

The Paradoxes of Intimacy in Early Modern Drama

By

Brenda Marina Henry-Offor

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Date

Mario DiGangi
Chair of Examining Committee

Date

Steven Kruger
Executive Officer

Mario DiGangi
Thomas Hayes
Joseph Wittreich

Supervision Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

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By

Brenda Marina Henry-Offor

Advisor: Professor Mario DiGangi

During the early modern period intimacy was neither well-defined nor discussed in the drama in the way that we do today. My dissertation is an examination of the paradoxical nature of intimacy in Renaissance drama and the impact of space on this intimacy. I am looking at the behavior of married couples and same-sex couples within the home during the early modern period. To elucidate my theory of intimacy I have chosen the plays: Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Intimacy in my dissertation is different from two people being alone or the idea of privacy. Intimacy is based as well as promises knowledge of self, loved ones (wife/friend), of social hierarchy (status relations). In all of the chosen plays women are victims within their homes. In almost all of the plays the heroine dies and the husband or male kin is directly or indirectly responsible for her death.

Space, too, plays an important part in my dissertation. Public and private spaces impact the development of intimacy in the plays. The open household is a problematic space at this historical moment. The plays are centered around the openness of the female body and openness of the early modern household. I will show that there is a relationship between the open household and the penetrability of women's bodies usually by men who are outsiders. Palaces in

the plays are viewed as public spaces but are also private spaces for those who dwell within. Defining public and private spaces becomes problematic in the plays because early moderns are now creating private spaces for themselves and are utilizing these new spaces for personal, intimate purposes. Moreover, there is a blurring of private and public spaces within the plays. I will also demonstrate that the household is not a safe space for women who are often denied the use of private spaces. Cultural differences, too, impacts the development of intimate relationships between characters in the plays. Also, the theme of male guests violating their hostess is a recurring one in the plays suggesting a cry for cultural changes. Women should be better protected in their homes and the open household should be better fortified against preying male guests. I will also elucidate how notions of public and private affect the development and outcomes of the plays. Additionally, I analyze the issues that historically and culturally contribute to the paradox of public-private intimacy, as well as the kinds of spaces that promote or disrupt intimacy in the plays.

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Chapter One

Introduction: The Paradoxes of Intimacy

My dissertation examines the development and demise of intimacy in plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Providing a novel way of conceptualizing the drama of this period, my study posits that intimate relationships in early modern drama are deeply affected by the imagined household spaces in which they play out. To get at this relationship between space and intimacy, I analyze the issues that historically and culturally contribute to the paradox of a public-private intimacy, as well as the kinds of spaces that promote or disrupt intimacy in those plays. Such issues include anxieties concerning male and female sexuality, the vexed place of sexuality at court, and confusing and conflicting rules of gendered comportment, among others. Sometimes these issues work in conjunction with each other, sometimes alone, in complicating the development of same-sex and male-female intimacy.

Throughout, I emphasize interpersonal relationships, but also define intimacy as more than the private interaction of two people. According to Sigmund Freud, selfhood defines a person's psychological state and influences his performance of intimacy.¹ I posit that intimacy is based on, as well as promises knowledge of, the self, loved ones, and the social structure. Intimacy creates boundaries in human relationships and is public and private at the same time. Intimate moments are always transactional and dynamic ones, but the performance of intimacy can also take place within the self.

¹ Freud argues that the “contents of the mind, most foreign to the ego—on symptoms. Symptoms are derived from the repressed, they are, as it were its representatives before the ego; but the repressed is foreign territory to the ego—internal foreign territory—just as reality... is external foreign territory” (71). In the plays in this study, characters show a similar lack of awareness of the self.

The examination of intimacy in this study furthers the work of Patricia Fumerton, Celia Daileader, Catherine Belsey, and Anne Ferry. One of the first critics to address the dynamics of inwardness in early modern writing, Anne Ferry describes the “inward language” of soliloquy as well as personal reflection, but she does not identify inwardness with intimacy (14-28). Whereas Ferry’s analysis leans toward the individual and his or her relationship with the divine, as in John Donne’s poetry, my analysis stresses the dynamics of intimate interpersonal relations. Critics such as Fumerton, Daileader, and Belsey have since added their own findings to Ferry’s groundbreaking scholarship, suggesting that “inwardness” was an early modern emotional and social state. In *Cultural Aesthetics*, Fumerton discusses inwardness in early modern England in terms of the newly formed spaces within aristocratic homes where practices such as the private reading of sonnets and sharing of portraits fashioned in lockets evolved.² Daileader’s *Eroticism on the Renaissance Stage* argues that imagined spaces complicated the notion of inwardness for early modern audiences that were left to form their own conclusions about what actually went on behind the scenes in plays, especially when sexual intimacy was implied in off-stage episodes. Likewise, Catherine Belsey’s *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden* is suffused with discussions about the influence of religion on marriage relations and sexual reproduction. Belsey’s account of religion’s hold on the emotions of early moderns is, in fact, a precursor to modern notions of intimacy, which focus on sexuality. Daniel Juan Gil argues that critics find it difficult to separate sexuality from other aspects of early modern social life because of “the important sociological fact that the early modern sex-gender system lacks the notion of intimacy—a special class of *interpersonal relationships* (whether between men, between women, or across gender) in which sexuality has a privileged home” (1). While I agree that early modern notions of intimacy are

² Like Ferry’s work, Fumerton’s focuses on cultural practices rather than on verbal expressions in the poetry and drama of the period (7-11).

not defined as a “special class” of interpersonal relationships, intimacy nonetheless existed, although it was paradoxically experienced in public-private form.

Exploring intimacy in early modern drama opens new possibilities for reading familiar texts by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Scholarship has neglected the impact that restricted space had on the development of intimacy in the early modern household. My contribution to the scholarship is a novel one, in that I identify moments of “inwardness” in the plays that I have selected, that are, in fact, moments of intimacy defined by particular social and physical spaces. Corinne Abate and Elizabeth Mazzola opened up this new subject by focusing on misogyny and “indistinguished spaces” in early modern households and the “hidden” spaces where women nurtured intimate relationships.³ My dissertation will further the work of Abate and Mazzola in an attempt to arrive at a clearer understanding of early modern social relationships, of which intimacy is an important part. Additionally, while Abate and Mazzola acknowledge that female relationships were intimate, their work does not elaborate on how space impacted the development of same-sex and male-female relationships during the period.

Although several critics like Katherine Eisaman Maus and Anne Ferry have made significant efforts in their research on early modern intimacy, I argue that their work privileges social life over individual relationships. Maus argues that “social life demands the constant practice of induction, or what the physician John Cotta calls ‘artificial conjecture’: reasoning from the superficial to the deep, from the effect to the cause, from seeming to being.”⁴ However, my central argument is that inwardness, influenced by space, underpins Shakespearean notions of intimacy in the selected plays. The importance of space to my approach makes it essential to

³Abate explains, however, that early modern women were not always cognizant of specific uses of spaces as they related to privacy and inwardness (1-2).

⁴Maus argues like Fumerton that inwardness was a part of social life and had to be performed. One had to show publicly what one felt inwardly (4).

investigate the historical and cultural construction of what I am calling the paradox of intimacy. By definition, the early modern household, with its multi-purpose uses such as household industry and its retinue of servants, did not lend itself to privacy.

Royal households in particular embody the paradoxes of intimacy. In “The Public and the Private,” Nicole Castan quotes Teresa of Avila: ““Nothing is private in the life of the great.”” Teresa’s explains that her friend Mme. de La Cerda ““lives according to her rank and not according to what she loves, in a state of servitude that makes her the slave of a thousand things”” (403). According to Castan, monarchs and notable royal figures appeared to live totally private or totally public lives as they struggled continually to clarify differences between private and public. Most important to an understanding of private-public life in early modern England is Queen Elizabeth’s often complicated representation of herself. Elizabeth often used her private life to counter threats in her public and political life. Courtiers like Walsingham, Leicester, and Raleigh participated in intimate rivalry for the queen’s affection. While she fiercely guarded her privacy, Elizabeth presented to the public a divided self as she engaged in private, intimate behavior in public, a practice that not only suggested a contradiction within the self but also separated the queen’s behavior from general English cultural practices.

Current monarchs, such as the British royal household, struggle in vain, like their forefathers, to keep their private lives separate from their public lives. The news media, along with the general public, keep a vigilant watch over the movements and utterances of British royals. Royal bodies like that of Prince Charles and his two sons are constantly held up to public scrutiny. Their movements are staged performances for a continually viewing public that acknowledges these performances as a right. Similar cultural and political gazing on the monarchy obtained during the early modern period.

Although intimacy seems to be a modern concept, early moderns did envisage certain spaces within their homes and their relationships in terms of privacy. The notion of possessing personal, private spaces and personal items did exist. Privacy was a part of early modern life, although private spaces were few and precious to those who possessed them. Orest Ranum explains in *A History of Private Life*, that souvenir spaces such as the bedroom, study, walled garden, as well as letters, and other objects were considered to be very private.⁵ Private spaces could be problematic, however, because what might be determined to be a private space at a particular time might well be a public space at another time. Such spaces I will define as paradoxical. As Celia Daileader explains, “paradoxical space straddles the spaces of representation and representability” (13). Representations of early modern paradoxical spaces can be seen in Elizabeth I’s performances, as I mentioned earlier. Elizabeth publicly portrayed herself as virgin queen, a private self in a public space, so that she is at once both public and private in her behavior, something very paradoxical for her subjects to comprehend. The queen’s public-private performance mirrors that of staged performances where off-stage imagined action became problematic for the audience. To complicate matters further, early moderns found themselves, like their queen, struggling to demarcate spaces and ideals of public and private life.

Since the design of interiors was still evolving, space in some homes did not always offer occupants privacy or room for intimate development. Wendy Wall explains that some early modern homes suffered from insufficient private living spaces. Servants and guests sometimes shared beds with other householders. John Selden writes in his book, *Titles of Honour*, that during the seventeenth century old halls in the aristocratic houses and manors were very large and were romanticized. The Lord of the manor, as head of household, ate with his servants to

⁵Ranum argues that the idea and definition of the private, as we know it today is very different from the definition of the private in the early modern period (207).

teach them about life and to socialize them. Such halls as Selden describes were a part of the problem. Servants saw and heard all.⁶ In the plays in this study, relationships become problematic because early modern spaces were inadequate, especially since the numerous uses and inhabitants of the early modern home created a public-private atmosphere that limited the development of intimacy between couples. During moments of intimacy in the plays, women have much to lose, especially married women, whose private spaces were not always as private as we know them to be today. Any destabilization within the early modern home became problematic because of fears that such destabilization would flow over into the public sphere and destabilize the state.

Hence issues of gender are particularly central to my study. Some aristocratic homes did have private rooms that were identified as the master's and off-limits to all others unless invited. Women craved such spaces too, but male penetration into women's inner sanctums was not uncommon. In the plays, some of the women, such as Desdemona and the Duchess of Malfi, fail to achieve the intimacy that they attempt because spaces, such as bedchambers, that are meant to be private are in actuality public spaces. For other women in the drama of this period, the lack of autonomy and personal space, born of patriarchal and cultural restrictions, proves to be futile and fatal, thereby denying these women intimate relationships that would be viable under other circumstances. Viviana Comensoli's in-depth account of how spaces were utilized during the period and the impact of religion on the daily life of early moderns helps to elucidate how patriarchal influence controlled the outcome of relationships and how the notions of private and public restricted people's lives.⁷ I will add my own voice to Comensoli's accounts to show how

⁶ According to Selden, members of the aristocracy modeled behavior for those in the lower classes, hence a man's home became his castle since he is king of his household. (36, 67, 98-102).

⁷ Comensoli's description of female subjection is based on cultural accounts of women's experiences during the period. Her book challenges the idea that women had private spaces where they could find comfort and safety (34).

intimacy is denied female characters in the plays. I will show that religious and cultural values did not favor women and that homes did not always provide safe and intimate spaces for them. My reading of the plays differs from Comensoli's in that I show how the playwrights present a pattern of female subjection based on cultural experiences, where male protagonists expose their wives to unchallenged and unwanted male advances. The women are left to fend for themselves in the absence of their husbands. An important aspect of my examination of the plays is to present the disparity between what early moderns perceived as cultural norms and what actually obtained in the selected plays. For example, religious leaders advocated for equality between the sexes in marriage; however, within the plays women cannot achieve intimacy because of the disparate social problems that arise from contradictions of inwardness and exterior performance.

What we understand today as family life and family values are very different from early modern family life. The myth of the ideal family and the ideal home is nothing more than that—a myth. Illustrations of early modern English family values in the plays sometimes belie the violence against women during the period. Our readings of these representations are informed by what we know of the present and therefore, to some extent, distort a true representation, one that is not altogether knowable by us. My aim is to narrow this loss by analyzing the plays for patterns that will give a clearer picture of the culture and spirit of the time.

Catherine Belsey argues that family values and marriages were historically constructed around the Bible and religious rules such as married couples' reproduction (*Eden 6*). Her analysis significantly establishes cultural parameters for the early modern family, but it does not discuss intimacy in marriages even as it examines and denaturalizes family values of the period. I go beyond Belsey's work on family life, in that I explore various, specific ways in which early modern men exploited their patriarchal authority from religious, economic, and cultural angles.

For instance, in Chapter Two, I demonstrate the fatal impact that religion has on the marriage relationship between the Frankfords in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Anne Frankford internalizes current religious beliefs, sacrificing her life in the hope of salvation for herself and redemption of her husband's manhood in the eyes of God and man. In her performance, she accepts forgiveness from her husband on her deathbed in a manner that likens him to the God in whose power she placed her life. Women's internalization of religion often created a worldview that limited their options which, in turn, forced them to react to personal situations such as adultery or rape in a fatalistic manner. Anne Frankford is an example of such internalization of religious ideology.

