidelity are necessary to secure certain knowledge of the heir to which a man is transmitting his patriarchal power, they are also *necessarily difficult* because such aspects of women continue to elude certainty. *Kinsmen* from the very first opens with the unknowability of female sexuality and the threat of it eluding the male gaze. The play's celebration of "maidenheads" is troubled by an awareness that one can never truly know "[if] they stand sound and well" (Prologue.1-3). The new bride who "after holy tie and first night's stir / Yet still is Modesty and still retains / More of the maid to *sight*, then husband's pain" (Prologue.5-8, emphasis added), who might in fact be other than she appears to be to sight, is no small threat to men for whom sight and the gaze is the means by which they attempt to make known and possess female sexuality (as discussed above). The doctor that the Jailer seeks after his daughter goes mad for Palamon is even more explicit, bluntly professing that her "honesty" would be impossible for him to "find" (5.2.28-29). Not even Theseus can escape this anxiety-

inducing uncertainty in his wedding to Hippolyta, where it is symbolized as a "sland'rous cuckoo" (1.1.19). The cuckoo, finally heard, reveals the eyes as having been inadequate instruments all along, reveals how blind are men's systems for knowing women. This uncertainty about paternity creates further uncertainty about patrilineal continuity and stability. For all that the male gaze acts to reduce that uncertainty around women and so neutralize the anxiety they cause to some degree,[28] uncertainty always remains. The gaze on women, rather than solving the riddle that is woman, repeatedly encounters only the unsolvability of woman which created the need to solve women in the first place, a need which can never be answered.

Nor could it have been otherwise. To have determined that the only thing worth knowing about woman is her chastity and marriageability, is in effect to have already placed limits upon the male system of knowledge, and thus to have consigned certain aspects of women beyond that system. Thus it is impossible to attempt to know women through such a system without running into the limits of its methods. Even as the scene of Emilia in her virginal garden provides Palamon and Arcite wide space to indulge in their sexual curiosity, it at the same time occasions a subtextual lesbian desire that, being beyond the male gaze that is men's method of knowing, resists being known. Examining how *Kinsmen* adapts Emilia's virginity, Lori Leigh notes that the garden offers up a safe and constrained version of female sexuality which, being transparent to and penetrable by Palamon and Arcite's male gaze, remains containable within heteronormative marriage and the malleable to the purposes of patriarchy. Yet this hardly precludes it from being, at the same time, a homosocial enclosure where Emilia might have a homoerotic encounter with her maidservant, away from male influence and surveillance (54-58).[29] In this the garden becomes but one instance of how the uncertainty about Emilia's preference between Palamon or Arcite is shadowed by a larger uncertainty around women which takes its most extreme form in the possibility that she "shall never—like the maid Flavina— / Love any that's called man" (1.3.84-85), that she is not knowable to men because he is knowable only by women. Remembrance of Flavina is so stimulating that it puts Emilia "out of breath" (1.3.83) and puts her sexuality quite out of male access. If her "breasts"

and "decking" seem to grant men visual access and advertise her fertility's usefulness for patrilineal purposes, they also hint at her romance with Flavina, who would "long" for the "flower that [Emilia] would pluck / And put between [her] breasts," and whose "pattern" Emilia copied in her "decking" (1.3.66-72). Greedily and confidently seizing upon Emilia's figure in her seemingly transparent "to-be-looked-at-ness,"[30] the male gaze instead fails to grasp how it is another unknown woman Emilia looks at, with quite unknowable intentions and threateningly opaque history and future. Appropriately, then, Emilia's homage to Flavina and her demonstration of her unknowable sexuality is compared to "old importment's bastard," since the "bastard" child of uncertain paternity and unascertainable femininity, is male knowledge at its most fallible (1.3.80). As the ambiguity of the "bastard" troubles the patrilineal Emilia's possibly female-oriented sexuality, and the more general fact of its unknowability, frustrate the attempts of those who would make her sexuality known in order to appropriate it into a vessel for the certain continuation of patriarchal authority.

In much the same way, Marina at her most knowable within the male system of knowledge is paradoxically also Marina unknowable in the ways most dangerous for the continuation of that system. From the first, Marina's resistance to being known by men (sexually or otherwise), is one "able to freeze the god Priapus and undo a whole generation" (4.5.12), one that threatens the continuity of a patriarchal society dependent upon women being knowable for reproduction of itself. Eventually, Pericles and Lysimachus come to know Marina well enough to know her as a suitably chaste vessel for the transmission of Pericles's patriarchal power to the next generation. Yet, even as Pericles's discovery that Marina "*look'st* / Like one [he] loved indeed" (5.1.115-116, emphasis added) paves the way for his knowledge that she is as pure as the woman he married to inherit her father's power (and therefore certainly chaste enough to allow him to transmit his own), he encounters the same unknowability of woman before which Antiochus confuses his daughter with his wife and brings proper patrilineal lines of inheritance to destruction. The most successful fulfilment of the male investigation into women, in which the woman in question is most completely known as pure enough to pass from Pericles to his son-in-law Lysimachus, cannot throw off the shadow of its

dark twin in Lysimachus passing Marina to Pericles while praising, in an ambiguously sexual context, her "sweet harmony / And other choice attractions" (5.1.38-39). Such ambiguity is deadly in another daughter passed between Pericles and Antiochus. The unknowability of Marina momentarily renews the threat of incest and the destruction it wreaks upon patriarchal social organization as well as the national government it supports.

The Unknowable Future of Patriarchy

If patrilineal stability and male success depends upon knowing women, yet is hindered by the fact that women are impossible to know through the ways by which men know, then patriarchy becomes perilously dependent upon women choosing to make themselves knowable. Men cannot know women because the system and instruments by which they know (an overdetermined masculinist gaze) is fundamentally incompatible with what they seek to know of women's ambiguities. The male gaze in the end is a dubious means of actually resolving the riddle of women, prolonging an investigation without ever coming to certain conclusion. After all, the conclusion of the riddle comes not through the gaze but the voice. While a riddle might be investigated in the passing of the eyes over the riddle's object, the riddle is only *solved* when the answer actually passes the challenger's lips. (This is the very quibble by which Pericles can complete his investigation into the riddle without actually completely resolving it, and so partially escapes what would have been the consequences of doing so.) And if the gaze has been heretofore the tool by which men attempt to know women, it is the voice that is the means by which women make themselves known. If there is a riddle of women to be solved for the success of patriarchy and the succession of its heirs, it is a success dependent upon women making themselves known, rather than men who are doomed to fail in their attempts to know women when equipped with the worst possible tools for the task.

Given the impossibility of Pericles attaining knowledge of Marina through male ways of investigating and knowing and thus the impossibility of him ever securing his patrilineal continuity through that knowledge, it instead falls upon Marina to makes herself known to Pericles and to restore him to his kingship. When she declares, "I am the daughter to King Pericles, / If good King

Pericles be" (5.1.168-169), her identification of herself in some sense does conjure King Pericles back into "be[ing]." To extend Kurt Schreyner's argument that "[i]t is Marina that makes Pericles a father, not Pericles himself,"[31] one might say that it is Marina making herself known to Pericles, rather than Pericles's coming into knowledge of her, that equips him with the knowledge he needs to re-establish his patriarchy and become King Pericles once more. At the same time, it is the voice by which Marina makes these declarations of identity. As her musical talents once allowed her to escape being subject to rapacious male investigation of her body, her voice now cancels out the silence Pericles has fallen into following his failure to answer the riddles around his wife and daughter. Marina's musical voice breaks the silence of the unknown and unknowable to keep tempo with the "music of the spheres" (5.1.18), accompanying Diana's answer to the question of which sea to cross to find Thaisa, whose body is the question and the path Pericles must cross to find her father's power. Pericles himself admits that it is "by *her own* most clear remembrance she / Ma[kes] *known* herself [his] daughter" (5.3.12-13, emphasis added), that she succeeds where he fails, that knowledge is to come only by being female and freely given rather than from the invasive gaze upon women, especially when the answer turns out in the end to lie in the voice that cannot be seen. What is "dumb" in Pericles's mute "show" Marina now makes "plain with speech" (3.0.14). Antiochus, even Simonides and Pericles, only ever aspired to authority on the paternal level of Prospero, whereas Marina's originary power in relation to Pericles finds its closest parallel in the way everything that can be known of *Pericles* flows from the omniscient Gower himself.

Marina's voice is what finally gives the patriarchal system the knowledge of woman that it desperately needs for the preservation of its regulatory systems, the knowledge that it is also poorly equipped to acquire precisely because of those systems. This gives a new context from which Emilia's silence at the end of *Kinsmen* might be viewed. One might certainly read Emilia's silence at the end of the play as evidence of how there is nothing more to be known about her because she has become entirely known to men. Her wishes are not taken into account; her consent is "precarious or nonexistent"[32] because the men do not bother to ask—but they

do not bother because they do not think there remains anything to ask, not when all has already been wrenched into the harsh light of revelation. Yet it is precisely the silence of another daughter in *Pericles* that makes her so much a symbol of familial and national disorder occasioned by the unknowability of woman.[33] The question of whether Emilia consents to the marriage is forgone by the mute fact that she has never consented to being known, such that her final silence speaks to a refusal to be definitively known, a refusal to be comfortably reduced to an object of knowledge and knowable transaction. Her silence seems almost a fulfilment of Hippolyta's early promise to Theseus, that she will forever let herself fall to "vigour dumb" (1.1.195) and make no more requests of him if he refuses her present request that they postpone the wedding until after he helps the three widows. Lois Porter comments that Hippolyta's words might sound "obedient" but "can also be seen as a threat," especially in the context of her actually withholding her sexual availability from Theseus until he fulfils her request.[34] Hippolyta's "vigour dumb" is a threat for how the withdrawal of her voice will make her acoustically inaccessible, on top of how the withdrawal of her body will make her sexually and visually inaccessible and thus unserviceable towards the reproduction of patriarchy. It is Emilia who, before her own impending nuptials, makes good on that threat. If the apparently heteronormative ending of *Midsummer's Night Dream* is still not conclusive enough to contend with the homoerotic suggestiveness that Rosalind and Celia retain precisely because sexuality is "unknowable,"[35] then perhaps the seemingly heteronormative endings of *Pericles* and *Kinsmen* are not as conclusive as they seem either, especially given the unknowability of women that the plays are insistently preoccupied with, and that both make emphatic once more in their heroines' silence.

In *Pericles* and *Two Kinsmen*, marriage with women is indispensable in creating the kinship between males through which patriarchal authority is transmitted. Equally indispensable to this process of patrilineal inheritance is the reduction of women into objects of knowledge by which their suitability as patrilineal vessels might be judged. The problem, however, comes in how the women of the plays are not so readily known, are far more unpredictable and unknowable than is intelligible to the reductive

epistemologies of patriarchy. Unknowable as they are, they begin to make uncertain the continuity of patriarchy itself. It is Oedipus who speaks the answer "Man" and passes the riddler on the road to Thebes, but it is the Sphinx in her suicidal silence who clears the path leading to the destruction of his patriarchal kingdom.