The remainder of this chapter will demonstrate how a single play might reveal different facets of the paradoxes of intimacy that are somewhat artificially isolated from each other in the three main chapters of the dissertation. I will focus on Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II* to illustrate how *paradoxical privacy*, *intimacy and the open household*, *intimacy and cultural difference*, and *intimacy and the public realm* can be seen to permeate a single text. To illustrate the concerns of this introduction with paradoxical privacy, I examine how Edward's public display of passion⁸ for Gaveston disrupts a pattern of institutionalized intimacy between the king and his peers. The king's private, intimate behavior within his home is construed as public because of the continued lack of privacy in that space. Chapter Two focuses on intimacy and the open household. Gaveston and Queen Isabella, both French nationals, come and go from Edward's court repeatedly in the play. Their goings and comings from the king's home point to the fluid or open nature of that space and its impact on intimate relationships in the play. The third chapter illustrates intimacy and cultural difference. Gaveston's French origin, his class, and

⁸ The word "passion" dates back to c. 1175 and was loosely associated with Christ's suffering. It was first attested as "sexual love" in 1588. (*OED*).

his ability to command Edward's love are seen as a threat to English culture. Members of the nobility disapprove of the king's passionate obsession with the Frenchman only while the king neglects the custom of intimate group patronage. In Chapter Four my research examines intimacy and the public realm. The barons oppose Edward's public display of personal "will" as he publicly distances himself from the group while embracing Gaveston against their collective "will." However, Edward's "will" is pushed aside because he is dependent upon the group for political support.

Edward II

In *Edward II*, members of the peerage violate the king's political and personal boundaries, thus thwarting the development of intimacy between Edward and Gaveston. The king and his minion are subjected to patriarchal surveillance within Edward's castle because that space is public and private at the same time. Rife with hatred and jealousy, Edward's castle proves to be a non-viable space for him and his minion to develop their intimate relationship. Edward's anger erupts as he responds to the peers' accusations of favoritism: "Anger and wrathful fury stops my speech" (1.4.42). Security also becomes an issue when the barons, who occupy a privileged place within the castle and who are charged with protecting their king, turn against their sovereign because of his passion and favoritism for Gaveston.

Furthermore, Edward's passionate desire for his minion becomes a national problem when he displays intimacy in public spaces. The king violates conventional public/private boundaries as he continues to declare his love for Gaveston in public, simultaneously engaging in intimate displays of touch. Unlike Elizabeth I, Edward cannot command the fear and loyalty that he needs in order to sustain such intimate behavior publicly. When the queen overtly

displayed private behavior her courtiers responded with adoration. When Edward does the same he is rebuffed and ridiculed. The peers' response results in Edward overcompensating by drawing Gaveston closer to him, while simultaneously distancing himself further from the barons and his wife. Lancaster reports to his fellow peers, "Thus, arm in arm, the King and he doth march; / Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits, / And all the court begins to flatter him" (1.2.20-22). Mortimer Jr. and his group feel alienated from the king's inner sanctum, which by custom is an accommodating space for royal patronage, when Gaveston publicly claims Edward's body and shuts them out. As Isabella reports, "[T]hus leaning on the shoulder of the King, / He nods, and scorns, and smiles at those that pass" (1.2.23-24). Gaveston's behavior runs contrary to English customs. The space that he occupies on the king's shoulder rightfully belongs to Edward's wife. Additionally, Gaveston should not touch the king's body because he is a subject and because public display of touch is unacceptable and alien to royal culture. However, Gaveston holds the claim on the king's body by virtue of the titles that Edward heaps on him.

Such institutionalized intimacy derives from a tradition in which the king distributes wealth and power to his loyal patrons. The conflict arises when the king chooses to distribute titles and money to one individual, his minion, rather than share the wealth, as is customary, among his chosen peers. Mortimer Jr. and the other barons dislike Gaveston's non-conformist influence over Edward, although Mortimer Senior sees homosexuality as mere sport in Nature, and observes that "riper years will wean him from such toys" (1.4.400), suggesting that the king's homosexual desires are not a perverse form of behavior. The other barons, though, are self-preserving, ambitious men. They resent Gaveston and object to his presence primarily because he entertains Edward's love advances, in public, an act that is seen as a threat to early

modern heterosexuality, but more importantly a threat to the peerage and its attendant wealth. Their behavior suggests that they share a level of intimacy with their king that makes his love a private public performance.

Then, again, in some respects, for intimacy to be acknowledged it has to be made public, as Natalie Zemon-Davis points out in her argument that early modern communities are always involved in married couples' relationships. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the barons exert pressure on Edward and Gaveston because of the love relationship that the two share. The same kind of policing that subjects engage in with their monarchs is enforced at every other level in society. In her book *The Expense of Spirit*, Mary Beth Rose explains that "marriage becomes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the site of a paradoxical struggle to create a private realm and to take control of it in the interest of the public good" (130). The barons argue for a similar cause when they attempt to control Edward's body for the public good. But their argument is self-serving because they are not attempting to save the king's marriage; rather, they are fighting to save their positions in the king's circle and the attendant economical gains, and their egos get in the way. Where there is strife there is uncertainty, so the barons' disruptive practices are neither conducive to intimacy nor in the best interests of the court as a whole. The public-private nature of Edward's castle with all of its attendants makes it impossible for Edward and Gaveston to find the privacy that they need to actualize their relationship. By its very nature, the castle is more of a public-private space than a private home. The constant presence of the clergy and noblemen at the castle make it impossible for Edward and Gaveston to maintain an intimate, passionate relationship there.

Along with the archbishop and other members of the clergy, the barons accuse Edward of alienating them in favor of Gaveston. His divided love between himself and Gaveston leaves the

queen and the barons on the fringe of the kingdom. Accustomed to sharing in the king's affection as a group, Mortimer Jr. and the other barons are upset with Gaveston for being sole recipient of the king's love, attention, and largesse. As a result, the barons become disruptive in their transgression of personal boundaries as they fuse the notion of public and private spaces. In their relationship with the king they cross personal, intimate boundaries, widening the gap between him and them. For the barons such transgression manifests itself in their bold demands from their king. In Act One, scene four, the peers, led by Canterbury, confront Edward, demanding:

Remember how the Bishop was abused;
 Either banish him that was the cause thereof,
 Or I will presently discharge these lords
 Of duty and allegiance due to thee. (59-62)

Canterbury's threat to "discharge these lords" is ironic, for in discharging the group Canterbury would also rid Edward of one half of his problem. Without the lords, Edward's castle would become a private space more conducive to a passionate male-male relationship.

Still, Canterbury's idle threat moves the king to action. As soon as Edward signs their demand for Gaveston's banishment from England, Lancaster announces, "Give it me; I'll have it published in the streets" (1.4.89). The group has created a space between themselves and their king, making it official by announcing it to the general public. According to Gregory W. Bredbeck, there is "a space between power and person [that] can be narrowed or widened depending on the circumstances" (66). The circumstances surrounding Lancaster's move to publicize the king's private affairs are shrouded in selfishness and greed. The group's desire does not further the good of the realm but, instead, it advances their ambition. The group hopes

by its public disclosure of Edward's and Gaveston's passions to further their own cause. Not only are Edward's private affairs bastardized in public, they are also discussed publicly among the household. Interestingly, Gaveston in particular wants his relationship with Edward to be public, not private, because he, too, hopes to gain from such publicity.

In the first act of the play Gaveston tells of entertainments he wishes to share with Edward:

Italian masques by night,
 Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
 And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
 Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad...
 And in his sportful hands an olive tree
 To hide those parts which men delight to see,
 Shall bathe him in a spring...
 Such things as these best please his majesty,
 My lord. (1.1.55-71)

Gaveston desires these public "pleasing shows" so that the world can behold him in his intimate relationship with the king, a move that would strengthen his claims to the royal body and booty. Edward, too, wants his relationship with Gaveston to be public, but for different reasons. As king, he believes that it is his right to behave in whatever manner he chooses. In an ostentatious display of power Edward dares Mortimer Jr. and his group: "What, are you moved that Gaveston sits here? / It is our pleasure; we will have it so" (1.4.8-9). It is such public displays of private emotion that bring the king into conflict with members of his peerage.

Having his "pleasure" in public, although rightfully in his home, complicates the

relationship between Edward and Gaveston. Passion is often seen as an excess. To outwardly display his passion in the presence of his peers is insulting. However, the king comes to the realization that his public duty conflicts with his intimate passions and that his castle is neither private nor public. He desperately desires privacy in his relationship with Gaveston so he cries out in desperation to the group: “Make several kingdoms of this monarchy, / And share it equally amongst you all, / So I may have some nook or corner left, / To frolic with my dearest Gaveston” (1.4.70-73). This is the second instance in the play when Edward offers to share his kingdom. The play begins with Gaveston reading Edward’s letter telling him, “Come, Gaveston, / And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend” (1.1.1-2). Therefore, in asking his friend and his foes to share his kingdom, Edward is outwardly showing his divided self. A body divided is a dead body, so Edward’s desire to share his kingdoms is almost a request to die. Edward’s extreme emotional distress is a sign of the self-division occasioned by the paradox of the public/private nature of intimacy. Edward wants it all—the love of Gaveston, Isabella, and his barons—because he desperately wants to be loved by all. Edward understands the religious and political implications of his publicly performed intimate behavior. Edward knows that Isabella, the barons, and his subjects participate in religious and cultural practices that are intolerant of his sexual behavior and he needs them in order to function as a monarch.

Achieving intimacy within the open household is as problematic as overcoming the public/private nature of intimacy. Queen Isabella and Gaveston are engaged in a pattern of going in and out of Edward’s life and his household. There are numerous instances in the play that mark a pattern of exile and return, leaving and returning, signs that Edward’s castle is an open household. The household is like a replica of the king’s inner emotions. The very beginning of the play marks Gaveston’s return to Edward and his open court after being exiled to his native

France. He comments on this to the poor men: “You know that I came lately out of France” (1.1.43). Upon his return to England he rejoices, saying, “The sight of London to my exiled eyes / Is as Elysium to a new-come soul” (1.1.10-11). A few moments later Edward welcomes him back to the castle: “What, Gaveston! Welcome” (1.1.139). Later, Gaveston is once again exiled by the nobles; this time he flees to Ireland as directed by Edward: “thou must depart. / Be Governor of Ireland in my stead, / And there abide till fortune call thee home” (1.4.124-126).

Isabella is exiled from the castle not by the nobles, but by the king, who blames her for Gaveston’s banishment. She complains to Mortimer Jr. and his group, “The angry King hath banished me the court” (1.4.210). Her banishment, like Gaveston’s, is short-lived because she returns to the court soon after. Edward’s household is open enough to allow his intimates easy exit and reentry. Later in the play, Edward sends Isabella to her native France when he is informed that Gaveston will not return to England: “Madam, in this matter / We will employ you and your little son; / You shall go parley with the King of France” (3.1.69-71). She returns empty-handed to England and the castle from which she has been exiled. Gaveston’s and the queen’s movements, to and from France and Ireland, in and out of Edward’s castle, illuminate for the audience the fluidity and openness of the early modern household.

With total disregard for the fact that he lives in an open household, where everything that he does is scrutinized by his household subjects, Edward, at the beginning of the play, bestows unnecessary titles upon Gaveston. His brother, the Earl of Kent, intimate with the customs of his country and his people, cautions the king that his actions will upset the nobles: “Brother, the least of these may well suffice / For one of greater birth than Gaveston” (1.1.157-158). Gaveston, too, is aware of the excessiveness of Edward’s gifts and he remarks: “My Lord, these titles far exceed my worth” (1.1.156). Mortimer Jr. complains about Edward’s extravagance:

The idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows
 And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston
 Have drawn thy treasure dry and made thee weak,
 The murmuring commons overstretched hath. (2.2.156-159).

Early modern households, according to custom, should be shut tight, but because the king's castle is a domestic space as well as a multifunctional public space, Edward's privacy is always already compromised.

Additionally, Edward's intimate display of love and affection for Gaveston in the open household is threatening and debasing for Isabella who, as Edward's queen, is powerless to stop his adulterous relationship. Gaveston's presence is divisive as he displaces Isabella as a wife in an open household that admits her as co-head. For Isabella, Edward's "hang[ing] about Gaveston's neck" is an affront and threat to her marital relationship with Edward. As a "base upstart," Gaveston's unrestrained proximity to the king's body, within the open household, could mean demise for some among the peerage. The titles that Edward heaps on Gaveston will mean a displacement in terms of income and prestige for some members of the peerage. Moreover, with each title that Gaveston receives from the king, a member of the aristocracy is pushed one step further away from the king's body. Gaveston's ascendance is frightening to Mortimer Jr. and his group in that it could set a precedent, causing the demise of the aristocracy as they know it. Edward confirms their fears when he tells Gaveston:

I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,
 Chief Secretary to the state and me
 Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man. (1.1.153-155)

All of these titles heaped upon Gaveston make him a co-King and Lord over the barons. Fearful

of what appears to be their imminent ejection from the king's inner circle, Mortimer Jr. declares, "We will not thus be faced and overpeered" (1.4.19). Thus Isabella becomes a displaced wife and Mortimer Jr. and his group are ostracized by Gaveston's presence. Gaveston's new status almost sounds a death knell for the occupants of this open household and for the peers who normally have easy access to this space. The group's objections to Edward's moral behavior are mere cover for their own self-interest.

Gaveston's presence is also problematic in terms of intimacy and cultural difference. Foreigners are seen as "others" because of their language and culture. Gaveston, like the queen, is of French origin. In addition, Gaveston is of a lower class than the king, and he promotes same-sex desire and practices, making him an "other." Although Edward admits him as his minion and lover, in the eyes of the barons he is from another place, is of a lower class, and he imbricates himself between the king and his subjects. Mortimer Jr. and his group also fear that Gaveston will contaminate the king and his subjects with French culture. The group argues with Edward against the Frenchman's return to England: "Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself / Were sworn to your father at his death / That he should ne'er return into the realm" (1.1.81-83). For the culturally biased barons, Edward's love for Gaveston is troubling because the king misplaces his love by turning his attention away from them and onto an unworthy Frenchman. In essence, they reveal a tension between two kinds of male-male love. The barons are accustomed to the king's public, communal affection among their intimate group. However, his transference of affection to one individual, Gaveston, creates a notion of private love which is upsetting to them. It is of noteworthy importance to the barons that the king should continue England's cultural practice of patronage to this noble group and not to one individual. The barons want to continue their country's tradition of intimate group patronage which Edward

threatens with his display of uni-patronage, a practice that disturbs his followers and destabilizes the crown. In an emotional appeal to Edward to return to English custom, Mortimer Sr. asks, “If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston” (1.1.79).

Being a monarch, Edward embodies a culture that is different from his subjects’. As he points out, “I cannot brook these haughty menaces; / Am I king, and must be overruled?” (1.1.133-134). Although Mortimer Jr. and his group are members of the aristocracy, they are not on equal footing with the king. In confronting him about his passionate relationship with Gaveston and demanding the latter’s removal from the realm, the peers are overstepping their bounds. According to custom, the king cannot be “overruled” by his subjects. The behavior of Mortimer and his group is menacing and an affront to their liege. The “haughty” nature of the group is something that Edward “cannot brook.” He is conversant with the dictates of royal leadership, and he senses the threat that is inherent in their defiance. It is a bold cultural move on the part of Mortimer Jr. and his group to threaten their king: “Come, uncle, let us leave the brainsick King / And henceforth parley with our naked swords” (1.1.125-126). Earlier in the same scene Edward warned Mortimer Jr., “Well Mortimer, I’ll make thee rue these words. / Beseems it thee to contradict thy King?” (1.1.90-91). This constant threatening by Mortimer Jr. and his group represents a cultural divergence from what generally obtained between king and subjects. The king may threaten his subjects but they cannot do the same to him. When Kent questions the barons, “Yet dare you brave the King unto his face?” (1.1.115), it is because he sees that their behavior is foreign to English royal culture.

Finally, in *Edward II*, the establishment of an intimate relationship is made more difficult by presence of the public realm of political life. We already know that intimacy for all intents and purposes should be private, but in order for intimacy to be acknowledged, it must be

recognized as such in the public realm. Edward and Gaveston display their passion in public, embracing and kissing as Edward commands: “Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee” (1.1.140). Edward shows little judgment in such matters, because public intimacy between two men could be disenfranchising, as Alan Bray argues in *The Friend*: “Friendship was dangerous, and it was so because friendship signified in the public sphere.” Bray explains that friendship in the Renaissance was often “ambiguous,” because the public “flower-strewn world of masculine friendship . . . could never wholly be distinguished” from the sin of sodomy (59, 193, 201). This ambiguity between friendship and sodomy presents a major problem for the Church and the barons. Within aristocratic homes, the ambiguity of male-male friendship could be tolerated even if it was threatening. However, the relationship between Edward and Gaveston goes beyond private friendship. The two openly display their homosexuality in public, making it impossible for those around them to ignore.

To complicate matters even further, Edward, in a rare moment, publicly presents himself as Isabella’s husband, kissing her, after having been informed that Gaveston will be returning from exile. He hugs and kisses her and, as the stage direction shows, “wraps his arms about her.” He announces: “For thee, fair Queen, if thou lov’st Gaveston, / I’ll hang a golden tongue about thy neck, / Seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success” (1.4.326-328). But this public show of intimacy between Edward and Isabella is as limited as it is fleeting, because he conflates her being with his needs as he questions “if thou lov’st Gaveston. . . .” His public display of passion is mere objectification and reflex, because he kisses her for what she can do to enable his relationship with Gaveston, not because he loves her. He thanks her with kisses because she “hast pleaded with so good success.” Edward’s public show of affection for Isabella, although passionate, is acceptable in public because it counterbalances one extreme form of passionate

behavior with another. When Edward engages in same-sex passionate behavior it threatens his relationship with Isabella and the peers. However, when he engages in passionate behavior with Isabella, it is reassuring to her and the peers. The king's public passion with Isabella shows a divided inner-self.

Additionally, Edward's and Gaveston's public demonstration of their expensive clothing at the expense of the soldiers' pay causes an aside from Mortimer Jr., who notes their thoughtlessness and indifference to others' suffering: "While soldiers mutiny for want of pay, / He wears a lord's revenue on his back" (1.4.405-406). He is upset that, in public view, Gaveston is dressed as well as, or even better than himself. Gaveston's public lasciviousness highlights the disparity between the barons and Gaveston, a sign that royal patronage is uneven within the king's inner circle. It is disconcerting for Mortimer and his colleagues to countenance the imbalance of patronage that now exists between them and Gaveston. They find Gaveston's obscene gestures threatening to their class and position as barons as he taunts them with his "nods, and scorns, and smiles at those that pass" (1.2.23). Observing Gaveston's comfort in a space that they once claimed to be their own, the nobles harbor thoughts of destruction for the king and his minion so that they might reclaim that which they consider to be rightfully theirs.

In their struggle over Gaveston's presence at Edward's court, both Edward and his peers present opposing "wills." Edward enters the play with an *aside*:

In spite of them

I'll have my will, and these two Mortimers

That cross me thus shall know I am displeased. (1.1.76-78)

Edward's "will" is thwarted by Mortimer Jr. and his group. However, culturally the king's "will" should be imposed on his subjects and not the other way around. Lisa Hopkins explains:

To be aware of this apparent political dimension of *Edward II* may alert us to the manner in which it presents personal relationships not as the product of free affective choice, but as structured and configured by social groupings, in ways that develop to its most nuanced and sustained point the interest in the family group inherent throughout Marlowe's career. (67)

But, in reality, the king's "personal relationships" with his peers are not actualized through his free will and hierarchy, but are structured on group dynamics. Mortimer Jr.'s call to the group, "Then may we lawfully revolt from him" (1.2.73), demonstrates the "will" of the group. Edward's "will," therefore, is subordinated in favor of the group's "will." Edward is overruled by his barons not only because he is outnumbered, but also because he is a weak monarch. Moreover, culture is a way of life which makes it difficult for the king to change the rules in favor of his personal attraction for Gaveston. In the end, neither Edward, Gaveston, nor Isabella find intimacy in their relationships.

Edward II reveals the numerous problems with establishing intimate relationships that this dissertation will explore. The spaces where intimacy is performed must be conducive in order for intimacy to evolve into meaningful and lasting relationships. Intimacy, by its very nature, can be public and private at the same time. There is also an innate culture that supports intimacy. If the relationship is divested of this culture then intimacy cannot thrive. Open households do not, as a rule, support intimate relationships; neither do public spaces because they lack stability and continuity. Edward's relationship with Gaveston proves to be unsuccessful because they lack the spaces and support that are needed for intimacy.

Chapter Two

Indistinguished Spaces: The Violation of Intimacy in the Open Household

Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* reveal how shared spaces and "indistinguished spaces" might have created a violation of intimacy in the open household. Moreover, these two texts show a progression of sexual betrayal and violence from *Cymbeline*, where the heroine Imogen is falsely accused of adultery, but is able to prove her innocence after evading a death sentence, to *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, where the heroine Anne Frankford commits adultery and subsequently commits a slow suicide. My objective is to show that the women in these two plays are victims within their homes because they lack intimate spaces. In each play, the husbands, who should be responsible for the protection of their wives, invite male guests into their homes, leaving their wives unprotected and, unwittingly, even encouraging their guests to violate them. The husbands take no responsibility for their actions and allow their wives to suffer the burden of the sexually transgressive acts that occur in the open household.

Imogen and Anne Frankford find themselves in "indistinguished space[s]" where the idea of consent and a woman's will are ever in flux and their roles within the open household are never clearly defined. Commenting on Edgar's exclamation in *King Lear*, "O indistinguished space of woman's will!" (4.6.268), Corinne Abate writes:

The "indistinguished space" Edgar describes is, upon closer inspection, a place where the established order of things has become inconspicuous, a place that is as a result, unfettered by patriarchal constraints and unschooled by its syntax. In the early modern period, this place is frequently located in domestic settings with their own set of material practices and material goods. (2)

Within the early modern household this indistinguished space of “inconspicuous” or blurred order, as defined by patriarchal rules, could result in conflicting understandings of power. In their husbands’ absence, wives had wide responsibilities as heads of household, but at the same time they had limited agency, because their roles were narrowly constrained by societal expectations of female chastity. Women were also held accountable for protecting their husbands’ honor from accusations of cuckoldry. The limitations on their agency were compounded by gazing servants who assumed such roles as master’s keeper, whereby they kept a watchful eye on the mistress of the home in the absence of their master. The wives in *Cymbeline* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness* find themselves in spaces where their attempts at intimacy and their household authority are compromised by their servants’ unwanted intrusion.

There is a progression of intimate behavior that moves from the private to public that can be traced through the two plays. In *Cymbeline* we see the privacy of the royal household invaded by an intruder. Nonetheless, there is minimal publicity about the infractions against social and sexual decorum, such as the false accusations made by the intruder and the secret marriage between the princess and the king’s ward. Even the violation of Imogen’s intimate space is kept secret from her until the end of the play, because she is unaware of the male intruder Iachimo gazing upon her sleeping body. In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, the violation of social and sexual decorum takes place within the family’s private home, but Anne’s act of adultery becomes common knowledge among servants, guests, and extended family members. Despite these different circumstances, the offending wives in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and the victimized wife in *Cymbeline* must leave their homes as a result of the violation of marital intimacy in the open household.

Early modern women, explains Catherine Belsey, understood that there was no room for sexual indiscretion and that chastity was an intimate form of knowledge, which could only be valued if publicly acknowledged as chaste behavior (*Eden* 4). The female body during this period was in a manner of speaking an “indistinguished space,” because a woman possessed her body but at the same time her father or spouse owned it. I will explore in this chapter the consequences of this male ownership of the bodies of women, whose chastity they relied upon to protect their own manhood. To testify to her husband’s manhood, a woman’s chaste behavior must be public knowledge as much as it is her intimate knowledge of herself.

In the first chapter I defined intimacy as something different from two people spending casual time alone or the act of privacy. Instead, intimacy is based on mutual trust; it promises knowledge of self, of loved ones, and of social hierarchy; and it assures security. In this chapter I will show that the women in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *Cymbeline* find it difficult to maintain their chastity because there are few safe, intimate spaces provided for them. I will explore how these limited spaces affect the growth of intimacy and illuminate how the spaces where early moderns performed intimate acts such as private conversations and physical relations were not truly private, but “indistinguished,” because of constant surveillance by servants, household guests, and local communities. In these plays, as in early modern social life, intimacy is performed in specific spaces such as the open household with its many attendants and guests; the bedroom where the husband and wife become sexually intimate even as servants might be nearby; and the prayer chamber where one might find solace with one’s God and within oneself.

Intimacy between master and servant also complicates relationships within the home. Since it is the servants’ job to attend to their master’s and mistress’ needs, the business of gazing

becomes problematic. On the one hand, in order to serve and protect their master and mistress, the servant must be attentive to their needs at all times; on the other hand, gazing on their employer interrupts intimacy as well creates marital problems, as in the case of the Frankford household when a trusted servant reports his findings of his mistress' indiscretions to his master, causing a rupture in the couple's relationship. My aim is not to assign blame to servants, but to examine how their presence in the household—a reflection of the family's wealth—could complicate relationships and deny intimacy. Laura Gowing explains that “the physical space of early modern households allowed for little privacy. In many houses, rooms were multi-functional and often multi-occupied. Bedrooms might be shared not just by husbands and wives, but by servants and apprentices as well” (60). Also, the very large banquet hall of the early modern aristocracy provided ample space for the master, his family, and his servants to dine as one extended family, as a sign of wealth, ownership, protection, and communal inclusiveness. By the very nature of its openness, the early modern household could not provide adequate space for intimacy to thrive.

Louise Montrose explains that the domestic “is not a place apart from the public sphere so much as it is the nucleus of the social order, the primary site of subjectification” (29). Women's domestic spaces within the open household might have helped to awaken self-knowledge in some ways. The kitchen, master bedroom, knitting alcoves, female nooks, and laundry spaces all afforded women arenas to inform their self-awareness. Nonetheless, early modern women's experiences with intimacy were affected by their knowledge of the expected role of a wife and the consequences of adultery and rape. These women were expected to understand that “men's investment in their wives' chastity put boundaries of property and honour around married women's bodies; rape was still in many ways seen as a property crime

committed against husbands or fathers” (Gowing 58). Dramatists such as Shakespeare and Heywood put forward the perception that for a woman who participates in any form of extramarital or premarital intercourse, willingly or otherwise, punishment is the correct response to these infractions.