Notes

1. According to the pamphlets: "If he says 'Nothing', he really means 'Nothing'"; "If she says 'Nothing', she really means 'Something is bothering me. I hope you are sensitive enough to *figure it out*" (emphasis added). A more accurate phrasing of the organization's ostensible aim to "help young people unravel the world of the opposite sex" would be that they aim to help *males* unravel the world of *females* while positioning them, respectively, as unraveller and to-be-unravelled. Some of its materials are reproduced in Azim Azman, "Hwa Chong student's post over 'sexist' relationship workshop goes viral", *The New Paper*, Oct 8, 2014, https://tnp.straitstimes.com/news/hwa-chong-students-post-over-sexist-relationship-workshop-goes-viral.

2. "The more mysterious and aloof you appear, the more he'll want to spend time with you and figure out what's changed in your life." Such is the love advice given in Ellie Porter, "8 Ways to Ignore a Man and Make Him Want You," *Mindful Cupid*, October 29, 2021, https://mindfulcupid.com/how-to-ignore-a-man-and-make-him-want-you/. For an account of how the *femme fatale* trope in film noir plays up this sexual appeal (to men) of the mysterious (woman), see Tania Modleski, "The Woman Who Was Known Too Much: *Notorious*," in *The Women Who Knew Too Much* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

3. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 173-174, 182. For further exploration as to how kinship organizes gender relations, see Janet Carsten, *After Kinship, New Departures in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511800382. Although this essay focuses on how such ideas of kinship might lend insights to their representation in Shakespeare, the usefulness of Rubin's ideas even for contemporary kinship and gender relations is demonstrated in Andrea Wright, "Making Kin from Gold: Dowry, Gender, and Indian Labor Migration to the Gulf," *Cultural Anthropology* 35.3 (August 3, 2020), https://doi.org/10.14506/ca35.3.04.

4. Rubin, "Traffic in Women," 193.

5. Gayle Rubin and Judith Butler, "Sexual Traffic: Interview with Gayle Rubin by Judith Butler," in *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 283.

6. Laura Kipnis, "Response to 'The Traffic in Women,'" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34.1/2 (2006): 435.

7. Carol Parrish Jamison, "Traffic of Women in Germanic Literature: The Role of the Peace Pledge in Marital Exchanges," *Women in German Yearbook* 20 (2004): 13–36.

8. Rubin, “Traffic in Women,” 193.

9. Modleski, “*Notorious*.”

10. Lisa Zunshine, *Getting Inside Your Head* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 176.

11. Rosi Braidotti, “Mothers, Monsters, and Machines,” in *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 225-226.

12. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 16-19.

13. Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 21-22.

14. Rubin, “Traffic in Women,” 192.

15. William Shakespeare and George Wilkins, *Pericles*, ed. Suzanne Gossett, The Arden Shakespeare: Third Series (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004).

16. Phyllis Gorfain, “Puzzle and Artifice: The Riddle as Metapoetry in *Pericles*,” in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 136.

17. Sophie Emma Battell, “Pericles and the Secret,” *Shakespeare* 18.4 (October 2, 2022): 432–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2022.2066166.

18. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2015).

19. Rubin, “Traffic in Woman,” 193.

20. Rubin, 193.

21. Rubin, 182.

22. Braidotti, “Mothers,” 226.

23. Janet Adelman, “Masculinity and the Maternal Body: The Return to Origins in *Pericles*,” in *Pericles: Critical Essays,* ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 185-187.

24. William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Lois Potter (Revised Edition, New York: The Arden Shakespeare: Third Series, 2015).

25. Valerie Voight, “‘I Am Not against Your Faith yet I Continue Mine’: Virginal Vocation in The Two Noble Kinsmen,” *Comparative Drama* 55.2 (2021): 307–30, https://doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2021.0017.26. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 21-22.

27. Alex Davis, “Living in the Past: Thebes, Periodization, and The Two Noble Kinsmen,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40.1 (January 1, 2010): 173–95, https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2009-018.28. Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 22.

28. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," 19.

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"Let all the dukes and all the devils roar": The Jailer's Daugher's Performative Empathy

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Having recently freed the noble kinsman Palamon from prison, the Jailer's Daughter defiantly exclaims what she has done: "Let all the dukes and all the devils roar, / He is at liberty! I have ventured for him / And out I have brought him" (2.6.1-3).[1] In the Daughter's soliloquy, she details the complex machinations behind the plot which has been motivated by her passionate love for the eloquent prisoner of whom she observes, "Fairer spoken / Was never gentleman" (2.4.20-21). Furthermore, as she confesses of her primary motivation for releasing Palamon without her father, the Jailer's knowledge, "O, Love, / What a stout-hearted child thou art!" (2.6.8-9). At this pivotal moment in time, the Jailer's Daughter demonstrates the remarkable potency of language to illuminate key relationships between people. As Russ McDonald argues of this crucial type of speech, "Shakespeare's artful arrangement of moving words is the engine that generates immense emotional and theatrical power. The events depicted are often extremely moving, and usually it is the form of expression that augments the emotional effect."[2] For example, the Jailer's Daughter's striking repetition of the personal pronoun "I" in this stunning jailbreak speech underscores her strong female agency and commitment to securing Palamon's freedom: "*I* have ventured for him / And out *I* have brought him" (2.6.2-3). As Hélène Cixous reflects of the markedly gendered verbal power which the

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Daughter displays, "Feminine strength is such that while running away with syntax, breaking the famous line (just a tiny little thread, so they say) … she goes to the impossible where she plays the other, for love, without dying of it."[3] Challenging her potential detractors, the Daughter rhetorically "runs away with syntax" by speaking from a place of deeply rooted authority—and of course, personal agency. If, as Jillian Cavanaugh argues, "Performativity is the power of language to effect change in the world: language does not simply describe the world but may instead (or also) function as a form of social action," the Jailer's Daughter's decisive words not only emphasize her shocking release of the prisoner, but also trigger the powerful affective responses of imagination and empathy within the audience—thus rendering its members complicit in her compelling ruse.[4]

Philosopher Eva-Maria Engelen defines "imagination" as a "representation" which is "more precisely a form of directed (thus guided) conceiving or creation of possibility," and additionally, this type of mentalism "is not limited to visual imagination, but includes the conceiving of a non-present situation, a non-present image or story, a melody or situation or even the conceiving of a proof."[5] For instance, when the Jailer's Daughter speculates about Palamon, "Say I ventured / To set him free?" (2.4.30-31), she envisions a "non-present situation" and loaded possibility taking place. Encouraging the audience to imagine this transformative event with her, the Daughter appeals for its collective empathy, which Engelen explains as, "a social feeling that consists in feelingly grasping or retracing the present, future or past emotional state of the other; thus empathy is also called a vicarious affect."[6] Stimulated to feel with, and not simply for, Palamon and the Jailer's Daughter the offstage audience experiences empathy as precisely this type of vicarious emotion.

The Daughter's question about the concept of Palamon's freedom illustrates how, as Slavoj Žižek argues, "Possibility itself, in its very opposition to actuality, possesses an actuality of its own."[7] Crucially, the term "possibility" suggests two diametrically opposed things: "Possibility designates something 'possible' in the sense of being able to actualize itself, as well as something 'merely possible' as opposed to being actual."[8] In other words, a possibility represents either a desire that becomes real or a

hypothetical one that does not. Moreover, as the Daughter's release of Palamon demonstrates, the difference between an actual and a mere possibility can frequently be determined by a compelling blend of empathy, personal strength, courage—and sometimes total force of will. Hearing the Daughter's passionate rationale for freeing Palamon—and imaginatively participating in his offstage liberation and its dramatic aftermath—audience members concur that she successfully *actualizes the possible* by making what was once a speculation, completely real. As the gripping dynamics between imagination, empathy, and action unfurl within William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's late play and "romance," *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, its main characters confront the key question: "What is possible?"

In order to accomplish her goal of transforming a possibility into an actuality, the Jailer's Daughter utilizes what I would call "performative empathy," which may be simply defined as the empathetic "call and response" that is successfully solicited and achieved between onstage actors and offstage audience during a performance, the reciprocal sharing of "fellow-feeling" between these individuals. For example, when the Jailer's Daughter announces her plan to free Palamon, she simultaneously establishes herself as being irrevocably changed by the scheme—and masterfully extends the "call and response" for performative empathy to the offstage audience. The Daughter's rousing hypothetical—"Say I ventured / To set him free?"—is also directed at "us." And what exactly do we think of her game-changing ruse?

Significantly, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare powerfully foregrounds the human body as an embodied affective tool easily triggering the imaginative and empathetic faculties of audiences onstage and off. In order to stimulate the striking reciprocal conduit of shared feeling generated between onstage and offstage interlocutors, the playwright cannily showcases the astonishing *corpus humanum* as a foundational instrument for generating performative empathy. As a result, the audience observes skilled actors who are not only capable of stimulating our emotions—of reaching out to us and making us feel things—but also of encouraging us to conceive of our own bodies as flexible instruments for taking dynamic action in the world. Unquestionably, Shakespeare's emphasis on the phenomenological

upshot of dramatic performance—upon the physical body, bodily affect, feeling, and sensation as reliable signifiers of our common and shared humanity—luminously characterizes the last thing he wrote.

My paper argues that Shakespeare establishes the deeply human/e Jailer's Daughter as the play's chief empathizer with the well-spoken Palamon. By feeling with, and not simply for, this transiently downtrodden individual—including bearing empathetic witness to Palamon's (and his kinsman, Arcite's) pain, struggles, and eventual triumphs—the Jailer's Daughter dauntlessly engages with the cathartic violence of change in word and deed, thus profoundly impacting all those who come unto her sphere of influence. The Daughter's bold liberation of Palamon changes his life (and her own) forever—thus illustrating how, in the Derridean sense, a performative, "produces or transforms a situation, it effects," cathartically.[9] Furthermore, the Jailer's Daughter successfully solicits the offstage audience's engagement with the onstage performance in order to concretize the changes that she has wrought. To this end, I want to explore how the Daughter's performative empathy "works" onstage, especially by means of her four hypnotic soliloquies.

After formulating a plan, the Daughter proceeds to take direct action. Bidding her father, the Jailer, farewell, for the second time, obsessing about his potentially being a prisoner who could have "endured cold iron" (2.6.10), and besides observing that since all of the other inmates have already been freed, he might as well lock himself up in the jail and stay there—as she crossly quips, "Shortly you may keep yourself" (2.6.39)—the Jailer's Daughter states of Palamon: "Now to him" (2.6.39). The Daughter's observation about the Jailer having "endured cold iron" (2.6.10) has a two-fold implication. She either means that her father should basically have self-imprisoned at this point, that he more deserved jail himself, or that he is so fearful that he would have chosen to lock himself up in one of the jail cells and stayed there, rather than trying to set Palamon free.