In *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *Cymbeline*, there are some differences in the responsibilities of the husbands for these marital infractions. Both husbands are responsible for inviting unsupervised male guests into their homes, and in each case the husband has confidence in his wife’s faithfulness and chastity. In *Cymbeline*, Posthumus accepts Iachimo’s dare and invites him to Imogen’s home to test her faithfulness, boasting: “My mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking” (1.5.150). In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Frankford invites Wendoll into his home and beckons him to partake of all that is his: “Master Wendoll, in my absence use / The very ripest pleasure of my house” (1.1.63-64). Posthumus uses defensive language and openly challenges Iachimo in defending Imogen’s chastity, while Frankford’s language suggests that he harbors suspicion and doubt about his wife’s character. His language, though guarded, is inviting. Whereas Posthumus uses superlative language to defend his wife’s honor—she “exceeds in goodness the hugeness” of Iachimo’s dishonorable thoughts—Frankford uses superlative language to invite Wendoll to enjoy the “very ripest pleasure” of his hospitality.

In *Cymbeline*, Iachimo’s revelation to Posthumus “but I now / Profess myself the winner of her honour” (2.4.52-53), is an invasion of Posthumus’ property, Imogen. The fact that Posthumus is exiled from his home is not enough reason for Iachimo to attempt to usurp Posthumus’ role in his marriage bed or “infringe [upon] the boundaries of knowing” in Imogen. He unmans Posthumus when he alleges that he has performed the male sexual role in the latter’s

bed. Posthumus immediately seeks to redeem his manhood and honor by ordering Pisanio to murder his wife, a reaction that suggests that Imogen is incapable of safeguarding her chastity and maintaining her boundaries. According to Gowing, “[e]arly modern culture defined women as constitutionally unable to keep their own boundaries” (52). Moreover, “[t]he uncertain legal, physical and social status of a woman’s body, and particularly the power of a husband over his wife’s body, defined the place of women in families, households and communities” (52).

Imogen’s place within the open household is undetermined, because she is secretly, legally married to Posthumus. Yet, her marriage is neither consummated, nor is it recognized by her unsuspecting father. She leaves her father’s house, (not unlike other Shakespearean characters like Desdemona and Juliet) in search of her lover. She is also unaware of Iachimo’s dishonesty: “I’ll make a journey twice as far t’ enjoy / A second night of such sweet shortness which / Was mine in Britain” (2.4.43-45). Iachimo

Disrupting the relationship between Imogen and her husband, Iachimo surreptitiously observes details about her body as she sleeps that will help to convict her of unchaste character:

Here’s a voucher,

Stronger than ever law could make; this secret

Will force him think I have picked the lock and ta’en

The treasure of her honour (2.2.39-42).

Imogen’s “secret” becomes a “voucher” in Iachimo’s mouth. The lock that he alleges to “have picked” is a mere fiction of his imagination because the “treasure of her honour” will be revealed at the end of the play. Posthumus’ anger with Imogen over Iachimo’s alleged intimacy with her is a breach of the faith that he had earlier sworn to her honor. On the one hand he swears by her chastity, but on the other hand he sees her as an example of typical female inconstancy.

Posthumus' behavior is analogous with Iago's comment to Othello on the inconstant nature of Venetian women. This image of the woman as fluid is conversant with the early modern idea of a woman being incapable of maintaining the "boundaries of her identity" (Gowing 52).

Imogen's fluidity in her marriage is paradoxical because it is a marriage both born of deception and unconsummated. Moreover, she can neither behave as a maid nor a married woman. She moves from being a young maiden to becoming a married woman and those roles are continually shifting within her mind. She must constantly be on guard when she is approached by members of the opposite sex. With her father she must appear an innocent maiden. Cloten and Iachimo are present threats to Imogen's chastity and her status as a single/married woman. She lives in constant fear of being exposed or being married off to someone else, mainly Cloten, who reminds Imogen of the allegiance she owes to her father: "You sin against / Obedience, which you owe your father." (2.3.112-113). Both Imogen and Desdemona are "carried away" in their marriage not with any ideas of power but by their "sin against /Obedience, which [they] owe [their] father" (2.3.112-113). They are reminded of their transgression through their interactions with others.

But Imogen is not the only person in that relationship who is guilty of disobedience. Iachimo's accusations against Imogen are vexing to Posthumus, who sees her alleged betrayal as an act of transgression. He judges her because he understands the difficulty of defending her body in her open household and being the other half of the marriage, he knows that she deceived her father, so what stops her from deceiving him? In addition, since both Posthumus and Imogen once lived in the same palace, an open household with numerous servants and guests, Imogen's body is hard to defend and is therefore a site to be easily penetrated. Although Posthumus knows that their marriage has not been consummated, he still loses faith in her ability to maintain the

boundaries about her body. He explains, “Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained, / And prayed me oft forbearance” (2.4.9-10). Imogen knows the importance “of the boundaries of proper and improper touch” (Gowing 53). Her body belongs to her father until he gives her away to a husband, yet she fails to accept her father’s advice of “forbearance” against Posthumus. She must also constantly guard against guests like Iachimo, who suggests to her, “Let me my service tender on your lips” (1.6.139), and from family members like Cloten who invites himself into her room to announce to her, “Still I swear I love you” (2.3.91), knowing that he is after her crown and not her love. The open household proves to be a non-viable space for Posthumus and Imogen’s intimacy to develop and is doomed to fail, because she has no allies at the court, save her husband’s man Pisanio.

The king and queen align themselves with Cloten, whom they encourage to aggressively pursue Imogen for her hand in marriage. Her father distances himself from her cries to be reunited with Posthumus. He comforts her with the response: “That mightst have had the sole son of / My queen!” (1.1.136-137). Cymbeline goes further, counseling the rejected Cloten: “The exile of her minion is too new; / She hath not yet forgot him. Some time / Must wear the print of his remembrance out, / And then she’s yours” (2.3.41-44). But Imogen is in love with “her minion,” as she repeatedly tells her father: “Sir, / It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus” (1.1.142-143). She is also confident in her knowledge of her husband’s love for her. Moreover, the passage of time that her father believes will heal the pain of her loss, actually increases her love for Posthumus. Imogen is secure in her knowledge of her husband, while Cymbeline gives Cloten false assurances that Imogen will soon accept his advances. As Imogen’s father he exposes her in her very home to Cloten’s unwanted overtures, instead of shielding her from him.

The Queen, too, advises Cloten how he should win Imogen's hand. She is well informed of the customs and therefore advises Cloten that the best way to win Imogen's hand in marriage is through her father, who is king of Britain, lord of the house, and father to the maiden whose hand he seeks:

You are most bound to th'king,
 Who lets go by no vantages that may
 Prefer you to his daughter. Frame yourself
 To orderly solicits, and be friended
 With aptness of the season; make denials
 Increase your services; so seem as if
 You were inspired to do those duties which
 You tender to her; that you in all obey her,
 Save when command to your dismissal tends,
 And therein you are senseless. (2.3.45-54)

All of the advice that the queen gives to her son is, naturally, to his advantage, not Imogen's. By increasing his service to the king, Cloten is increasing his chances to win political favor with the king. The queen knows that the king would think kindly on Cloten marrying his daughter if the young man can prove his worthiness in the king's eyes. Taking his mother's advice, Cloten does "frame" himself in Imogen's doorway, but he does not conduct himself "to orderly solicits." Instead, he annoys Imogen and bribes her maids: "There is gold for you; Sell me your good report" (2.3.83). His behavior is dangerous because in bribing the maids he creates a space between them and Imogen which he fills with his unwanted advances. According to the queen, Cloten must show himself as "apt" at all times so that he will be viewed favorably by the king at

the opportune time. Because he lacks creativity, Cloten can neither make apt “denials” nor favorable approaches to the already married Imogen. The queen’s advice to Cloten is also paradoxical, as one might question whom he is really courting. Is it Imogen or her father? Cloten’s courtship blurs boundaries as he strives for intimate relationships—to “be friended” with both father and daughter at the same time. His lack of self-knowledge forces him to make desperate alliances with his parents, whose knowledge of Imogen lacks true intimacy.

Of course, the Queen’s true motive is to get the British crown for her son, which would elevate her family name. The space that she occupies in the palace is open to deceit and corruption. Her scheming and dishonesty gives the audience insight into the symbolic representation in dramatic form about the private life of the royal family. According to Mary Beth Rose, “the drama not only illuminates the inner life of the surrounding culture but plays a significant part in creating it” (11). The audience’s participation in the private life of the royal family on stage provides them with an intimate understanding of the difficulties that arise in an open household. When the queen provides her son, Cloten, with a woman’s insights into the ways of approaching Imogen through her father, the audience gets first hand “insight into the ways in which people conceived of their emotional experience and represented it not only to the world but to themselves” (Rose 11). The queen’s advice to her son is an insight into the way she sees and understands human relationships. She is cold and conniving and cares more for position and power than for the emotional well-being of her son and step-daughter. For the queen, marriage is a contract based on one’s stature in society, not on intimacy between husband and wife.

Representations of love and sexuality on the early modern stage modeled for the audience an idealized form of marriage that was imbricated with religious ideology and political

implications. Often, these staged representations were meant to be didactic. Cloten's anxieties over Imogen's dismissal of his unwanted advances might be interpreted as superfluous, because early modern religious customs advocated parental choice of a spouse. Since his advances are not genuine, Cloten lacks any claim to intimacy, physically or mentally. It is the British throne with its accompanying wealth that is at the heart of his marriage pursuit. He tells Imogen, "Yet you are curbed from that enlargement by / The consequence o'th' crown" (2.3.120-121), and "[W]inning will put any man into courage. If I / could get this foolish Imogen, I should have gold / Enough" (2.3.7-9). Cloten objectifies Imogen's body because it is the means to his own making. The play emphasizes Cloten's greed and desires that are underscored by his mother's coaching and their combined deceit. Shakespeare's singling out of Cloten and the queen for the audience's contempt bears on the fairy tale theme of the wicked step mother and the favoritism of her own children, while maltreating her husband's daughter. The first Gentleman in the opening of the play makes social comment on the queen's performance:

He that hath lost her too. So is the queen,
That most desired the match. But not a courtier,
Although they wear their faces to the bent
Of the king's looks, hath a heart that is not
Glad of the thing they scowl at. (1.1.11-15)

Unlike his daughter, Cymbeline fails to read his wife and Cloten's "faces" because he lacks intimacy with each member of his family. In contrast, Imogen is cognizant of Cloten's desires and motive for pursuing her. She is aware that he proffers friendship because her father facilitates his advances in his own castle, an open household. She plainly responds to his

profession of love for her, “If you but said so, ’twere as deep with me. / If you swear still, your recompense is still / That I regard it not” (2.3.92-94).

Whereas the Queen “most desired the match” between Imogen and Cloten for public fame and power, Posthumus treats Imogen as a kind of private property from which he can profit. Immediately before he leaves for Rome, Posthumus expresses his love for Imogen, while putting a bracelet on her arm as a sign of his possession of her: “For my sake wear this, / It is a manacle of love, Ill place it / Upon this fairest prisoner” (1.2.52-54). His choice of words “manacle of love” marks her as property that he is placing boundaries upon. She is also a “prisoner” of his love now that she is his wife and is bound by the bracelet. Imogen’s body is sexually marked by the bracelet as a space owned by Posthumus, and it is her responsibility to keep her husband’s property chaste even in his absence. He tells Iachimo: “My mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking. I dare you to this match: here’s my ring” (1.5.149-151). It is with confidence in Imogen’s chaste thinking that he pledges his ring to Iachimo. In condemning Iachimo for his “unworthy thinking,” Posthumus is celebrating not only Imogen’s chastity but the virtue of his own intimate chaste thoughts of her.

In wooing Imogen, Cloten more overtly subjects her personal desires to his own desires for position and wealth. Cloten begins his one-sided courtship at a disadvantage that stems from his sense of entitlement and his false ideal of familiarity with Imogen. He also believes that as the son of the queen he is entitled to certain privileges which Imogen denies him. Responding to her rejection of his suit, he threatens her: “I will inform your father” (2.3.152). In a consistent pattern of patriarchal force and intimidation, Cloten attempts to force his way into Imogen’s bed. His reliance on cultural norms, that is, an unmarried woman’s obedience to her father, is insufficient for him in this particular instance. His expense of energy in wooing Imogen,

therefore, is in vain. The first Gentleman points out to the Second Gentleman that Cloten is an upstart “but not a courtier” (1.1.12), although he and the queen pretend to be of royal blood. Pretending to the throne will cost Cloten the throne and his life, because as the audience already knows, he is always already a pretender. Cloten lacks the skills to be a courtier; therefore he will be unable to compete successfully to be Imogen’s husband. As a member of the open household, he is a part of the family, yet he is an outsider.

Imogen’s knowledge of her own chastity and of her position in her father’s open household informs her rejection of Cloten’s advances. As she informs him:

I care not for you,
 And am so near the lack of charity
 To accuse myself I hate you; Which I had rather
 You felt than make’t my boast. (2.3.108-111)

Just as she reveals a clear understanding of her antipathy towards Cloten, so she reveals a firm confidence in the reasons for her love of Posthumus. Responding to her father’s anger at her unauthorized marriage, Imogen says:

Sir,
 It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:
 You bred him as my playfellow, and he is
 A man worth any woman; overbuys me
 Almost the sum he pays. (1.1.142-145)

Her choice of words in saying that Posthumus “overbuys me / Almost the sum he pays” points to her awareness of her propertied status as a woman and a wife. Additionally, she is aware of her importance as the future ruling monarch of the country. Her self-knowledge offers her limited

agency which she uses to exile herself from those at court. Imogen takes control of her situation and surreptitiously escapes from the castle under cover of darkness. She knows that her inability to love Cloten—since she is “so near the lack of charity”—could become problematic if she stays in the palace. To protect herself from a forced marriage and to save herself for Posthumus, Imogen leaves the protection of her father’s private, open household to find shelter in public spaces.