However, before turning to the Jailer's Daughter's unforeseen release of Palamon, I want to briefly touch upon an earlier summa demonstration of "fellow-feeling" heralding the Daughter's passionate empathy with the prisoner. The opening scene

showcases Duke Theseus, Queen Hippolyta, and the noble kinswoman Emilia's protracted interaction with three queens. Arguably, Theseus represents the late romance's first example of an empathetic sovereign whose compassion for the gathered women effectively sets the tone for the rest of the play. This begins with the Queens, Hippolyta, and Emilia all begging Theseus to go to war against King Creon so that they might finally bury their three kings whose bodies still lie reeking on the battlefield. While the queens' emphatic demand that the royals hear and respect them may be delivered coarsely, their expressed sentiment is real, so people compassionately listen to what they have to say. Finally, it's the women's grief-stricken words and melodramatic actions (including assuming the supplicant position) which ultimately rouse the Duke's empathy for their long-standing plight. As Theseus exhorts the groveling women, "Pray, stand up. / I am entreating of my self to do / That which you kneel to have me" (1.1.205-207). They make him beg himself! However, at the same time—and especially given what happens after his acquiescence to the stranger women's plea (including the jailing of Arcite and Palamon)—*it seems obvious that the three queens should not have asked Theseus to help them*.

Once Theseus has committed to assisting the three queens to bury those whom he agrees "were good kings when living" (1.1.147), the Duke readies the great cracking engine of the state for impending war—a formidable task of which, Agamemnon-like, he has some modest experience. As he promises the crying sovereigns, "I will give you comfort, / To give your dead lords graves—the which to do, / Must make some work with Creon" (1.1.148-149). Readying himself for battle, Theseus next romantically expresses to Hippolyta, "Since that our theme is haste, / I stamp this kiss upon thy current lip; / Sweet, keep it as my token. Set you forward, / For I will see you gone" (1.1.215-218). Theseus's words to the queen can be taken in two ways. The phrase "For I will see you gone" suggests that the Duke will remain onstage to speak with his close friend, Pirithous, after the women exit. But coupled with the admiring injunction, "Set you forward," the phrase could also represent a rallying battle cry recalling his wife's past exploits as she fearlessly rides into battle on horseback. Additionally, I wish to suggest that the audience should perceive a slight parallel between Hippolyta and the Jailer's Daughter—what could be characterized

as the shared "freedom-fighter" ethos by which they live their lives. Both women take transformative action in the world to accomplish their goals by leading the Amazonians into battle and setting Palamon free. Thus, we might say that these two strong women are spiritual helpmeets and—in an ideal universe—would probably be very good friends. I think this could also still possibly be. For, as the Jailer's Daughter thinks while turning the lock in Palamon's jail cell as her father continues to sleep, who has not heard of the famous exploits of Queen Hippolyta?

Notably, Shakespeare structures *The Two Noble Kinsmen* around the Jailer's Daughter's stunningly empathetic liberation of Palamon which, as she observes, is soon to become the stuff of prison lore. Post-jailbreak, Palamon remains dramatically shackled in the woods by a cedar and a flowing stream where the Jailer's Daughter has temporarily left him while returning to the jail in order to secure "necessaries" (2.6.32), including food-stuffs, for the former captive. Markedly, during the multiple nighttime forest scenes where the Daughter's Ophelia-esque descent into madness—or in early modern parlance, "wode"—aligns with the natural woodsy environment—so we might say she goes "wode" in the dark "woods"—her empathetic sharing of Palamon's woe doesn't in the least prevent her from seeking him out. Quite the reverse, because of course, the Daughter still needs to file off the kinsman's iron leg shackles, feed him provisions, and hopefully receive a long-awaited kiss as recompense for her pains. And after all she has done for him—it had better be a good kiss.

For, as the "greensick," or sexually frustrated, Daughter obsesses, Palamon hasn't yet thanked or so much as kissed her as recompense for her pains; frustratingly for her, there wasn't ever a solid gesture of exchange compacting the freedom she has wrought. Still pining for a kiss, the Daughter vows to await the growth of Palamon's more reciprocal feelings, perhaps stirred by her enduring love for the kinsman: "Yet I hope, / When he considers more, this love of mine / Will take more root within him" (2.6.26-28). Like a tiny seed which first sprouts into a young sapling and may finally grow into a mighty cedar tree, the Daughter prays that her personal passion will inspire the former captive's similar sentiments over time. Naturally, all that is required of Palamon—the sole recipient of the Daughter's boundless devotion—is at some point

in the future, the sensual sealing of their deal with a romantic kiss. The Jailer's Daughter's eager anticipation of a grateful kiss from Palamon is heightened by the fact that soon people will be scouring the countryside for the kinsman, and as she imaginatively gloats to the audience, "I am then / *Kissing* the man they look for" (2.6.36-37, italics mine). Crucially, since the Jailer's Daughter and Palamon have already shared romantic intimacies, their past history explains why she longs for yet another kiss from the kinsman. As she enthusiastically confides to the audience, "Once, he kissed me. / I loved my lips the better ten days after: / Would he would do so every day!" (2.4.25-27).

However, the Jailer's Daughter's first soliloquy opens with her present-day lament over what she perceives as the current impossibility of the match—which will only ever become an actual possibility if she can successfully help Palamon to escape from prison. Remarking on the vast socio-economic gap between herself and the noble kinsman, the Jailer's Daughter naïvely wonders to the audience: "Why should I love this gentleman? / 'Tis odds / He never will affect me: I am base, / My father the mean keeper of his prison, / And he a prince" (2.4.1-4). The opening lines of the Daughter's soliloquy rapidly engage audience members in her predicament.

As Michael Wagoner observes, "Her question immediately creates a connection with her audience…She invites the audience to craft answers through asking a question, which is to say that she invites the audience to create her own interiority."[10] Via the conduit of "performative empathy," and by asking key questions, the Jailer's Daughter requires that audience members participate in her characterological self-generation as it's purposefully defined by her love for Palamon. Realistically citing completely different social classes as the main reason why she believes Palamon will never "affect," or love her, the Daughter surmises to her sea of empathetic interlocutors that marriage is out of the question—and acknowledges that having sexual relations outside of that commitment is truly foolish: "To be his whore is witless" (2.4.5). In addition to being glossed as "to like or love," the word "affect" can also mean "having an impact," and since the rest of the Jailer's Daughter's speech illustrates the palpable affect which Palamon has upon her, she uses this word both ironically and sincerely. As

the Daughter explains the trajectory whereby she found herself falling in love with Palamon: "First, I saw him;" / … "Next, I pitied him—" /…"Then, I loved him" (2.4.7, 11, 14). Markedly, Palamon (like Arcite) is repeatedly spoken of by the Daughter as being "a young handsome man" (2.4.14) and so, as the story often goes, her eyes were first ensnared by his comely appearance. Furthermore, and from the moment she sees him, the Jailer's Daughter can instantly tell him apart from the other prisoner, who is actually described as slightly better looking. In response to her father's perhaps knowing misrecognition of the prisoner who peers out of the jail cell window—"That's Arcite looks out" (2.1.50)—the Daughter immediately clarifies: "No, sir, no, that's Palamon. Arcite is the lower of the twain" (2.2.51-52). So it seems she already recognizes Palamon as that "tall young man" (4.1.82). And eventually, of course, she falls in love with him.

The Jailer's Daughter's striking pity for Palamon and Arcite is highlighted in her opening lines where, as she enters "carrying rushes," she compassionately observes to her father of the two noble kinsmen, "These strewings are for their chamber. 'Tis pity they are in prison and 'twere pity they should be out. I do think they have patience to make any adversity ashamed" (2.1.21-24). Significantly, the Daughter's pity for these unfortunate captives is based not only upon her probable belief that the men were wrongly imprisoned, but also the fact that she cannot realistically be with Palamon (in any sense of the word) while he remains in penitentiary. Ironically, and as the audience soon learns, Arcite and Palamon have been jailed by Duke Theseus in order to receive healing ministrations after their defeat in battle. Arguably, the kinsmen's presence within jail is the result of their being taken as prisoners of war—not because they have committed any obvious wrong, other than fighting on the side of Creon. Logically therefore, the offstage audience's early cognizance that the two men are unluckily beaten soldiers only increases its collective capacity to empathize with Palamon and Arcite, unfortunates in war if not—as we shall soon see—in love. For once the Daughter has set her sights on Palamon—and pitied his lamentable plight—she strongly desires to free the captive kinsman. As the Jailer's Daughter exclaims, "I will do it!" (2.4.32) adding, "And this night, or tomorrow, he shall love me" (2.4.33).

Crucially, the word "pity" suggests that the individual who pities another human being is currently in a superior position, and frequently that there is a sincere desire to alleviate—and sometimes to stay with—the other person's suffering. As the Daughter compassionately observes of their mutual sorrow, "He grieves much— / And me as much to see his misery" (2.4.27-28). In other words, the empathetic Jailer's Daughter feels Palamon's pain as if it's her own. Certainly, the Daughter experiences her love for the kinsman as the most vital part of her existence. Wondering to the audience, "What should I do to make him know I love him?" (2.4.29), since as she admits, "For I would fain enjoy him" (2.4.30), the Daughter next boldly contends, "Say I ventured / To set him free?" (2.4.30-31). Vigorously disowning all other impediments, including blood-ties, and embracing the lure of possibility in order to actualize the possible—since as Žižek observes, "Possibility already possesses a certain actuality *in its very capacity of possibility*."—the Jailer's Daughter resolutely exclaims: "Thus much for law or kindred! / I will do it!" (2.4.32-33).[11]—emphatically pounding her broom on the ground. Yet another compelling alternative performance choice would be the Jailer's Daughter spreading invisible rushes in the kinsmen's cell while declaring, "I will do it." Manifesting Judith Butler's compelling observation that, "The deed is everything" during this riveting preliminary speech, the Daughter establishes herself as a very brave woman whose personal identity is shaped by her chosen position as the instrument of Palamon's liberation.[12] Crucially, part of the significant shock value of the Daughter's plot is that there is literally *no* preamble of any kind to her stunning revelation in 2.6 that she has, in fact, done the deed—and, for better or worse, the noble kinsman is free.

In the jailbreak speech where the Daughter announces Palamon's release, she passionately explains how her all-encompassing love for the former prisoner has overridden any other concerns about the risky social action which she has undertaken for his sake: "I love him beyond love and beyond reason, / Or wit, or safety; I have made him know it" (2.6.11-12). Perhaps imagining the supposed heedlessness which caused Palamon to be imprisoned in the first place, the Daughter speaks of herself as actually being far more overtaken by a desire for freedom than the kinsman

in her confession: “I care not, I am desperate” (2.6.13). Via her selfless love for Palamon, the Jailer’s Daughter demonstrates an unnerving side-effect of empathy—the affective phenomenon of what philosopher Fritz Breithaupt calls “self-loss” which, “can be described as a possible effect of simulating, adapting, or otherwise engaging with the perceived perspective, state, or identity of another and thereby losing, ignoring, or forgetting one’s own perspective, interests or state.”[13] In other words, one of the big risks of feeling too much for another person—of over-empathizing with him or her—is no less than the totalizing loss of self. To this end, the Daughter concludes her revolutionary manifesto with the moving profession of her desire to be of service to Palamon: “Let him do / What he will with me, so he use me kindly—” (2.6.28-29). By making this extraordinarily giving statement, the Daughter rhetorically transfers the agency she claimed by defying those who sought to keep the noble Palamon in chains from herself to the eloquent escapee, whom she wants, as she strikingly puts it, “to use her.” In fact, and with supreme good-heartedness, the Jailer’s Daughter states: “For use me so he shall” (2.6.30). She says she wants him to “use” her. Because she really loves Palamon, the gentle Jailer’s Daughter gives his life back to him.

Having freed the former captive, who must run for his life while his hands are still chained, the Jailer’s Daughter arrives onstage, distractedly exclaiming about her inability to find the young man in the forest. During this time—where the Daughter’s panicked speech precipitates her eventual distemper—she experiences the phantasmagoric dark woods as a stunning performative version of what Žižek resonantly characterizes as the “place ‘between the two deaths,’ a place of sublime beauty as well as terrifying monsters.”[14] It is also, “the site of *das Ding*, of the real-traumatic kernel in the midst of symbolic order.”[15] The traumatic kernel that the Daughter must now confront is Palamon’s absence from her life. Presuming that the kinsman has already been gobbled up by hungry wolves—as she laments, “He’s torn to pieces; they howled many together / And then they fed on him. So much for that.” (3.2.18-19)—the Jailer’s Daughter asks herself, “How stand I then?” / … “So, which way now?” (3.2.20, 32). The Daughter’s questioning rhetoric signaling her desire to establish where she is in space and to maintain emotional control, and also sanity, while perambulating

through yet another eerily reversed world—where the screech-owl is substituted for the crowing cock—effectively heralds her tragic descent into madness. While Fletcher was known for writing potent "mad scenes," scholars generally accept that Shakespeare probably scripted the Daughter's final soliloquy in which, at this point in time, she is very sick.

Entering the nocturnal stage to express her debased condition, the Jailer's Daughter laments, "I am very cold and all the stars are out too, / The little stars and all, that look like aglets" (3.4.1-2). Comparing the stars in the sky to the ornate spangles on a great lady's dress, the Daughter begins to hallucinate by aligning the striking image of the entire cosmos with an item of jewel-bedazzled clothing. The Jailer's Daughter's madness transpires, at least partially, because of her profound physical exhaustion and grief over losing Palamon. Mourning the absent kinsman, "Alas, no, he's in heaven" (3.4.4) and repetitiously asking, "Where am I now?" (3.4.4), the Daughter expresses her progressive distancing from reality in a stunning narrative presaging her impending insanity. An Athenian countryman or "rustic" will diagnose her as a "madwoman" (3.5.73) in the following scene—yet she will stimulate performative empathy by dancing with the Bavian and his friends.

I would argue that it's precisely the Daughter's emotional instability—and performative verbalization of a series of emotive images stimulating the audience's empathy with her plight—which lends her second nighttime speech its striking import. Although standing in the middle of the forest, Daughter instead imagines herself standing on the seashore, gazing out at its vast oceanic depths—and tragically unable to forestall an impending shipwreck. Panicking, she observes, "Yonder's the sea and there's a ship; how't tumbles! / And there's a rock lies watching under water; / Now, now, it beats upon it; now, now, now!" (3.4.5-7). Believing that she is witnessing a ship crashing against a large, submerged rock, the Daughter exhorts the vessel's phantasmagoric mariners to, "Run her before the wind, you'll lose all else. / Up with a course or two and tack about, boys!" (3.4.9-10).

In this speech, the Jailer's Daughter also expresses her hope of finding a stimulating amphibian companion with whom she might converse: "Would I could find a fine frog; he would tell

me / News from all parts o'th' world" (3.4.12-13). Although the Daughter could mean that she wants to consume the reptile as food, the contemplative frog's comforting presence—in the midst of her aquatic fantasia—more likely alludes to her evocative hallucination of being near the water. Continuing in the same vein, the Daughter next proposes, "Then would I make / A carrack of a cockle shell and sail / By east and north-east to the king of pygmies, / For he tells fortunes rarely" (3.4.13-16). Whimsically wishing to set sail in a small seashell to the Land of the Pygmies to have her fortune told, the Jailer's Daughter also subtly bespeaks her longing for a release from all worries and cares, a sentiment further explaining her desire to chat with a fine frog who, seated peacefully on his lily pad, shares many interesting stories with her about how the world goes. And in doing so, the frog rhetorically—and also solicitously—generates a safe and protected space where the frog prince might one day proffer a kiss to the woebegone princess.

In the following act, the Jailer confirms what he perceives as the Daughter's increasingly disorganized behavior to the Wooer and the First and Second Friend. As the Jailer observes of his distracted progeny, "I asked her questions, and she answered me / So far from what she was, so childishly, / So sillily, as if she were a fool, / An innocent, and I was very angry" (4.1.38-41). And the Wooer concurs with the Jailer: "'Tis too true: she is mad" (4.1.45). For recently, the young man has secretly sighted the Daughter moping alone by a lake, "thick set with reeds and sedges" (4.1.54). Having peeped at her "through a small glade cut by the fisherman" (4.1.64), and confirming to the stone-faced Jailer that, "I saw it was your daughter" (4.1.64), the Wooer quotes the Daughter's melodic lamentation: "She sung much, but no sense; only I heard her / Repeat this often: 'Palamon is gone, / Is gone to th'wood to gather mulberries'" (4.1.66-68). A compelling example of what Marjorie Garber calls an "unscene," which is defined by, "narrating events that have taken place offstage and out of our sight," the Wooer's elegiac description of the Daughter's madness encourages us to empathize with her sorrow by imagining the mnemonic unscene.[16] In his narration, the Wooer stimulates the audience's empathy by imaginatively presenting what Engelen would characterize as a "non-present image or story," even including a melody about Palamon collecting wild berries in the forest. As it turns out, when

the Daughter catches the Wooer spying on her, she instantly tries to drown herself in the lake, but is rescued from that sad fate because he wades into the water and "set her safe to land" (4.1.96). Fleeing the Wooer for the city, the Daughter is soon intercepted by several men, one of whom is her brother, and brought back to the jail and her father. Continuing her warbling back in prison, the Jailer's Daughter angrily sings, "May you never more enjoy the light" (4.1.104) and sharply inquires of those present, "Is not this a fine song?" (4.1.104)—to which her brother patronizingly agrees, "Oh, a very fine one" (4.1.105). Frustrated by the men's rejoinders—and falsely imagining her droll sibling as a tailor—the Daughter switches topics and, putting her hands on her hips, asks, "Where's my wedding gown?" (4.1.109), and then hauntingly croons: "O fair, o sweet (etc.) …" (4.1.114).

In response to the First Friend's agreement with her positive assessment of Palamon—"Yes, he's a fine man" (4.1.120)—the Daughter muses, "Oh, is he so?" (4.1.121) and next jealously observes, "You have a sister. /…But she shall never have him—tell her so— / For a trick that I know" (4.1.121-123). Of course, the "trick" itself is probably either a surprise clandestine engagement to the Jailer's Daughter herself or a crafty early modern bed trick where she proposes to substitute her body for that of the sister's. Wildly hypothesizing about Palamon's possible betrayal of her bed—and also in order to block the mean sister from him—the Jailer's Daughter frantically speculates to the Friend, "There is at least two hundred now with child by him" (4.1.128), yet soon reduces that absurdly large number by conceding, "There must be four" (4.1.129). Aware of the ignoble kinsman's philandering—and thus promptly stating that Palamon has already produced hundreds of children with other women—the suspicious Daughter explains to the company present, "Yet I keep close for all this, / Close as a cockle" (4.1.129-130). To be sure, being used or tricked by men obsesses the Daughter's mind.

The Jailer's Daughter's focus on the kinsman means that she must still take every "broken piece of matter" (4.3.6) and immediately relate all of these spoken utterances to his name. As the Jailer frets, the Daughter "fits it to every question" (4.3.8). She uses Palamon's name in every single sentence she utters. Perhaps reminiscing about her childhood, which remains intertwined with

her romantic memory of Palamon, the Jailer's Daughter nostalgically explains to the Doctor: "Sometime we go to barley-break, we of the blessed" (4.3.29-30). "Barley-break" is a rustic game played by young couples who hold hands while running across a wide field while a third couple stands in the center among the barley and the rye trying to catch them as they pass by. The joyful game represents not only a subtle metaphor for sexual coupling, but also probably alludes to the Daughter's happy childhood memory of playing with friends in a green field. By contrast to this bucolic image of those who frolic happily in the fields of the blessed, the Daughter observes of those who live in "that other place" of sin, damnation, and eternal hell fire—and so must endure, "such burning, frying, boiling, hissing, howling, chattering, cursing" (4.3.31-32)—that, "Lords and courtiers that have got maids with child…shall stand in fire up to the navel and in ice up to the heart" (4.3.40-42). To be clear, these people are in Hell. Of course, the striking image of these sufferers also bespeaks the Daughter's internal howl of rage because she is starting to realize that she may never receive so much as a "thank you" kiss from vanished Palamon. The complex affective mood surrounding her illuminates how, as Megan Snell observes, "Audience responses to the Jailer's Daughter in performance epitomize the mixed reactions that tragicomedy can produce, as her heartbroken sadness can also cause enjoyment."[17] Yet, we also empathize with the Daughter, who involves us in her end-goal of freeing, finding, and ever-dwelling with Palamon.