Cymbeline’s portrayal of marriage, chastity, class, and property goes beyond sociological interest. It thrusts to the forefront the tension between the characters’ public selves and their personal desires in the open household. The king embodies the role of head of household, patriarchal lord and protector of his daughter, while at the same time behaving like a tyrant towards Posthumus. His treatment towards Posthumus is harsh, and is unfeeling towards his daughter. Cymbeline subjects Imogen’s body in order to punish Posthumus. He puts her emotional well-being secondary to his desire for revenge. In the opening of the play we learn from the first Gentleman that Cymbeline does not have his daughter’s well-being at heart:

His daughter, and the heir of’s kingdom, whom
 He purposed to his wife’s sole son—a widow
 That late he married—hath referred herself
 Unto a poor but worthy gentleman. She’s wedded;
 Her husband banished; she imprisoned. (1.1.3-7)

The dilemma that Imogen and Posthumus face—choosing between obedience to a father figure and securing their love through marriage—was not uncommon in the early modern household. An audience could relate to the young couple’s struggle and understand the need for parents to listen to their children in matters as important as marriage. At the same time, the play points to a

father's need to be more observant of what takes place within his home where there is a lack of supervision of male guests.

Iachimo compromises Imogen's chastity and "good name" when he appears unsupervised and uninvited to her bedroom to attempt to seduce her. The proper code of conduct forbids him from entering Imogen's room because he is neither her husband nor her father. Her body, as Iachimo is well aware, is a space now "owned" by Posthumus. Nonetheless, Iachimo sees her body as a source of wealth "most rich" that he can tap into through his penetration and subsequent gain of Posthumus' ring:

All of her that is out of door most rich!

I f she be furnished with a mind so rare,

She is alone th' Arabian bird, and I

Have lost the wager. Boldness be my friend. (1.6.15-18)

Iachimo judges her external appearance "out of door" as well as her inner "mind so rare." He senses her vulnerability because "[s]he is alone" and a rare species, the "Arabian bird," or phoenix. Iachimo wants to devalue Posthumus' rare property as he moves from the outside to the inside.

In his attempt to seduce Imogen, Iachimo speaks cryptically, making it difficult for Imogen to distinguish the truth or falsehood of her husband's loyalty. Iachimo asks:

What, are men mad? Hath nature given them eyes

To see this vaulted arch and the rich crop

Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt

The fiery orbs above and the twinned stones

Upon the numbered beach, and can we not

Partition make with spectacles so precious

'Twixt fair and foul? (1.6.31-37).

Iachimo's claim that men are unable to "distinguish" between "fair and foul" underscores the ambiguity of the indistinguished spaces in which the play takes place. He questions men's capacity to perceive what they possess, such as "the rich crop / Of sea and land." Iachimo also examines Imogen's chaste behavior and he challenges her resolve. She is fair that is chaste; he is foul that has unchaste thoughts. He later proposes to her, "Let me my service tender on your lips" (1.6.139), to which she rebukes him, accusing him of dishonorable behavior and intent: "If thou wert honourable, / Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not / For such an end thou seek'st as base as strange" (1.6.141-143).

Imogen uses her home as a sanctuary and a safe space where she hopes that the presence of her servants could aid her in her desire to maintain her chastity. She berates Iachimo as she defends her husband's rights and property—her body—and, paradoxically, her father's rights and property as well:

Thou wrong'st a gentleman who is as far

From thy report as thou from honour, and

Solicits here a lady that disdains

Thee and the devil alike. What ho, Pisanio!

The king my father shall be made acquainted

Of thy assault. (1.6.144-149)

In defending Posthumus and promising that "[t]he king my father shall be made acquainted" with Iachimo's transgression, Imogen demonstrates the fluidity of her status as a married woman and single daughter in her open household. Here, she is actualizing her agency when she seeks the

protection of her father. Her disdain for Iachimo equals her contempt for Cloten and therefore she is wronged as much as Posthumus is wronged. Hence she repels Iachimo's advances: "Away, I do condemn mine ears that have / So long attended thee" (1.6.140-141). Imogen realizes that in listening to Iachimo she has abused herself. Her "condemn[ation]" of her ears attests to her self-knowledge. Imogen understands that intimacy involves knowing oneself and knowing the other. She makes the right choice when she refuses to listen to Iachimo's abuse of her person and personal space. Space, writes Gaston Bachelard, "is the abode of human consciousness" (13). It is this consciousness that promotes or denies intimacy. The presence of a third party in a couple's intimate space is an intrusion that crowds not only the physical space but also the individual's awareness and inwardness.

To protect himself, Iachimo gives a false flattering response to Imogen's threat to report him to the king:

A lady to the worthiest sir that ever
 Country called his; and you his mistress, only
 For the most worthiest fit. Give me your pardon.
 I have spoke this to know if your affiance
 Were deeply rooted, and shall make your lord
 That which he is new o'er. (1.6.159-164)

Like Posthumus and other males in the play Iachimo uses superlatives such as "most worthiest fit" to speak of Imogen's character and beauty. Unwittingly, Imogen accepts Iachimo's explanation, and she mends her relationship with him. To show good faith she extends her hospitality to him by offering to put his trunk in her bedchamber for safe-keeping. It is ironic that Imogen invites Iachimo: "Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept / And truly yielded

you. You're very welcome" (1.6.211-213). Her invitation to Iachimo is an innocent one made as a gesture in good faith and social decorum. However, it is an invitation that almost results in her loss of chastity and her death. Iachimo sees her statement "You're very welcome" as an invitation to become intimate with her. Subsequently, he invades her privacy and sets the stage for Posthumus to request her murdered by his servant.

Imogen's invitation to Iachimo, though innocent, is an error in her judgment. His earlier verbal assault on her body is a violation of boundaries which she recognized, but chooses to ignore after he persuades her that his intentions are honorable. Imogen's sheltered life leaves her bereft of the social protocol of entertaining a male guest who is a stranger in the household. In a vulnerable moment, as she listens to Iachimo testify to her qualities as "[a] lady to the worthiest sir that ever / Country called his" and his apology she relaxes her guard against him and blurs her boundaries of intimacy with him. Her earlier reaction to his requests, condemning her ears for entertaining him, shows her as being more intimate with her self-knowledge. But the open household often leaves women unprotected and vulnerable in their judgment about intimate matters.

That night, as Iachimo steals into Imogen's room in his trunk he compares himself to Tarquin, who ravished Lucrece, leading to her death. Although Iachimo claims that his "design" is "[t]o note the chamber" (2.2.223-24), his earlier reference to Trirquin suggests that rape is uppermost in his mind, and even though he does not physically rape Imogen, his intent is as good as the act. He states:

Our Tarquin thus
 Did softly press the rushes ere he wakened
 The chastity he wounded. (2.2.122-14)

Iachimo has “wounded” Imogen’s chastity even as he apologizes to her earlier for his sexual solicitations from her. His behavior could have been as damaging as Tarquin’s, but for Pisanio’s fondness for the princess and his belief in her honesty. The trunk into which Iachimo steals himself into Imogen’s room is a metaphor for her chastity, which can be illegitimately stolen or opened. Her helplessness as she sleeps in her bed, with an “invited” male guest prowling about her room, is emblematic of Tarquin’s victim whose helplessness mocked her even as she lay awake pleading with him to save her chastity. Imogen’s body, like Iachimo’s trunk, is property that can be tampered with, and her intimate content cannot be totally protected. Knowing what’s in the trunk and knowing the status of Imogen’s body —chaste or unchaste—can only be attested to by Iachimo, who finds temporary “lodging,” and later makes false accusations against her. Like the trunk, her honor can be illegitimately opened and open to ridicule, since only Iachimo can confirm the truth about her body, whether or not the “lock” has been “picked”:

Here’s a voucher,

Stronger than ever law could make; this secret

Will force him think I have picked the lock and ta’en

The treasure of her honour (2.2.39-42).

Iachimo’s violation of Imogen’s body creates an indistinguished space between her and the trunk and between her and Posthumous whose intimate thoughts of Imogen are poisoned by Iachimo’s lies.

After his dishonest tour of Imogen’s bedchamber and her body, Iachimo returns to the trunk that is itself a space for hiding things. He stores himself and the evidence that he will use to tarnish Imogen’s image and torment Posthumus. Upon his return to Rome, Iachimo presents his evidence, the chief of which is the mole beneath Imogen’s breast:

If you seek
 For further satisfying, under her breast—
 Worthy the pressing—lies a mole, right proud
 Of that most delicate lodging. By my life,
 I kissed it, and it gave me present hunger
 To feed again, though full. You do remember
 This stain upon her? (2.4.136-142)

Like her virginity, the “mole, right proud / Of that most delicate lodging” under Imogen’s breast is hidden from public view and is protected in that space. Iachimo’s desire to touch the mole, as he describes it to be “[w]orthy the pressing,” harkens back to his desire to deflower her upon their first encounter at the palace. He has a constant desire to insert himself into intimate spaces that belong to Posthumous. This desire is extended to Posthumus’ ring that Iachimo will not return to him.

Iachimo’s damning false evidence leads Posthumus to believe wrongly that Imogen has been unfaithful to him and that women cannot be trusted. He remarks:

Is there no way for men to be, but women
 Must be half-workers? We are all bastards,
 And that most venerable man which I
 Did call my father was I know not where
 When I was stamped. Some coiner with his tools
 Made me a counterfeit; yet my mother seemed
 The Dian of that time; so doth my wife
 The nonpareil of this. (2.5.1-8)

His loss of faith in women's constancy is understandable because of the false evidence presented to him by Iachimo. Questioning his own paternity—"We are all bastards"—and hence his mother's chastity and honesty, Posthumus seeks vengeance for the wrong that he assumes was done to him by Imogen. His lament is that:

Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained,
 And prayed me oft forbearance; did it with
 A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on't
 Might well have warmed old Saturn; that I thought her
 As chaste as unsunned snow. (2.5.9-13)

His lament is warranted because he believes that Iachimo deflowered Imogen and what was his "lawful pleasure" she intimately shared with a stranger who "view[ed]" intimate parts of her body which he was often denied. His intimate thoughts of Imogen ("As chaste as unsunned snow"), are heightened by his comparison to "old Saturn" who would have been "warmed" at the sight of her chaste snow-white body. The images that Posthumus develops violate his original images of Imogen's chaste body and his mother's virtuousness ("the Dian of that time"), and this in turn gives him the confidence he needs to instruct Pisanio to murder her. Posthumus' intimate thoughts are disrupted by these images, and what hurts him the most is the fact that he acceded to her request for restraint. Yet he believes that she quickly gives her "pudency" to "this yellow Iachimo in an hour" (2.5.14). Convinced that women are responsible for keeping their chastity, which they "should from encounter guard" (2.5.19), Posthumus resolves to hate all women. Unfortunately, he is unaware of the violation of the household that Iachimo perpetrated. His boundaries of knowing are violated by a male guest in his wife's household. This violation by

Iachimo has numerous repercussions because it disrupts the lives of everyone in the palace as well as Posthumus.

Since Imogen is ignorant of Iachimo's violation of her body, her agency is severely diminished as she sets out on a journey that could have easily become fatal. Imogen engages Pisano who takes her to Milford Haven to find the means to reunite with Posthumus and clear her name. She instructs him to:

Go bid my woman feign a sickness, say
 She'll home to her father; and provide me presently
 A riding-suit, no costlier than would fit
 A franklin's housewife. (3.2.74-77)

She exiles herself from her father's home for two reasons: first, she must get to her husband to clear her name and regain his love and trust, and second, she must make herself unavailable for Cloten's advances.

The men in the play—the King, Cloten, Posthumus, and Iachimo—have all violated Imogen's boundaries. To save herself from bigamy and death Imogen must cross the boundaries that society has set in place for women. She must exchange her social status as a princess and assume the garb of a young man which in of itself is a violation of boundaries. In dressing as a male, Imogen violates the boundaries of femininity, which includes her staying at home under the protection of her father and accepting his guidance. She also opens herself to male aggression and assault if she is discovered to be a woman. She must disobey her father by stealing away from his house and protection. While she is in exile, Imogen seeks to protect herself with the help of Belarius, Arviragus, and Guiderius. At this point in the play Imogen is unaware that Arviragus and Guiderius are her long lost brothers. Sustained by her wit and

confidence, and armed with the determination to clear her name and reunite with Posthumus, Imogen transforms her appearance and identity. She has limited agency which she utilizes to the best of her abilities as she fights to keep her chastity and marriage intact by accepting her husband's condemnation of her:

Prithee, dispatch;

The lamb entreats the butcher. Where's thy knife?

Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding

When I desire it too. (3.4.96-99)

Imogen accepts death as the right response to sexual indiscretion although she is not guilty. She is aware of early modern customs regarding the value of female chastity and sees no other option as viable for her.

In disguise as a young male, Fidele, Imogen uses her agency and wit to survive in unfamiliar places. As if blood could speak, Imogen and her brothers are attracted to each other and immediately her brothers and Belarius seek to protect her although she is disguised as a young boy. In essence her chastity is safeguarded now that she is disguised as a boy, in a natural environment and away from the unsafe conditions at the court. The living conditions in the wild make men like Arviragus, Guiderius and Belarius more conscious of their dependence on each other for safety as well as the rules of nature that set boundaries for nature's species. Their dependency upon each other for survival makes each one intimate with the needs of the other and the need to share space as well as respect the other's space. Intimacy is also accepted as public emotion in the wild environment. Unable to contain his emotion, Guiderius announces to Imogen:

I love thee – I have spoke it –

How much the quantity, the weight as much

As I do love my father. (4.2.17-19)

Not to be left out, Arviragus adds:

If it be sin to say so, sir, I yolk me

In my good brother's fault. I know not why

I love this youth, and I have heard you say

Love's reason's without reason.

Guiderius' and Arviragus' open display of intimacy in their profession of love for Imogen/Fidele is dissimilar to that displayed by Cloten for Imogen at the palace. The brothers display a natural affection that is, in effect, a metaphor for the natural place, the environment in which they dwell. The forest offers itself as a space in which intimacy can be nurtured naturally. Unlike the palace, where people impose themselves on others and display unnatural affection and insincerity, the forest nurtures life and fosters relationships. Arviragus admits that he loves Imogen/Fidele even though he does not really know who Imogen is and from where she comes. What he does know is that "[l]ove's reason's without reason." The intimacy that Arviragus and his brother seek to establish with Imogen is openly and sincerely discussed, unlike the deceptive kind of intimacy that exists in the open household at court which destroys the weak (especially women), and weakens relationships. The honesty that exists between the family members in the forest is an extension of Imogen's own honesty as she sets out to prove her love for Posthumus. Her survival is assured under the protection of her brothers and their father whose natural tendency in the wild is to protect life except when they feel threatened or need to hunt for sustenance. It is in self-defense that Guiderius murders Cloten and his action saves Imogen from the latter's plan to

sexually assault her if he finds her: “With that suit upon my back will I ravish her” (3.5.136).

There is more safety in the forest for Imogen than in her home.

Nonetheless, Imogen still finds herself victimized by the Queen’s machinations.

Unknown to Pisanio, the Queen had the poison prepared for Imogen. Pisanio gives the box to Imogen with good intentions:

My noble mistress,

Here is a box; I had it from the queen.

What’s in’t is precious. If you are sick at sea

Or stomach-qualmed at land, a dram of this

Will drive away distemper. (3.4.189-192)

The potion, as we later finds out, was tempered by Cornelius, who suspected the queen’s motives. The Queen believes that Imogen occupies a space that her son should inherit upon the death of the king. The “box” that the queen gives to Pisanio, like Iachimo’s trunk, is another metaphor for Imogen’s chastity and by extension, her life. Once the “box” is opened Imogen loses something “precious.” She is defenseless in her unconscious state and at the mercy of people and beasts that dwell in the wild. The chastity that she prizes so much can be easily lost; however, the men in the forest seek to protect her as she lay unconscious, and then to bury her lifeless body to protect it from further violation. Their songs of mourning elevate her being—
 “Nothing ill come near thee. / Quiet consummation have, / And renownèd be thy grave”
 (4.2.279-281)— in sharp contrast to Cloten’s songs, which seek to penetrate her chastity and destroy her: “I am advised to give her music a-mornings; they say it will penetrate” (2.3.11-12).

The space in the cave proves to be a safer place than the castle for Imogen, but it is not a viable space for marital intimacy. Her brothers try to establish an intimate, brotherly relationship

with her, but her beauty becomes threatening to her identity. Imogen's brothers become preoccupied with her rare beauty and gentleness and, in an unusual display of affection, allow their love for her to surpass the love they bear their father, Belarius:

The bier at door,
 And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say
 "My father, not this youth." (4.2.22-24)

Imogen's symbolic death in the cave—"the bier at door," is almost a metaphor for the death of intimacy that she endures at the palace. The intimacy that she enjoys with her brothers in the forest is meaningful and enduring, but it cannot substitute for the kind of marital intimacy she sought with Posthumus.

Guiderius' and Arviragus' relationship with Imogen is a natural love untainted by worldly greed or sexual gratification while the men at the palace are locked into two ideas, sex and wealth. Like Iachimo's trunk and the Queen's poison box, Iachimo's and Cloten's minds are narrow spaces that seek no enlargement and open and shut on two ideas only. They seek to dishonor women and profit from their dishonor. The two seek to penetrate Imogen's body and profit economically from their ravishing sexual encounter of her. Neither of the two men are in love with her. The men in the wild seek to nurture life, develop and expand intimate relationships and enjoy nature on its own terms, just as Imogen seeks to marry on her own terms.

As her brothers follow her back to the court, Imogen and Posthumus are faced with the same problems of privacy and intimacy. Imogen's life is an open one in which several people must participate. Her new-found brothers are added to the list of outsiders gazing at the performance of life between Imogen and Posthumus. The demise of Cloten and the Queen opens the king's eyes to the realities of relationships in his household. Having lived in the wild,

Imogen, Posthumus, Guiderius, and Arviragus bring back to the court a new kind of intimacy that promises mutual trust, knowledge of self and loved ones, respect of social hierarchy, and security. Imogen accepts her loss of kingdom and her gain of “two worlds,” her brothers. Her experiences in the palace and in the forest have prepared her for a new intimacy with her husband. Her response to her father’s question “O, what am I?” (5.5.372), and his statement that she has lost her right to the kingdom: “No, my lord, I have got two worlds by’t” (5.5.377), is the beginning of a new “world” order at the palace. Also, Posthumus’ forgiveness of Iachimo sets the tone for this new life within the household:

Kneel not to me.

The pow’r that I have on you is to spare you;

The malice towards you to forgive you. Live,

And deal with others better. (5.5.421-423).

The behavior of Posthumus and Imogen in using their power to enable a new relationship suggests that intimacy in this young marriage will grow and survive in its newly established space. The king’s remembrance of “a sanguine star” (5.5.367) upon Guiderius’ neck, a space that is open to inspection and is impenetrable, proposes a new security in the relationship between the family members and a sign of confidence in the king to be, as the word “sanguine” suggests, one who would provide safety for and nurture Imogen and Posthumus’ intimacy in his household and his kingdom.

A Woman Killed with Kindness

In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Anne Frankford's only form of agency is suicide as she is forced into exile by her husband. Her transgression, the sin of adultery, is an unacceptable form of behavior in early modern society. Anne's behavior is described by Viviana Comensoli as an "abrogation of domestic hierarchy and decorum as rooted in the hierarchies of gender and status" (69). The punishment for Anne's adulterous behavior is exile from her matrimonial home. In spite of her exile, Anne has agency which she uses to commit suicide, ultimately determining her own punishment. Anne's role in her marital home, an open household like Imogen's, is sometimes indeterminable even as mistress of an aristocratic home. Such homes are described as "a model of civility and order":

Sumptuous private spaces, elaborate state properties, and leisurely activities create an atmosphere suggestive of English prosperity and gentility: the Yorkshire country house; the subdivided home; the retinue of servants; expensive furnishings; (tables and chairs, doors, stools, beds, and other household objects); sporting and other amusements. (Comensoli 69)

Anne's role is to entertain household guests freely and to the best of the family's ability, as Comensoli explains, according to the degree of the master. Upon his arrival at the Frankford home, servants are commanded to serve Wendoll, as Frankford offers: "Please you to use my table and my purse--/ They are yours" (4.65-66). Anne herself, as a good and dutiful wife states: "As far as modesty may well extend, / It is my duty to receive your friend" (4.81-82). Anne must keep up the image that the Frankford family has "painted" in society. She must keep up appearances that theirs is a hospitable family able to accommodate their guests. The early modern gentleman was defined by "his ostentatious display" (Fisher 114). Frankford's open

household suggests a corruption of prevailing values that emphasize correct behavior of all householders, but his open invitation to Wendoll to use his house and its contents as if they were his own will lead to corruption of the flesh: “Prithee, Nan, / Use him with all thy loving’st courtesy” (4.78-80). In offering Wendoll his purse and his open household, Frankford is corrupting English societal norms that allow a host to provide generous hospitality to his guest. Offering one’s guest open access to one’s purse (a subtle reference to female genitalia) and one’s wife goes beyond the norm and ultimately ends in disaster. It is a corruption of those values that made the early modern aristocratic open household a welcoming space for guests.

Frankford’s open household is also a symbol of the porous nature or openness of the female body that can be corrupted through immoral penetration. Wendoll’s penetration into the early modern, newly created, private rooms in the house, with Frankford’s permission and invitation, lead to the penetration of Anne’s body. What is she supposed to understand by her husband’s order: “Prithee, Nan, / Use him with all thy loving’st courtesy” (4.78-80)? As an aristocratic woman with some formal education, Anne is aware of the rights and status that marriage gives to a woman. She is also conversant with religious knowledge that governs her role as spouse and co-head of household. How she understands the assignment that her husband gives to her about entertaining his house guest is unclear. At best, it is a paradoxical statement. Anne knows the implications of and punishment for women who engage in adulterous behavior and the power that marriage confers upon women. She is confused, however, by her husband’s command to “use” Wendoll “with all [her] loving’st courtesy.” Anne is intimate with her religion that invokes a sense of awareness in her as she speaks with Wendoll. As a good Christian wife she briefly reminds herself: “What shall I say? / My soul is wand’ring and hath lost her way” (6.150-151). Her religious reflection helps her to give pause and ponder briefly

upon the error and sin that she is about to commit. Yet, Frankford has instructed his guest, “in my absence use / The very ripest pleasure of my house” (11.63-64). Her self-awareness affords her the understanding of the intimate nature of her relationship with her husband and the one she is about to begin with Wendoll. But none of this knowledge can support her in the situation in which she now finds herself. She confides in Wendoll that she has been a good wife to her husband and she fears that she will lose her soul if she commits adultery:

O Master Wendoll,
Pray God I be not born to curse your tongue,
That hath enchanted me. (6.158-160).

In spite of all of her knowing Anne is confused “enchanted” and so she breaks her marriage vows committing adultery in her home under the watchful eyes of her servants.

Laura Gowing argues that early modern laws conferred certain rights and status on married women:

Marriage gave women rights and status. If it granted husbands the power of coverture over bodies, property, and legal status, it also gave wives a strong sense of status in the married body. Partly, this came from the shared honour of marriage: a violation of a wife’s body was an attack on her husbands too. (58)

Anne knows that chastity is very important in her society, and that the act of adultery affects her husband, but at the same time she has never had to defend her chastity against a male house guest to whom she declares: “My husband loves you” and “He esteems you / Even as his brain, his eyeball, or his heart” (6.112-115). It would be absurd to say that as a result of the love that Frankford and Wendoll claim they share for each other that Anne sees Wendoll and Frankford as one. However, since Anne and her husband are two in one flesh through their marriage, and

since Frankford instructs his wife to “use him [Wendoll] with all thy loving’st courtesy” after opening his purse and home to him, then Anne may have found all this information paradoxical, when she decides to become sexually intimate with Wendoll in her marital bed.

Anne misunderstands the meaning and implication of such violations as she tells Wendoll: “He wills as you prize his love, / Or hold in estimation his kind friendship, / To make bold in his absence and command / Even as himself were present in the house” (6.74-77). Anne shares her body with Wendoll as her husband shared his purse and hospitality with him. In spite of her knowing the repercussions of her action Anne allows herself to be seduced by Wendoll, who shares his host’s purse, when he devalues his property in penetrating Anne. Coppélia Kahn writes “that men have property in women, and that the value of this property is immeasurably diminished if the woman at anytime has sexual relations with anyone other than her husband...If she remains faithful, she in effect certifies his virility; if she strays, she calls it into question” (121).

In spite of her confusion or limited knowing, Anne understands the role of a wife in terms of hospitality to one’s guest. She chooses to join her husband in entertaining their guest even before she is asked to do so. In welcoming Wendoll, Anne goes out of her way to inform him after her husband leaves for a business trip:

You are well met, sir... Therefore he enjoin’d me
 To do unto you his most kind commends.
 Nay, more, he wills you as you prize his love,
 Or hold in estimation his kind friendship,
 To make bold in his absence and command
 Even as himself were present in the house;

For you must keep his table, use his servants,
 And be a present Frankford in his absence. (6.68-79)

As a good wife and hostess Anne relays her husband's message to Wendoll, taking care to include the details such as his command that Wendoll "be a present Frankford in his absence." She understands these words in simple terms, unlike Wendoll, who interprets the message to include him as a performer in his host's bed. He therefore "makes bold" in Frankford's bedroom with his wife "even as himself were present in the house."

Numerous conduct books and religious texts of the period address the subject of good female behavior. The role of wife was considered problematic in early modern England. While, on the one hand, Anne is praised by her husband as a dutiful and exemplary wife, on the other hand, she displays female weakness accompanied by a willingness to accommodate Wendoll's adulterous advances in her home during her husband's absence. She focuses on what her husband says: "He enjoyn'd me / To do unto you his most kind commends." To Wendoll's villainous speech to her, she responds: "There is sedition in your countenance" (6.104).

While religion preached against the practice of adultery, it seldom gave women constructive advice on how to repel unwanted male advances. So, although Anne is aware that Wendoll is dishonest in his motives, she is unprepared to rebuff his unsolicited advances. It is also plausible to assume that Anne misinterprets her role at that particular moment. It is an indistinguished role of head of household in spousal absentia, as well as the role of "grass widow."⁹ As a "widow of sorts" she is a "free" or single woman and can therefore do as she pleases with her body. Sensing that she is about to be seduced, Anne accepts and revels in his flattery as she admits in her soliloquy: "What shall I say? / My soul is wandering and hath lost her way. / O Master Wendoll, O" (6.150-152). Her "wandering" soul is an apt metaphor for her

⁹ A "grass widow" in Eastern Nigeria is a wife whose husband is absent but not dead.

confusion in her new-found role as head of the home during her husband's absence. This is a paradoxical role for Anne since she is female and Wendoll has been asked to be "a present Frankford in [Frankford's] absence" (6.79). For Anne, this role can mean many things since neither her husband nor society prepared her for this role. Should she accommodate Frankford's advances, or in the context of early modern social customs, should she turn him out and face the consequences? Unwittingly, she takes the wrong turn, something she only realizes after she is caught in the act of adultery.