In order to distract the mad Jailer's Daughter from her grief—and to soundly turn the mocking conception of playing a bed trick on the Friend's sister against her—the Doctor devises a cunning ruse whereby the Wooer will impersonate the missing kinsman in order to seduce the Daughter, and even get to introduce himself to her as "Palamon." Additionally, the men's scheme shortly emerges as a protective fiction for the Daughter since she can only accept a new paramour if she misrecognizes him as Palamon—who means so much to her past and whose absent presence continues to shape her present experience. As Linda Charnes observes of the past's haunting influence upon the present and the future, "Only rarely do we 'process' or complete a relationship to the past in a way that lets us say to ourselves, confidently, 'that was then, and this is now.'"[18]

Refocusing the Jailer's Daughter's attention on Palamon to a second "Palamon" by replacing one man with another, the Doctor, the Jailer, and the Wooer utilize patriarchal rhetoric in order to instantiate their reality over hers. The language of the three men is markedly plainspoken; their blunt speech indicates their strenuous efforts towards a lasting cure. For example, the Wooer vows to regularly make love to the Jailer's Daughter because as the Doctor insists, "There the cure lies mainly" (5.2.8). And he also pleads with the Wooer, "If she entreat again, do anything. / Lie with her if she asks you" (5.2.17), to which the Jailer exclaims, "Whoa there, Doctor!" (5.2.18). Yet the Doctor still insists: "Yes, in the way of cure" (5.2.19). Ignoring the men's mockery, the human Daughter—who may knowingly acquiesce to the controlling "necessary fiction" before her—eventually throws up her hands and confirms to the at least physically available Wooer that obviously at this point, "We'll sleep together" (5.2.109). Arguably, the Daughter accepts her prescribed role in the situation since she has accomplished her sole purpose—and the only thing that really matters in the end. As the Jailer's Daughter wearily, triumphantly observes to the Doctor, "Now he's at liberty" (5.2.96). For in the case of the noble kinsman, whom the Daughter never really forgets—and who may still return to her someday, the audience will always remember how she deploys this same kind of deep passion to change his life.

One reason why the Jailer's Daughter may accept her new bedfellow's proposition is because the Wooer and Palamon may be the same person. In New York and Ashland productions of the play, the actor playing Palamon doubled as the Wooer. As Lois Potter explains of the duplicitous sort-of kind bed-trick, "The Wooer in Palamon's clothes looked surprisingly like Palamon. Indeed, at Ashland…the Wooer's 'Do you not know me'? (5.2.82) showed both his reluctance to lie to her and her sense that perhaps he had been Palamon, or Palamon had been the Wooer all along."[19] Perceiving "The Wooer's" question, the Daughter may recognize romantic Palamon as being incognito—and standing in front of her, which explains why she propositions him! This is one and the same man. And this is also an epic scene from fantasy—where Palamon comes back in the end.

Of course, the Jailer's Daughter once harnesses tremendous personal strength in order to release the prisoner—or as the entire Ashland cast would have it—to find him again someday. Putting all of her energy into one chosen desire, the Jailer's Daughter accomplishes that same desire—of setting Palamon free—by focusing on one specific, sublime object. It is her one wish and she achieves it! Movingly, the brave Jailer's Daughter's unforgettable challenge to all opposing forces bespeaks her commitment to Palamon's protection: "Let all the dukes and all the devils roar!" Arguably, Palamon and the Jailer's Daughter are spiritual helpmeets: he holds the key to her heart—and fortuitously enough for him—she the one to the clink. Binding herself to this one crucial task, the Jailer's Daughter powerfully demonstrates her endless love for the noble kinsman. Of course, the Daughter's devotion to Palamon illustrates how the play's title, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* could refer to a variety of partners, including the playwrights themselves—and also the Jailer's Daughter and her Palamon.

Relevantly, then, the last word on the Daughter belongs to Palamon. In the following scene, hearing of the Jailer's Daughter's recovery from illness and upcoming marriage, Palamon says he is glad to hear that news and generously offers his coin purse to the Jailer as a monetary contribution to the Daughter's dowry—and perhaps that wedding gown: "Commend me to her and, to piece her portion, / Tender her this" (5.4.31-32). Similarly, his assembled knights also throw their purses, exclaiming, "Commend us to her" (5.4.35). Palamon's munificent donation of financial largesse is characteristic of the kinsman, who demonstrates his awareness of how the Jailer's Daughter's great deed has changed his life. It is a gift from a real prince.

To be sure, and as we might expect, throughout the play both of the kinsmen are repeatedly established as being noble and/or good. Furthermore, since Palamon and Arcite are also equivalent regarding their personal virtue, the playwrights introduce the element of randomness into the mix of things in order to determine who will wed the lovely Emilia. Paradoxically, the noble kinsman who meets his doom is actually the victor of the pyramidal test of strength: the doomed Arcite who is paralyzed and soon dies from being crushed under the weight of his mighty black stallion. Magnificently, and just moments before his tragic death, the stage

directions indicate that the physically beautiful Arcite comes onstage aloft, "carried in a chair," which is brought crashing down onstage as if to represent a stark punishment from the gods.

In a similarly distressing—yet perhaps still salvageable—vein, the faithful love which the Jailer's Daughter feels for Palamon is never entirely reciprocated for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the last thing Arcite ever does is to bequeath Emilia to his comrade-in-arms. However, we have borne witness to—and thus empathize with—the Jailer's Daughter's deep love for, and empathy with another person as real in both scope and significance. Inevitably for the nostalgic Jailer's Daughter, the past seeps into and infiltrates the present—thus enabling a series of transformative choices—including, above all, her liberation of Palamon. To this end, I argue that one of Shakespeare's final conjuring acts is to proffer us with the breathtaking experience of what is known in Biblical terms as "The Fortunate Fall" into love—or at the very least, lust. And that could also possibly be a waystation to true love.

The striking imagery of The Fall permeates *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. In addition to Arcite and his horse's traumatic fall backwards, other far more fortunate falls take place: the single rose from Emilia's tree, the two kinsmen's mutual experience of love at first sight when they spy Emilia wandering in the garden below the prison—and of course, the passionate Jailer's Daughter's falling in love with Palamon. Ironically, the Daughter frees Palamon in order to keep him tightly bound to her forever. Or as this overwhelming sentiment of mortal love for another human creature is expressed in Benjamin Britten's song about Eve's famous temptation of Adam, her proffering of the apple to him, and the First Man's tragic, inexorable—yet irrefutably fortunate—consumption of the juicy fruit from the Tree of Knowledge:

> Adam lay ybounden
> Bounden in a bond
> Four thousand winter
> Thought he not too long
> And all was for an apple
> An apple that he took
> As clerkes finden written in their book
> Nay had the apple taken been
> The apple taken been

Nay had never our lady
A been heaven's queen
Blessed be the time
That apple taken was
Therefore we moun singen
Deo gracias, deo gracias!

Notes

1. All Shakespeare quotations are from William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Lois Potter, rev. ed. (1997; repr., London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015) and cited in the text by act, scene, and line.

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4. Jillian R. Cavanaugh, "Performativity," *Oxford Bibliographies*, www.oxfordbibliographies.com.

5. Eva-Maria Engelen, "Empathy and Imagination," conference paper, Universität Konstanz, 2.

6. Engelen, "Empathy and Imagination," 3.

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8. Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 157.

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13. Fritz Breithaupt, "The Blocking of Empathy, Narrative Empathy, and a Three-Person Model of Empathy," *Emotion Review* XX.X (2011): 2.

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15. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 150.

16. Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 903.

17. Megan Snell, "Chaucer's Jailer's Daughter: Character and Source in The Two Noble Kinsmen," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 69.1 (Spring 2018): 49.

18. Linda Charnes, "Shakespeare, and Belief, in the Future," in *Presentist Shakespeares*, eds. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 66.

19. Lois Potter, introduction to *The Two Noble Kinsmen* by William Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 59-60.

ACTING SHAKESPEARE: A Roundtable Discussion with Artists from the Utah Shakespeare Festival's 2023 Productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Michael Bahr
USF Executive Managing Director

Featuring: Cassandra Bissell, Nathan Hosner, Ty Fanning, Naiya Vanessa McCalla

Bahr: It's the twenty-fourth year of inviting academic scholars to campus to see Shakespeare performed. I think this is a very, very important part of the work. And when I say the work, I'm talking about the overall work of both production and research.

Just so I know the audience that I'm talking to, how many of you got a chance to see the show last night? [Hands are raised in audience.] Okay, fantastic. How many of you got a chance to see *Midsummer Night's Dream*? Let me see those hands too, as well. [Hands are raised in audience.] Fantastic.

This cast, or the actors that you see here, were both in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and also in *Romeo and Juliet*, and love to talk about their work.

We are going to be recording this and then we'll type it up and put it into a proceedings. Nothing will be broadcast or printed or anything until we've reviewed it and put it all together, and we send those to the actors to make sure we're okay and have permissions,

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but we do think that this helps out the scholarship. And Matt will tell you that EBSCOhost and others have used these discussions about productions to inform other productions as well. So, I'm grateful.

I haven't introduced myself, have I? I guess I probably should.

Audience member: This is the man that was missing last night, one of our founders, Michael Bahr.

Bahr: Thank you. A long time ago, we created the Wooden O—"may we cram / Within this Wooden O" (*Henry V* 1.0.13-14)—to explore Shakespeare, as we've talked about. And we've had scholars here, biology scholars and history scholars and language arts scholars and geology scholars, because that great man, Shakespeare, takes us to all of those places. I'm grateful for that.

I am presently the interim managing director at the Shakespeare Festival, where, again, we're very grateful to have you here. Enough about me.

We are so grateful that we are blessed to have these actors, who you saw in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and also in *Romeo and Juliet*. They will tell us a little bit about those processes, but I'd like you to get to know them personally. So why don't we start off, first of all, with an introduction. Tell us your name, the characters you play, and essentially just a little bit about your training and how you got here to USF. And we'll start here with Cassie and move on down everybody else. Go ahead.

Bissell: I'm Cassandra Bissell. I played Hippolyta and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*.

I don't have formal training as an actor, actually, but I did start doing theater from a very young age, in elementary school. My mother signed me up for an after-school theater class. And I come from academic folks, so I think Shakespeare was always kind of held up as the ultimate. So, I always wanted to do Shakespeare, but I didn't get to do it until I was in college.

I went to University of Chicago. My degree is actually in gender studies, but at the time University Theater was the largest extracurricular organization on campus. So, I did a ton of theater as an undergrad, but it was all student-driven and student-run. And then when I got out, I started auditioning in Chicago. My first professional equity jobs were actually at Chicago Shakespeare

Theater. So, when I started doing equity work, it was largely Shakespeare. And eventually, after multiple general auditions in Chicago, year after year, banging on the door, finally I got here. 2014 was my first season, and then I was also here in 2017, and this is my third season here.

Hosner: Hey, I'm Nathan Hosner. This is my first year here actually. I play Friar Lawrence, as well as Egeus in *Midsummer*.

I was very fortunate. I grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and at the time there was a youth repertory company. We were blessed to have an incredibly overqualified head of the youth theatre, who actually ended up going to the Stratford Institute and getting an MA there. So, we would take our high school productions around the state to do in front of other high schools, which was great. Although I missed a lot of classes, I ended up going to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Before that, I worked at an equity theater playing Demetrius, among other things. You're much better.

Fanning: You can't escape Demetrius.

Hosner: I went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and after that I was largely Chicago-based. I also worked at Chicago Shakespeare quite a bit, and a lot of different regional theaters, including Alabama Shakespeare, Arkansas Shakespeare. I should just do it alphabetically at some point. If there is one, I should work in Alaska Shakespeare.

After that, I started working a lot of new plays as well. It's interesting how Shakespeare works. I find him really interesting in terms of structure and thinking that way can really help you portray new works, particularly works that maybe lean a little more language-based. And now I'm here.