Early modern women were expected to guard their chastity with their life. T. According to *The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights*, the law "acknowledgeth a greater capacity of deceit, and maturity of desire, to be in women than in men" (22-23). A woman is, in essence, almost always responsible for any sexual act that she engages in, by force or by consent. Her marriage, children's legitimacy and inheritance, her husband's good name and his manhood and her standing in the community as a woman all depended upon her ability to keep chaste. Laura Gowing explains that early modern women's knowledge of the body helped to sustain patriarchal order over women's sexuality: "the boundaries between women's bodies and a watchful community were constantly open to question" ("Ordering" 46). It is the watchful female community that acknowledges chaste behavior and, at the same time, guards over women's behavior in a manner that men were unable to understand during that period, because women knew and understood their bodies better than men.

The responsibilities placed upon Anne in her husband's absence are challenging as well as numerous. In addition to her usual domestic responsibility Anne has been assigned her husband's chores as well. While she has been prepared for her duties as a housewife, she has had no training in the art of male stewardship. Moreover, she is unsure about her role because a

male guest has been given a similar charge to be head of household in Frankford's absence, with full spousal rights in the home. Placed in such a paradoxical situation, she seizes the opportunity to dispense with her subordinate role as wife as well as decorum and good-wifeliness. She indulges in an adulterous affair with her house guest as she assumes the "wandering" role of head of household, while her husband wanders off, returning surreptitiously to discover her in the act of adultery with his house guest. While she has conducted herself on numerous occasions in the role of head of household, she had not yet been challenged by the unsupervised presence of a male guest in her home. Frances Dolan argues that early modern patriarchal society, through its lack of understanding of domestic servants and women, often views any form of resistance by this group as treason and transgression of cultural boundaries (58). These misogynistic ideas allowed men to side with their own sex while placing the onus on the female.

Perhaps no other infraction or sin exemplifies early modern fears as that of adultery, a crime against both religion and man. Church laws punish both men and women for the sin of adultery, and society deems it an unpardonable female crime. Anne is conscious of this sin, and she understands that society frowns upon it, responding with swift and severe punishment. She admits the audience to her inner turmoil as she reveals in her soliloquy:

I ne'er offended yet:

My fault, I fear, will in my brow be writ:

Women that fall not quite bereft of grace

Have their offences noted in their face.

I blush and am asham'd. [*To him.*] O Master Wendoll,

Pray God I be not born to curse your tongue,

That hath enchanted me. This maze I am in

I fear will prove the labyrinth of sin. (6.154-161).

Anne's fear that her guilt would be reflected in her face is an indictment of her intimate knowing of her culture. Her eyes, a public private space that encompasses and expresses the inner life simultaneously, intimates itself with the seditious look on Wendoll's brow and presumes that her own transgressive intention will be revealed on her face too. Anne's intent on violating her matrimonial vows, as well as the state of "grace" that she is expected to maintain, causes her to "blush" and feel "asham'd" even before she commits the act. She wants her sin to be kept private. But her private indiscretion will now be made public so that in the end it is not private at all. She cries, "My fault, I fear, will in my brow be writ." Her fear of guilt is associated with first time offenders and inexperienced women. Moreover, "[t]his maze" and labyrinth that Anne describe (much like the labyrinth that Daedalus built for queen Pasiphae's Minotaur) is a paradoxical space that straddles her mind as well as her home. She finds herself "wandering" in a complicated "labyrinth," unlike her seemingly uncomplicated life in her husband's home.

Frankford is used to "wandering" as he goes off on his business trips leaving Anne to take care of the home. Alleging that Wendoll "hath enchanted" her, Anne finds herself in a questionable situation within her home, a space has proven to be unsafe for her now that her husband has installed a male predator, Wendoll, like the minotaur, giving him full rights to all that he owns. Knowing that she is Frankford's property, and knowing the consequences for female sexual infraction, confusion and chaos takes over her rational thinking. Anne feels threatened by this intruder, yet she engages him in banal banter that erodes her confidence, security and sense of propriety, and so the maze does indeed "prove [to be] the labyrinth of sin." Anne's bantering with Wendoll stems from her desire to be a good head of household and a good wife at the same time. She straddles two thresholds: the one as wife insulates her and helps her

to maintain her self-respect and chastity, and the other as temporary head-of-household that exposes her to the unwanted advances of predatory men like Wendoll. In such a situation Anne is vulnerable.

Anne's fears and her vulnerability are not unfounded. The presence of servants in her home denies her the intimacy that she seeks and the betrayal that she fears. Frankford finds out about his wife Anne's unfaithfulness because his trusted servant Nicholas feels that it is his responsibility to inform his master about the betrayal of friendship by Wendoll and the adulterous behavior of his wife, Anne. In this case the servant, Nicholas, bears allegiance to his master. Hiding behind the curtain he discovers Wendoll as he and Anne embrace in a kiss. This is an intimate moment between Wendoll and Anne, yet Nicholas is present (behind the curtain) to witness this marriage infraction. Nicholas's response to what he sees is: "I'll kill the rogue" (6.164). Although Nicholas aligns himself with his master he still bears allegiance to Anne. His quarrel is with the intruder, Wendoll, even as Anne encourages and participates in the adulterous act.

Servants saw and heard all that took place within the home between master and mistress and all others who entered the home. Servants were intimate with what went on in the home. They were expected to be discreet, although they often bore allegiance to either the master or to the mistress, in some cases both. Although spaces were physically separated by walls, they were often indistinguished, because they served multi-purposes—as in the case of servants sharing the masters' bedroom—resulting in complicated relationships. The relationship between master and servant complicates the relationship between husband and wife making it an "indistinguished" dynamic within the household whereby the husband appears to be intimate with his wife and with his servant.

The intimate moment that Nicholas spies upon from behind the curtain becomes an intimate one for him too as his inner thoughts fuse with his sight. Nicholas' intimate knowledge of his master's kindness toward his guest and servants is affronted by the sight of Wendoll and Anne locked in an adulterous, intimate kiss. This, then, becomes a paradoxical form of intimacy because it affects the servant emotionally. He must decide if he is going to keep Anne's indiscretions a secret, or if he will be loyal to his master. He must decide to whom he owes allegiance. Should he report his findings to his master he will destroy the illicit, intimate relationship between Anne and Wendoll. Nicholas will also destroy the marriage relationship between Frankford and Anne. If he keeps this knowledge to himself then he betrays his master's trust and his own sense of decency. Nicholas' relationship with his master triumphs, and he shares his intimate knowledge with Frankford at the risk of being berated, flogged, or dismissed.

Upon Wendoll's arrival at the house, Jenkins, another servant, informs Nicholas that he is to wait upon the newly arrived guest. Expressing his love for his master and his dislike for Wendoll, Nicholas declares: "I love my master—by these hilts I do-- / But rather than I'll ever come to serve him, / I'll turn away my master" (4.92-94). Nicholas' attitude towards Wendoll is significant because his anger towards him later becomes his master's response to Wendoll's unbecoming behavior in the Frankford home with Anne. Nicholas judges Wendoll's character correctly even before he has a chance to serve and interact with him. He declares:

I do not like this fellow by no means;

I never see him but my heart still earns.

Zounds! I could fight with him, yet know not why;

The Devil and he are all one in my eye. (4.85-88)

Nicholas, unlike Anne, reads the sedition "written" on Wendoll's face.

Long before his discovery of his wife in bed with Wendoll, Frankford displays an unusual sense of calm and decorum. He recalls his servant Nicholas' words about his wife's infidelity: "I know a villain when I see him act / Deeds of a villain. Master, master, that base slave / Enjoys my mistress and dishonours you" (8.53-55). Nicholas penetrates the intimate spaces that Anne and Wendoll inhabit while at the same time he penetrates Frankford's intimate fore knowledge of his wife. Nicholas' penetration corrupts his master's estimation of his wife leading to the demise of their marital intimacy. Frankford responds to Nicholas upon hearing of his wife's unfaithfulness:

Thou hast kill'd me with a weapon whose sharp'ned point
 Hath prick'd quite through and through my shivering heart...
 What didst thou say? If any word that touch'd
 His credit or her reputation,
 It is hard to enter my belief
 As Dives into Heaven. (8.56-64)

Frankford's declaration that Nicholas' revelation has killed him marks, in fact, the demise of any intimate relationship in his marriage with Anne. His intimate thoughts of her in such an uncompromising situation with Wendoll are unfathomable. Frankford's allusion to Dives getting into heaven points to the loss that Anne's reputation has taken in his estimation. It is as difficult for him to conceive of his wife committing adultery as it is for Dives to enter into heaven. Anne betrays his trust in her, leaving him incapable of harboring intimate thoughts of her or having any further intimacy with her as he explains: a "sharp'ned point / Hath prick'd quite through and through my shivering heart." Wendoll's penetration of Anne's body ultimately wounds her husband's heart. The "wound" corrupts Frankford's intimate feelings for Anne. His response, in

the tradition of Hephaestus¹⁰ in Homer's *Iliad*, is to entrap Anne and Wendoll in the act of adultery. Having made his decision he settles in to an evening of charade with his wife and their guests.

When Frankford agrees to play cards with Anne and Wendoll, he analyzes every statement that they utter and he views their movements suspiciously. He responds to Anne's remarks in asides that alert the audience to his inner turmoil. He is aware of the "charade" of friendship performed for his benefit by the erring pair. The room can no longer promote intimacy between the husband and wife; instead it has become a court of justice with Frankford as the judge. It was not uncommon for early modern heads of household to perform the role of judge and disciplinarian to settle family disputes. Anne declares, "Let them that are taken playing false forfeit the set." To which he responds, "it shall go hard but I'll take you" (8.137-139).

As we shall see later in the play Frankford does take his wife to a place of exile, as a prisoner of her indiscretion and guilt. He aligns himself with his other guest, the very circumspect Cranwell, who appears to be the only outsider within Frankford's home. Frankford teases Cranwell: "O you are a stranger, Master Cranwell, you, / And often balk my house; faith, you are a churl" (8.114-115). Cranwell is not only a "stranger" or visitor to his friend's house, he is also a "stranger" to Anne's body. Unlike Wendoll, Cranwell does not penetrate the intimate spaces of his host and friend's home. His behavior as a guest in the Frankford household is a model of early modern societal expectations. He shows respect for his host and his property. Interestingly, the master, servants, and the adulterers are privy to the abuses in the

¹⁰ Hephaestus, the god of fire and husband to Aphrodite was suspicious that Aphrodite had been committing adultery. Being a blacksmith, he fashioned a chain-link net to entrap his wife and Ares the god of war. He surprised the two one day catching them together in each other's arms in bed. He threw the net around them and exhibited them to the council of gods who laughed at the naked pair and released them from the net. Hephaestus did not get the just retribution that he sought for their offence.

Frankford household; all except Cranwell, whose question: “Gentlemen, what shall our game be?” (8.139), suggests his ignorance about Anne’s and Wendoll’s game of adultery.

Throughout the evening of dinner and games, Wendoll and Anne are determined to play a game of charade with present company. Her participation in the evening’s entertainment is a replica of the deceptive game that she plays with her marriage. The host plays along with the two, even as Wendoll objects to the host and hostess teaming up against their guests: “No, by my faith, sir, when you are together I sit out; it must be Mistress Frankford and I, or else it is no match” (8.126-128). Frankford quietly voices his dislike of their behavior to Nicholas: “I do not like that match” (8.129). Wendoll’s Machiavellian deceit as he claims Anne as his partner helps to strengthen his host’s suspicion about his relationship with Anne. Wendoll’s objection to “sitting out” is his admission to lying in with Anne. His familiarity with his hostess breathes suspicion and helps to convict him as an adulterer.

Satisfied that Nicholas’ accusations against his wife are true, Frankford leaves his guests and family under the pretext that he must go to work. Upon his return home he finds his wife and friend intimately entwined in his marital bed. The master bedroom and marital bed are clearly defined, protected spaces that are meant to be occupied by the master and his wife and, in some cases, attendant servants. Early modern married couples lay claim to these rooms as their personal realm. Corinne Abate describes these spaces as “a private or hidden psychological real, organized by personal habits, around intimate friendships or kinship, and behind ‘institutional powerlessness’ (10). She adds: “[U]ltimately, though, this space describes a female world inaccessible to male reason, and not entirely interested in it. Privacy and domesticity comprise overlapping spaces and habits which make up the nearly invisible background of patriarchal reality” (3). Seeing Wendoll in his bed with his wife creates inner turmoil for Frankford. For

solace, he turns to his trusted servant, Nicholas, who is intimate with the situation, for solace. He tells Nicholas: “O me unhappy, I have found them lying / Close in each other’s arms, and fast asleep” (13.42-43).

Frankford’s gentle nature and his religious beliefs forbid him from carrying out the murderous thoughts that he harbors as he encounters the sinful pair:

But that I would not damn two precious souls
 Bought with my Saviour’s blood and send them laden
 With all their scarlet sins upon their backs
 Unto a fearful Judgement, their two lives
 Had met upon my rapier. (13.44-48)

Throughout the play we see Frankford as a kind and generous man. Even as he encounters his wife’s infidelity with his guest and friend, Frankford is able to think of the two as Christians “two precious souls” whose souls he could not damn. His Christian way of thinking nourishes him spiritually for a short while. He is able to maintain some composure with the help of one of his maids who “stays his hand and clasps hold on him” (74), as he attempts to take “their two lives...upon my [his] rapier.” Frankford dismisses Wendoll: “Go, villain, and my wrongs sit on thy soul / As heavy as this grief doth upon mine” (23.70-71). Retreating into himself as he retreats into his study Frankford delays his punishment for Anne’s transgressions. Assuming the role of patient Griselda in Chaucer’s *The Clerk’s Tale*,¹¹ Frankford retreats to his private study to be intimate with his thoughts and to be patient with his wife as he decides her punishment for making him a cuckold.