Fanning: Hey. I'm Ty. I play Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* and Demetrius in *Midsummer*.

Let's see. This is my second season. I was here in 2018. I have spent the majority of the last 5 to 6 years out at American Players Theater, which is another classically-focused theater. Heavy language work. Nathan's also worked there. It's way out in the woods. It's one of the strangest places. We call it a Shakespeare cult, and if you've worked there, you would understand why. They are rigid in their work and very, very rigorous, which is really exciting, but it's very much shaped how I work.

American Players Theater have a core company, which is a wonderful thing because you've got these actors that have been there for 30 or 40 years, and they have houses in the same town that they actually work in, and they're able to play all of the roles in the canon. So, learning from them really shaped me.

But to go back a bit, I'm from Mustang, Oklahoma, so we did not have much of a focus on theatrical or dramatic work. I was a debate student, actually. In fact, we didn't have a debate program until I was a freshman, and I was the first student. It was me and my teacher. So, I fell in love with—

Hosner: Did you just debate each other?

Fanning: Yeah. We did. No, we literally did. The first thing, our first assignment, the teacher was like, "Okay, I guess I'll take the other side."

So really what I was in love with was arguments and rhetoric, and that was kind of my way in. I ended up in a Shakespeare play that they put on at my school. And it just kind of all clicked in my head. And that was how I ended up there.

I went to Oklahoma City University, which is a BFA training program, conservatory style, so studied acting. I spent the majority of my career in Chicago, also working at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. They really kind of scoop you up in Chicago. They're like, "Okay, you can speak text? Come on in." That was where I got my start. Then I worked, as I was saying, out at American Players Theater and anywhere else with Shakespeare's name in it. I spent three seasons out at Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, playing a lot of the really hefty stuff because they're a smaller company, so even though you're 25, you still get to play Hamlet. So, I was able to kind of cut my teeth out there.

McCalla: Hi. I'm Naiya.

My story isn't nearly as interesting or exciting. I'm from Georgia. I grew up doing youth theater things. I think my first Shakespeare play that I ever did was seventh grade, and it was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was small. It was at my ballet theater. I was Hermia, Titania, and Flute at the same time. Don't ask how that worked, because it didn't.

Then I continued to do local theater things around Georgia. I ended up going to New York University, and I graduated this year,

and this is my first year at the festival. And I'm very grateful to get my start here. And that's pretty much it.

Bahr: You have played Juliet, though.

McCalla: I have.

Bahr: Four times.

McCalla: This is my third. Knock on wood for a fourth. And all in this same year. I did Juliet twice in the last 265 days before coming out here. Which was fun.

Bahr: Thank you for that. I want to start off with a couple of questions to get us going, and then we'll open it up for the rest of the group.

And since we can talk about both shows, I think it's okay to talk about the conversation between both *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Let's lead with that. You also had two very different processes with *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. So, I'm just going to open up this as a question: What is the difference between those two productions? How do they inform one another? And have you found, for example, Demetrius Romeo? Egeus?

Hosner: I just screw it up for the kids whatever way.

Bahr: I know, it's a really, really open question, but since we have audience members that have seen both of those, the Shakespeare Festival gives us the advantage of leading to interesting conversations between shows as you look at the work and response from audience. So, anybody want to take that big broad question?

Fanning: I'll say, for me, something that struck me when I was working on Romeo was this idea that he starts the play in love with someone else, yet it's the greatest love story ever told. This was just something that came to me before I got into the rehearsal process, and it ended up really informing how I approached it—because it's so odd, right? What are we supposed to believe?

What always frustrated me about the play is that you get a vapid, shallow character if you approach Romeo like that. So, I was trying to find the opposite of true love. Which is obviously a very heady idea, but to me, the thing that I came around to is that with Rosaline, it's all about "what do I get?" And I found the same thing with Demetrius when he's with Hermia. It's about "what do I get?" But what they both learn is that love is the opposite of that. That actually love is about giving.

That's what Romeo learns in the balcony, I think. And I think that's what Demetrius learns with Helena. The process—how they get there—is wildly different. But in terms of character work, I found that that is a nice overlay for me, because when you're doing rep "This is the thing I'm after tonight. I am after get, get, get." And then, "Okay, now it's the opposite thing." They're both part of that arc.

Hosner: I'm just going to say that I think it was interesting that with *Romeo and Juliet*, we had an actor who was directing. Betsy Mugavero is a fantastic actor. You probably have been here and seen her before. But what was really interesting and I found really wonderful was having a director who had a special resonance with some of the work of Shakespeare and a special understanding of what actors need, understanding that we have a very small amount of time to get these plays up and running. We have a lot of *weeks*, but not as much *time* because everybody's doing other shows.

And I think that her focus, her understanding of the needs and the requirements of this space, of what the audiences are coming to it with, let her balance really digging into the text but also understanding that there's a bit of a triage in terms of what we can deal with and what we can't deal with. And so she relied on actors. If people knew how to take care of themselves with things, she let them. And to me it felt very empowering

You feel a lot more flexible because you're not having to filter. Not that there's anything wrong with a high concept production, and those can be really illuminating, but it's great to work where you feel like somebody understands the sweaty undergarments of your costumes, both metaphorically and literally. That, I think, felt wonderful. And I hope that that comes across in the production.

Bahr: Other comments before I go to my next question?

We are very blessed to have four really great text speakers here. Again, two very different productions. I find the *Romeo and Juliet* amazingly clear and simple, yet so incredibly deep because of the text. And Cassie, you and I have spoken about that beautiful text and resonance that you get in Titania and her language. So in both, the text is kind of our friend.

Could you share with us a little bit about your process, how you utilize the text to get what you want and how you work with the text? I've actually had multiple people talk to me about these

four actors and how their text is so fabulous. So how is the text your friend? And what do you do with the text to make that happen? Cassie?

Bissell: Well, you have to walk a really fine line on a technical level, getting the text out, lifting lines right, being clear and understanding individual words, et cetera, and also sounding like a human being. And the big thing for me is: I have to really have a very clear understanding of what I'm saying. That sounds like a really basic, obvious thing, but you have a sort of translation in your own head which tells you "This is what I'm saying here. This is the point that I'm driving at." And a lot of times with Shakespeare, you have a lot of lines to get you there.

It's driving through the argument that really powers the text. If you break it up too much, if you pause too much in between lines, you're going to lose it. But at the same time, the text is so beautiful and so rich and so layered. It's about figuring out how you get in all of these layers that are what make hearing Shakespeare's text extraordinary. Because it has so much more depth to it when you have all these different images, etc.

For me, I think about my early Chicago Shakespeare Theater days back before the internet was as much of a thing as it is now. I would go to the Chicago Public Library and get out every different edition of whatever the play was that I was working on and read whatever the notes were at the bottom to try and really get a feel for all the different interpretations of a line, and then make a choice for myself.

How do I make it true for myself in the context of this character that I'm building? What can I relate to best, as Cassie, in this character?

What I also love is the ability, with Shakespeare's text, to really talk to the audience. That's not always true, but sometimes it is. As Lady Capulet, I don't talk to the audience at all, but as Titania, I have moments where I do, especially in that first speech—that forgeries of jealousy speech—which is very hard. I've been put up on top in that balcony and it's a hard text and it's early in the play, and I feel like everybody's waiting for the lovers and the mechanicals and the fun. And it's hard to get through, but this is the scene that is setting it up. So more and more over the course of the run, I have found with that speech that I have a couple of lines where I really look at the audience, and I really try to grab them

by saying, "You're the human mortals that I'm talking about. We see the seasons alter. We're talking about climate change, folks. We are seeing the seasons alter." So, I lean into that when I can with Shakespeare, which is delightful.

Bahr: Beautiful. Anybody else? Yes, go ahead.

Fanning: In terms of text work, I think for me, it's like what you said, it's using the words to get what you want. It's argument.

Bahr: I just want to call back. He started by talking about debating. He talked about logic and rhetoric and argument. And I find that the minute I hear an actor I think—wow, they know how to use that. They know how to get what they want. So, if you want to talk a little bit about that?

Fanning: Yeah. I think for me, Shakespeare's work, both when I first approached it and to this day, feels like public discourse. It does not feel like a Netflix TV show with visual storytelling. To me, Shakespeare does an incredible job with his plots—not in all of his plays, but in many of them—but ultimately, he's trying to get to certain scenes, in my opinion.

There are certain scenes that feel like they are the argument that he wanted to have. The balcony scene is a scene where he's like, "That's gonna be the highlight of act one." It's a way to expand upon larger ideas. We can't just stand out there and pontificate or otherwise there's no story. It's what you were saying, too, Cassie. It's a weird line you have to tread where you know what you're lifting, what the argument is, but what's most important for us as actors is what your character needs, and what point you're trying to get across.

I think audiences understand text in both senses. There's the one sense of us knowing what we mean and lifting things and bringing life to them. But also the question of: what will happen to me if I get what I want? You have to think to the future as an actor. If you can get to that minutia, the really, really detailed stuff, people will think "it's so clear."

At that point, I'm not thinking about the words, because the words are a vehicle to get me what I need and a vehicle to the future. For this character, if I can get Juliet to get down from that balcony, lots of wonderful things can happen for Romeo, right? That's what I'm thinking about. I'm not thinking "Man, that's a good line." That is not where you can be living.

In the banished scene, it's the same thing for me. I can't be thinking, "Wow, what an incredible argument he's making right now." Or, "What a crazy kid. Chill out." I can't think those things. I have to think, "No, this is your fault now." I have to blame him because blaming him leads me, as Romeo, to not have to feel the blame myself. It unburdens me. It allows me to believe that Juliet will still love me.

It's an intricate web of ideas that we have hold. I think it's about knowing, not just words being clear. So, for me, text work is about what the character wants, needs, and gets out of it. What they actually get out of it, not just winning an argument.

Bahr: Cool. Nathan?

Hosner: Well, I would agree with all of that. And I think what I would layer in is that those are the two great strata of building a performance. Once you get into rehearsal and into performance the words work on you. It might be your scene partner, or it might be what you're saying and the sounds coming out, but they make you do or think differently. And that's the stuff that's so exciting.

If you're having trouble with a certain line, you might ask, "Why is this the way it is?" and then realize that this is a great key. There's a line in one of the Friar's speeches. This maybe isn't the best example—now I'm thinking of some monosyllabic stuff that's great—but there's a line that he has, talking about Juliet, "the most you saw was her promotion for 'twas your heaven she should be advanced." And what's interesting is, if you draw out the words, like "for 'twas your heaven, she should be advanced," it just starts to get kind of clunky. But if you think about the line, you suddenly realize that he's sitting here talking to someone and comforting them. Shakespeare's giving you this because you have to slow down.

You have to say, "'twas your heaven, that she should be advanced and weep you now seeing she is advanced above the clouds as high as—" he's building that staircase for you. And that ends in an "oh."

And when Romeo says, "thou canst not speak of that, thou doest not feel," and you're getting that, then suddenly you're knocked monosyllabic—"I do not know why yet I live to say these things," and beating yourself up.

The text can be all these things. When you're looking at it from outside, you can think. And I can think like that about Ty, think

"this is an interesting thing," but when you have it working on you, that's, to me, the best hit you can get.

Bahr: Can I tell you I find that banished scene the best? I've seen a lot of *Romeo and Juliet* and that banished scene is so amazing and rich anyway, textually. But to see you warriors, text warriors, do that. I mean, it's incredible. That whole second half too, but first of all, any comments on that banishment scene?

Hosner: "Touch it and the bloom is gone." But what do you—

Fanning: For us—

Bahr: I want people to understand what he just meant by that.

Hosner: *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Fanning: I think for that scene, just in terms of our process, Betsy really left us to our own devices.

Hosner: Yeah, she just said, "More."

Fanning: Yeah, she said, "I think with you guys, I could just turn dials." So, she was just saying less of that, more of that. I think, yeah, "touch it and the bloom is gone." I try not to think, "What are we doing after tonight?" I know that he's going to be giving me something different. And so then, therefore, I give him something different.

Hosner: The same. I love that feeling when I come out and I don't know—I mean, I know what's going to happen. And actually, the one thing about rep is there are some things that can't quite grow as much because you have a quick rehearsal process. It's not like Ty could go, "Well, tonight I'm going to trash the set." But within the framework that we have, we think how can we renegotiate that every night?

And I think that's what's exciting: there are different times that it lands completely differently on me. And I don't know how much of the audience gets that, but I know it keeps me interested. And I know that there are times where you suddenly feel your body doing something different, and it's almost like the language is taking you over. And I know that sounds like a cliché, but it really does. And then there are nights where you realize you were pushing against what you were getting. You need to get out of the way and let it go.

Bahr: Can I jump in? I'm sorry to throw you under this bus, and it's a big bus. "God knows when we shall meet again." When all you've got is your scene partner or the heavens or Tybalt coming

out behind you. Can you share a little bit about how you were able to get to that? Does everyone know what speech I'm talking about?

McCalla: The poison one.

Bahr: Yeah. The poison one.

McCalla: That's another one where every night it will come out slightly differently and it'll feel slightly different in my body. I think I've always thought of it as the panic attack monologue, because it is just Juliet building on her own anxieties.

The beautiful thing that Betsy and I talked about a lot and that she really, really loves about that monologue, is that Juliet gives herself all these reasons not to do the thing. And then at the end, she does the thing anyway. And I think that just goes to show how strong Juliet is as a person and as a character.

Talking about text work, there's so much imagery in that monologue of mandrakes torn out of the earth and shrieks. It's not just visual things. It's sensory. You're smelling things. You're feeling like you're claustrophobic. You're not going to be able to breathe.

As an actor, there is no other option than to not be able to breathe and to slowly build it, like Nathan said, through the text, until it is this ricocheting, terrifying thing.

And then there's Gil [playing Tybalt's ghost], who's up there, who I can't see, and I have no idea what he looks like half the time. I go off stage and he tells me, "This is what I did." And I'm like, "Thank you. I'm glad I didn't see it." I'm just going off of a lighting cue and screaming my heart out.

I think to have the ghost appear is a great choice and I love it. And it is different. It's a different world than we've been in until this moment, but it is the world that Juliet is in mentally at that time, to have that visual for the audience. But I'm not part of the audience.

I don't know how you guys felt about it, but to have that visual for the audience to see exactly where her mind has gotten to over the course of the last two and a half minutes is so helpful. I'm thankful for Betsy, because a lot of times I think I had trouble speaking up and speaking my mind and Betsy gave me permission and encouraged me. "Yeah, Naiya, you can scream. You can fully work yourself up to a point where you have no other option than to let it out vocally."

I don't know if that was the answer to your question.

Bahr: That was wonderful. You said something else, too, that I want to emphasize and talk about. You and I had a talk over a Coke, and we were talking about how I teach this show a lot and *Romeo and Juliet* gets a bad rap. People think they're cute or boring, as opposed to—you use the word strength. The strength of Juliet, and the power of Juliet. "Fiery-footed steeds"— all that type of stuff. Talk a little bit about why you feel she's as wonderfully strong as she is, because I agree. The text supports a very, very strong character.

McCalla: She is. I think—it's the same thing with Hermia. They're both stories about, for my character, someone who has something expected of them because of the way they exist as a woman in the world. And they're stories about them standing and finding their own agency and bodily autonomy.

They know what they want. They have no doubts about what they want the whole time. There are only other people telling them that they should want something else. And Juliet—Juliet doesn't speak four lines in a row until Romeo comes. Juliet is quiet. She says, "Okay, Mom, we'll see what happens." But she never says yes. She says, "We'll see." She says, "Okay, this is a great thing, and maybe I'm thinking something else." But she doesn't speak her mind.

And then she finds someone who not only speaks his mind and allows her to speak hers, but who works with her. It's a sonnet that they speak beautifully together. And she realizes that she has an intellectual power. And now there is someone who is allowing her to express it. And then she has the balcony scene, and she is speaking whole monologues and whole soliloquies without being interrupted because she knows she can now. And then as she's found herself through this other person and through the things that she always knew were there inside of her, then there's everything that happens in act two. And act two is just her saying no over and over again. Act two was her saying yes to herself.

Hosner: Many shades of no.

McCalla: And there is no other choice when everyone in your life has turned on you, everyone you expected to love you and support you. She simply must do the thing that she knows is right. "If all else fails myself, have power to die." "Myself have power." And that's her.

Bahr: I want to make sure we have time for questions. So, I have two more. We'll see how long this takes. The discovering of Juliet dead. Incredibly tough scene. How do you work up to that?

There's some scholars who think that it sometimes could be played as a comedy back in Shakespeare's day with all that crazy stuff which has been cut and omitted. We wouldn't do that today. But that is very tough. Tough for you, Cassie, and the Friar who's living a lie, and everyone. So, can you let us into a little bit about the rehearsal process to get to that scene? And to the choice—the directorial choice—to overlap those lines? How did that process come about?

Bissell: Well, Naiya can speak to this, too, since she was in the room.

Hosner: With her eyes closed.

Bissell: With her eyes closed. I feel like we brought to the table pretty high stakes right from the beginning. We didn't have to be pushed too hard to know where it needed to go. I think the decision about overlapping text happened—I feel like that was almost already in place.

Hosner: I think it was, yeah.

Bissell: That was a decision that was made dramaturgically even before we got into rehearsals. And it does create the effect of this cacophony that the Friar has to overcome—it gives him a reason to say, "Let me take control of this situation."
Some shows you have a text-heavy load and that's where the big burden is. And then some shows there's an emotional heavy load. And in this show, for me, is, that's what it is. And I feel like my job [as Lady Capulet] in this show is to bring that grief because the story is ultimately telling us this is what happens when you "other" people and when we lead with hatred. Bad things happen. And so the emotion, especially at the very end of the play, that is the warning. It's the message. "See what happens when we hate, when we when we 'other' people and we have arbitrary walls that we put up?"

Bahr: Thank you. Can we talk about—what audiences are talking about is the death. The death and the wake up. How was that conceived? How did you plan to show Romeo and Juliet waking up just before death, seeing each other's eyes? Betsy has said to me, "I've seen it done before. I've done this choice before.

This choice is not new to me." But it works magnificently well within this production.

You can tell. You hear the audience, too, as close as you are to what happens here. So, I want to talk about how the timing of that works.

Fanning: The other night, I accidentally saw your feet in my periphery, and I thought, "You don't see that because you need to drink this poison."

This was Betsy's idea, if I'm remembering right. We didn't come up with this, so I'm not taking credit for this, but it is common. I think the Baz Luhrmann film did it as well. And it's because the choice is effective.

With a comedy, you want to double down on the comedy. With a tragedy, you want to double down on the tragedy. If it's painful, then you need to make it twice as painful. As actors and directors, I have found that if the productions are really effective and great, that's what we do. We go, "Okay, so that was hard for your character. How can we make it harder?" It's part of how we extend the benefit, the payoff, of the story to the audience.

Something Betsy said, if I'm remembering right, was that even in the lark scene with the adieu, he has these two adieus, and it just always feels so quick. And the marriage as well. It's like "you guys are gonna get married. Bye." So, Betsy staged us to have one little second alone on the balcony, even though the Friar just said "I'm not leaving you alone." Betsy said, "It's about them having one moment to think, 'This is us.'" To show that they know what they're doing and there's no doubt in their minds. I think that's something we were really interested in.

The death scene is a question of how we give them yet another moment to really be together before they're dead forever. There's just a brief moment where everything is great. It's exactly like the Friar said. It's like you could see just for a minute that if he had just not gotten the wrong message, this could have worked.

This play gets a lot of bad rap because of because of the number of things that have to go wrong for it to end in tragedy. But if you can find those moments of possibility, which show the positive, which ask "What if it went well?"—but it didn't because he already drank the poison.

I don't know if you have anything to add.

McCalla: It's the near miss of it all. I love it. Something that I love about our ending—and I don't know how Nathan feels about this—is that in the story, this is not how it happens. The Friar comes in and Romeo's already dead. And then I wake up and I'm like, "Where's Romeo?" And the Friar says, "Don't look. Don't look."" And then just leaves me there. It's like one final betrayal, which is I guess makes sense in the script. And it makes sense with everything else that's happened.

As an actor who has done it twice before, it hasn't been my favorite cup of tea because I have to think, "How could you do this to me?" And then I have to come to all these conclusions seeing Romeo's body. I like the immediacy of it all now. There is no other thing distracting me. It is just this thing, and I'm experiencing it in real time, and there is no other option than to tumble down the hole because it is immediate: grave and immediate. There is only: how do I solve this? How do I fix this? And the way that I am playing, the positive fix it for me is—[gestures]

Bahr: I agree, and I think that empowers you. So many times the audience is thinking "Oh, we get to hear from the friar again?" And in your performance, you're hanging on. We care about you because of the compassion.

Hosner: Early on when Betsy talked to me about it in rehearsals, she said, "I know this is weird that you're not doing all this." This was before she really knew what I was going to bring to it, but I think she just had a sense of it. We both did.

There's certainly an argument for an older, bumbling kind of friar. He says "wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast." And he has the line—I don't say it in this play—about stumbling over gravestones. So, there is a sense of his acceleration and it getting away from him. But I think that Betsy felt instinctively, which was great because I did too, that this person that we have who's a little more engaged and maybe younger, he wouldn't leave her. I love it.

Initially she had had me re-entering earlier where they say, "Here's a Friar weeping." And I went over to Betsy, hoping she would be on board, and I said, "I can't be there. If the parents aren't there yet, and I come in, I would have to go to the lovers." And so I said, if I come in where he's mentioned again, where the watch says, "here's the Friar," but he's already been there for something like three pages, if the parents are already there, I can't go to them. And I loved that he's too late.

That for me was really exciting because it was a bit of a broken expectation. And certainly there's an argument for exploring what's in the full text. And I think that would be really interesting to do down the road and ask: why does he do this? Or, what if he is this? But I love it. I found it very illuminating.

Bahr: I don't think most audiences notice that. I think there are people in this audience who have taught it over and over and over and who saw this and thought it was genius. And it works beautifully, because the work was done. The discoveries were made. And it's really lovely.

I want to make sure you guys have a chance to ask the questions that you have. We still have time. Questions or comments from you? Yes. Go ahead.

Audience member: I saw *Midsummer*, what was it, two nights ago? And then *Romeo and Juliet* tonight. And I noticed that there's some liberties taken with the scansion. Particularly Puck does more of a contemporary scansion of the text. And then I also noticed you, Naiya, play a bit with Hermia and Juliet. I have the most familiarity with the Tybalt banished monologue. I have a BFA in music theater, so I did this, too. But I was wondering, how do you make those choices with scansion? When to honor Shakespeare, when to honor what you're getting, how to honor what the director wants from it. What are the choices that you make, and when you decide to rapidly go through a monologue, what leads you to make that decision, and what hesitations have you had in your own personal scansions of the monologues?

McCalla: I love Shakespeare. I'm sure we're all Shakespeare nerds here, because that's what we're doing here. I care a lot about the text, and I care a lot about—I was going to say I care a lot about honoring Shakespeare, but I was about to say also, I don't really care about honoring Shakespeare, which can be divisive. I think most important to me is that I honor myself and the truth of a moment, and that I honor the audience that I am with. And if "honoring Shakespeare" is in some way putting him on a pedestal that is unreachable for any person, I chafe against that.

Shakespeare, for me, became a thing that I knew I was going to be able to do when I had someone explicitly tell me I could. This was a professor I had at NYU, a wonderful man. He knew that there is often a barrier between Shakespeare and certain people

and people who have not had been exposed to scholarly levels of training, etc., etc. And a lot of my comrades did not want to do Shakespeare because of the way that it had been presented to us in the past. I personally had an experience in high school where I loved Shakespeare and I wanted to read a monologue, and my teacher said, "No, this is not for you. This is not something that you can do." And that kind of broke me a little bit.

After that, I didn't do Shakespeare for years and years until I had to do it at school. And then I was kind of going through the motions until my teacher told me that is exactly what's wrong with Shakespearean training today. And we need to find a way to bring him to ourselves and bring ourselves to him, rather than trying to lift and lift and lift, inserting ourselves into something that is just not truthful.

So yes, I scan all my texts—you'll see all my little notes in my script—but at the end of the day, if something in a moment is feeling like "I am just doing it because this is how it's supposed to be done," or "I'm just doing it because of the scansion," then I'm missing the point. The point is that we're doing this so that we can reach people and we can reach each other. And if I'm not going to reach anyone, then—

Hosner: Thank you for sharing that. The thing is that you do that work, but—going back to what I said before, what does the language do to you? And I think that's what you're really responding to. Because even if doing it a certain way is a great map that you've been given, if you've become divorced from your own center, it doesn't land in the same way. And I think we don't want to be cavalier about it, but sometimes those broken expectations can really illuminate or bring things out. Sometimes they don't. Sometimes you wonder, "Why did I do that tonight?" But you have to keep it alive. So, thank you for sharing that.

Audience member: I really appreciate, Ty and Naiya, what you were saying about helping us to see real love from Romeo and Juliet's side. This is the greatest love story and I think, very often it's dismissed and not taken as sincere love. So, I was hoping that as we're contrasting or comparing the two plays that you guys could speak, especially maybe Cassie and Naiya, to the things Demetrius says to Hermia, or the actions that Oberon takes toward Titania. It's hard to find real love in that. Do you have a sharp contrast in

mind, like *Romeo and Juliet* is a love story and *Midsummer* is not, or is there a closer relationship in the portrayals of love?

Bissell: Well, for one, it's comedy versus tragedy. You know, what I have come to really appreciate about getting to do Titania is that the goofiness that happens with her falling in love with Bottom is what happens in the beginnings of falling in love. You do crazy stuff and in the beginnings, you don't know the difference between what becomes real love and what is not real love. It can fizzle away or it can continue to grow. That's not really answering your question, but I feel like for me, being able to enjoy this crazy, wacky journey that Titania goes on is about that.

And, yes, her love has been contrived by Oberon and we can talk about that. It's problematic, especially in such a beloved play. There are some serious problems with what's going on in that play. I think on the first day around the table, Corey, who plays Oberon and Theseus, said, "Just to be clear, Oberon is basically roofying his girlfriend and kidnapping this child, right? That's what's going on."

We had a director who was trying to problem solve some of the things. She carried the child, the changeling child, through to Athens. We didn't really have enough time to thoroughly flesh out and follow through with some of her ideas, which I think we haven't spoken of. But there's a little bit of frustration when we feel the difference between working with a director like Betsy, who's an actor here, with many years of experience, who knew what kind of time crunch we were under and knew what we needed, versus a director who was working here for their first time and really, I think, misjudged the amount of time we had for us, as actors, to be able to fully embody these ideas that she wanted to show in the production.

But for me at least, I do feel like I am trying to embody what love does to us, which is part of what makes it wonderful. It's all the goofy stuff that love makes us do early on. So that does not speak to Demetrius. I'm not addressing the lovers' situation. That's another problem.

Fanning: I don't know what you're talking about. He's a stand up young man.

I'll just jump in because this feels like Demetrius is the elephant in the room. For Romeo and Juliet, it's simple. To me, you don't have a play if they aren't instantly certain that they would

die for each other. You have to know that because everything they say reiterates it. And when you're doing Shakespeare, there's not much benefit in ever saying anything you don't mean because the characters are—this is pre-Freud. They don't really know how to be circuitous in their arguments. They say what they mean. There is some variation in that because sometimes you say what you need to say to get something, but it's not necessarily the same thing as lying, even if Iago and those kinds of villains are somewhat different.

Hosner: Juliet, you have so many of those moments with your mother—

Fanning: That's true, that's true.

Hosner: Where you're not saying what you mean, but it's for a reason.

Fanning: There's a purpose to that silence.

But the love story: for *Romeo and Juliet*, it's to the ends of the earth. That's what makes it such a great story. *Midsummer* is messy, and I think in some ways more contemporary because of that. You have to remember, *Romeo and Juliet* is based on all of this other source material, romantic, tragic poetry, and it's trying to reach this high ideal. *Midsummer* was pure invention. There's some stuff Shakespeare's pulling from, but largely he's just making stuff up. And so you get this much messier, uglier version of what love is really like. I kind of like that about it.

In terms of Demetrius, there's the question, is he really in love with Helena when he's affected by love juice? The text says that he fell in love with Hermia suddenly, even though he was betrothed to Helena before the play started, and, in my opinion, clearly is still in love with her. I think there's true love for Helena from the beginning, but there's something to be gained from this relationship with Egeus and Hermia and that's what he's pursuing. It's slimy, and it's not pretty, but it's true. And if you don't think that happens in the real world, welcome to Earth. I think that feels real to me.

It's not something Jessica, our director, was interested in, to be honest. But it's something I'm interested in and still am. I think otherwise the love juice is still on him, which means there is no payoff at the end and I'm not sure what we're supposed to believe about Helena's story, which is in many ways supposed to be the most sympathetic story within *Midsummer*.

To me it feels important that wake up after a crazy night in the woods where all the things are parallel truths. The fairy things did happen, but also didn't happen. They're also just kids waking up in the woods, and it's really up to the audience. You can decide how you feel, though I think you're better off just embracing the liminal space that *Midsummer* lives in. That's what makes the play great.

So to me, Demetrius wakes up, and thinks, "Man, I have been such a terrible person," and realizes what he's done, and he thinks, "It's so weird, but I actually don't see the point in this whole thing anymore." That's the arc for him, to me. It is true love, but you've got to do a little bit of work to get there. It's not Romeo and Juliet where it's just on the page.

Audience member: I have a question for Cassie. You spoke, as a performer, of your work with the text and spoke about emotion as a part of the process. My question is if movement and deportment are also a conscious part of your performance. To me, as a spectator, all I had to do is see you walk and I was transported back centuries and aware of social status. So, I'm curious whether you have a movement background, whether it be dance or sports.

Bissell: Well, thank you very much for that. I do not. I said before that I don't have formal training. I'm very intuitive. That's my way into most things. But, I did get a lot of experience early on in my career doing classical work, so I do think that instilled in me a certain sense of what is required.

Obviously, status is a huge thing in a room, and we're all text people, but so much of storytelling is nonverbal. You make facial expressions in response to what you're hearing that clue an audience into what's being said. You show emotion. There's the way a king walks into the room and how the other people respond tells us just as much about a person as their costume or the way they carry themselves. I do feel like somewhere along the line, early on in my career, I absorbed that sense that physicality is a huge part of storytelling. As many methods as we can use to translate to an audience what the relationships are, who wants what in this moment, where the stakes are, what the important story points—we want to hit you with as many possible ways to help you along that story line as possible. And obviously physicality is a huge one.

Audience Member: Ty, I just want to know if this is a directorial choice or your choice: in the beginning with Rosaline,

you're in love, but you're morose. You're depressed. The minute you see Juliet and fall in love, your demeanor changes. Now you're energetic. Was that your choice, directorial, or collaborative?

McCalla: I just have that effect on people.

Fanning: Have you ever seen Naiya?

No, that's just when the caffeine hits me. I time it perfectly every night.

No, I mean, it was a collaborative choice, ultimately. I will give myself the credit that I brought that into the room. As I was saying, for me, with Romeo and Rosaline it is that sort of shallow relationship, where it's about "what do I get out of this?" and that is frustrating. And he's morose, and he's kind of just depressed. In all the stories about him, he's wandering around in the woods crying all day.

I wanted to show that this is the real thing, that the second he sees Juliet it's like a lightning bolt. This is the end all, be all. The way to do that, to me, as an actor, is to make sure to show it. There's a telephone game actors play. It's such a dumb thing, but if you know that you're about to pick up the phone and answer, and it's going to be really bad news, you have to start out having a good time and acting like everything is great. And then you pick up the phone.

Hosner: The one-sided telephone call.

Fanning: Yeah. It's that so that you can really contrast. And it helps you as an actor because otherwise how do you go from one thing that is morose and sad to being morose and sad? There's nothing there to contrast. I was trying to set up that contrast. It's a little bit of character work. It's a little bit of story work, too, of looking at the actual story arc. That's something I always try to make sure I'm focused on whenever I'm working on something as an actor. I think we often think, "Oh, no, I just get in the story, and it happens to me. The director will make the story." But we have to do it, too. You have to know how to set yourself up for success.

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