¹¹ Griselda is the patient wife in *The Clerk’s Prologue and Tale* who is married to a member of the aristocracy. She is hardworking and obedient. Her husband tests her fortitude and punishes her. He pretends to kill her children, divorce her and asks her to prepare for his marriage to his new wife. She does all this dutifully. He finally tells her that he loves her and that she will always be his wife.

This invasion of Frankford's mind as he wrestles with his intimate thoughts causes him to lose his customary composure as Nicholas points out: "Here's patience, perforce" (13.66). He pursues Wendoll with his sword drawn. He thanks his maid: "I thank thee, maid; thou like the angel's hand / Hast stay'd me from a bloody sacrifice" (13.68-69). No longer can Frankford think of his wife in a chaste and intimate manner without Wendoll being mentally present as an intruder. The shock of his discovery overwhelms him as he retreats into his study to be intimate with his thoughts now that he is in control of his emotions after his earlier uncharacteristic attempt at murdering Wendoll.

In the interim Anne humbles herself as she admits to her crime: "O! by what word, what title, or what name / Shall I entreat your pardon? Pardon! O" (13.78-79). It is now that Anne becomes fully aware of the damage that she has done to herself, her husband and her marriage. Wendoll's seduction appeared flattering to her, and as I stated earlier in this chapter, Anne lacks the necessary skills to repel intruders and seducers like Wendoll. Patricia Crawford perceptively points out that early modern teachings of Christianity were paradoxical, encouraging traditional patriarchal customs while at the same time encouraging women to believe that they could transcend patriarchal customs and societal structures. According to Crawford, Christian teachings and beliefs generally defended patriarchal traditions as they pertain to women especially female subordination and gender inequalities (3-7). Anne's lament as Frankford retreats to his study to decide her fate, "'Tis welcome, be it death" (13.132), is a Christian response to what she believes best fits her crime. Conversant with early modern customs she understands that her husband's good name and manhood must be protected at all costs even if she must die. She makes only one request:

Mark not my face

Nor hack me with your sword, but let me go

Perfect and undeformed to my tomb. (13.98-100)

Her request that her outward appearance should not be defiled is a vocalization of her fears including her soul's resting place after death. She admits that she has sinned against the Church: "Though once an ornament—even for His sake / That hath redeemed our souls, mark not my face" (13.98-99), and offended her husband and society, yet she appears to be chiefly concerned with her outward appearance than with saving her soul. Her decision to punish her flesh in the hope of salvation and forgiveness belies her request to keep her face unblemished. She admits her wrongs and accepts that punishment is necessary as her husband stands ready to convict her to a life of exile. He tells her:

Go, make thee ready in thy best attire,

Take with thee all thy gowns, all thy apparel;

Leave nothing that did ever call thee mistress,

Or by whose sight being left here in the house

I may remember such a woman by. (13.159-163)

Frankford's kindness is generous in appearance, but it is the very nature of its kindness that will cause Anne to starve herself to death. Her Christian sentiments and values will not allow her to be so lightly forgiven. Pleading with her husband not to scar her face or dismember her body, she expected a much harsher punishment for her crime. With those thoughts uppermost in her mind, Anne listens to her punishment.

Condemned to a life of exile away from her husband and children, Anne displays the use of her limited agency after her husband, Frankford, informs her:

My words are regist'ed in Heaven already;

With patience hear me: I'll not martyr these
 Nor mark thee for a strumpet, but with usage
 Of more humility torment thy soul
 And kill thee even with kindness. (13.152-156).

Immediately Anne responds, "A mild sentence" (13.172). Relieved from her responsibilities and role as wife she sets about making decisions contrary to her husband's instructions, ultimately deciding on her own punishment for herself while ignoring his instruction. Suddenly, there is a new-found freedom that Anne acquires in her exile. Anne decides for herself that she will not be "killed with kindness." She no longer has to answer to her husband for her actions, although she seeks his forgiveness in the end.

Soon after packing her personal belongings as instructed by Frankford, Anne declines the use of her coach which is owned by her husband, in favor of a more pedestrian mode of transportation that befits her new found lowly status:

Bid my coach stay. Why should I ride in state,
 Being hurl'd so low down by the hand of fate?
 A seat like to my fortunes let me have,
 Earth for my chair, and for my bed a grave" (15.1-4).

The coach is owned by Frankford even though Anne refers to it as "my coach." It has a history, according to the dispute between *Coach and Sedan*, of encouraging riotous behavior among the gentry and women of all classes. The Vicar accuses the Coach that he has "been these many yeeres a lewd liver, accompanying your selfe with Pandars and common Strumpets, both of Citie and Countrey" (Peacham 31). Moreover, Powell, a participant in the dispute, levels charges against the Coach-man that "the common people of the Countrie affect not, very well, the

Gentrie, nor the Gentrie them, there being a kind of *Antipathy* betweene them” (Peacham 25). Since coaches were despised by country folks because of the noise they make and the attention they attract, along with the number of them plying the country and city streets, Anne, now in search of privacy and intimacy, would not want to be seen in her husband’s coach. Sedan accuses Coach of its lack of intimacy by claiming that “wee [Sedans] are places for privacie, or meditation” (Peacham 12). F. J. Fisher discusses the corruption of early modern women’s character, “who, if they were unmarried marred their reputations, and if married lost them” (181).

Knowing how her society feels about coaches and the nefarious uses that they are put to, Anne distances herself from the coach. Her aim is to begin a life of penitence free of corruption of the flesh. The coach is, therefore, a space that is not conducive for intimacy, not befitting Anne’s newly defined status as a penitent in exile and too contentious for a fallen woman still mired in her guilt and confusion. She is free to make those decisions because at this point in her life she accounts for and to no one but herself. Her self-awareness is evident in the decisions that she is now making for herself. Using her limited agency, Anne prepares to unite herself with mother earth from whence she came, while at the same time forewarning of her decision to die rather than live in exile.

Upon receiving the lute that Frankford sends to her as a part of her possessions, she responds: “My lute shall groan; / It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan” (16.30-31). Frankford’s sending the lute to Anne can be interpreted as a phallic symbol of the agency that he provides for her in exile. The lute is the last material possession that he gives to her—a luxury that she does not need but one that typifies her ornamental single-minded personality. Anne prized her accomplishments as a beautiful woman, a musician and most of all Frankford’s

property and ornament. She is incapable of seeing herself, like the lute, without an owner/master/husband. To own the lute and keep would be more than Anne needs at this point in life. Her spirituality is what she needs. The lute would therefore be a distraction from her plans to repent, suffer and die as atonement for her sins. To this end she is successful.

In an open declaration of agency Anne determines her end. Showing that she is her own person, able to control her destiny, she breaks the lute upon the coach's wheel. The wheel is a symbol of the circle of love that she once shared with her husband, however, in breaking the lute upon the wheel she breaks with her past. She instructs Nicholas:

Go break this lute upon my coach's wheel
 As the last music that I e'er shall make—
 Not as my husband's gift, but my farewell
 To earth's joy; and so your master tell. (16.71-74)

Anne makes her own destiny when she states: "As the last music that I e'er shall make-- / Not as my husband's gift, but my farewell". This new-found agency is Anne's gift to herself, not Frankford's will or gift. She is now "doing for herself" where she once was told what to do. The fact that she emphasizes to Nicholas "so your master tell" is a sign of her independence. Since she is exiled, she is also in charge of herself. Indeed, Frankford's punishment has turned out to be a catalyst, in some way, for Anne. It affords her agency. She takes control of her destiny, restoring her chastity, giving Frankford back his good name, and cleansing her children's name.

Some time later Anne instructs the servant Nicholas to inform Frankford that she has repented and suffered:

If you return unto your master, say—
 Though not from me, for I am unworthy

To blast his name so with a strumpet's tongue—
 That you have seen me weep, wish myself dead.
 Nay, you may say too—for my vow is pass'd—
 Last night you saw me eat and drink my last.
 This to your master you may say and swear,
 For it I writ in Heaven and decreed here. (16.58-65)

Her message to Frankford is an empowering one that frees her from the binds of matrimony and societal expectations. In restoring herself to chaste womanhood through her suicide, Anne shows that she has agency. She has control over what kind of punishment she will endure and over how she will utilize her time in exile. She verbalizes her intentions even as she attempts to repent her adulterous behavior:

So, now unto my coach, then to my home,
 So to my deathbed, for from this sad hour
 I never will nor eat, nor drink, nor taste
 Of any cates that may preserve my life;
 I never will nor smile, nor sleep, nor rest,
 But when my tears have wash'd my black soul white,
 Sweet Saviour, to Thy hands I yield my sprite. (16.100-106)

Anne's response to her sin of adultery is religiously and culturally acceptable. It is repentance, the only hope of salvation for the Christian soul. But her change of plans, now deciding to go "unto my coach," is a contradictory pattern of behavior, because her earlier refusal characterized her new found state of contrition. The coach's history of female seduction and wantonness does not help her cause. It is not a viable space for redemption.

The home that she has been relegated to with its frugal furnishings is a more viable space to provide and nurture intimacy. Her “deathbed”, while it does not “preserve [her] life,” cleanses her soul through prayer and fasting. Anne, like Imogen, takes control of her life and death in a situation where her destiny is already decided by patriarchal laws and/or customs. Early modern customs deny other avenues to women who must depend on male relatives to defend their chastity. Imogen and Anne have the right, according to feminist theorist Rosalind Petchesky, to determine how they would use their bodies:

Informing every aspect of this ethical core is a realization drawn from women’s everyday experience that, particularly for women, all human rights – rights to political and bodily self-determination...have both personal and social dimensions, and these are integrally connected. (8)

But women like Imogen and Anne are faced with ethical challenges for which early modern society did not prepare them. Anne and her husband are part of the gentry whose responsibility Fisher explains: “is to reside in the provinces where they could act both as employers and as representatives of the state. Landlords who spent much or all of their time in London, served neither purpose” (180). Frankford takes numerous trips away from home, leading to opportunities for Wendoll to prey on Anne. Her indiscretion in having an adulterous affair with Wendoll has political implications because her behavior impacts on the community that looks up to the landed gentry for guidance. The Frankfords, as leading members of the community, are expected to lead by example. As a woman, Anne, therefore, has very limited control over her body, a body that is politically and socially marked and must at all times conform to early modern restrictions and mandates, limiting her agency in matters that affect her body.

Anne's desire to use her "fall" as a catalyst for change transforms her intimate self-knowledge, giving her inner strength to sustain her resolve. In the face of adversity, she dismisses Wendoll: "O for God's sake fly! / The Devil doth come to tempt me ere I die" (16.108-109). On her "death-bed," which she uses as a vehicle for forgiveness from her patriarchal relations, Anne utilizes her agency. She acknowledges her faults and weaknesses while at the same time commands forgiveness prior to her passing away:

You half reviv'd me with those pleasing news.

Raise me a little higher in my bed.

Blush I not, brother Acton? Blush I not, Sir Charles?

Can you not read my fault writ in my cheek?

Is not my crime there? Tell me, gentlemen. (17.53-57)

Her questioning of her guests as to what her face reveals goes back to earlier in the play when she makes a similar reference to the visibility of her sin in her outward appearance: "My fault, I fear, will in my brow be writ" (6.154). She invites her guests to "read" her face, a space that bears or advertises her intimate inner being.

In spite of his declaration that Anne should never try to contact him, Frankford accepts her invitation to see her one last time (another sign of her limited agency), and he arrives at Anne's home in exile. He declares, "I charge thee never after this sad day / To see me, or to meet me, or to send / By word, or writing, gift, or otherwise / To move me, by thyself or by thy friends" (13.174-177). Even on her death-bed, she is able to use her ailing health to elicit favors from Frankford, who assures her a pardon from him that will allow her, according to Christian custom, to enter heaven. He is, after all, her lord whom she addresses:

Amen, amen.

Out of my zeal to Heaven, whither I am now bound,
 I was so impudent to wish you here,
 And once more beg your pardon. O good man,
 And father to my children, pardon me
 Pardon, O pardon me! My faults so heinous is
 That if you in this world forgive it not,
 Heaven will not clear it in the world to come. (17.81-88)

Anne's humble request in her final moments fills the space between her and Frankford with religious breath that sanitizes any anger or stain of sin that may have lingered there. She clears the air, an artificial space that she believes is a real separation between earth and Heaven, "wither I am [she is] now bound" with cries of "pardon me, / Pardon, O pardon me!" Anne believes that if her husband "in this world forgive it not, / Heaven will not clear it in the world to come." It is in this space that she must be verbally and earthly forgiven by Frankford before her last breath is exhaled.

Having starved herself for many days, Anne is obviously in a state of delirium. Her frenzied requests from her husband are understandable. In his parting speech to Anne, Frankford reminds her: "But as thou hop'st for Heaven, as thou believ'st / Thy name's recorded in the Book of Life" (13.172-173). His assurances to her are paradoxical, because he has the power neither to cleanse her from sin nor to forgive her, and he cannot create a space in heaven for her. In assuring Anne, "Thy name's recorded in the Book of Life," Frankford is encouraging her to believe that he can erase her sin and that there is a Christian "Book of Life" wherein the names of only the "good people" are recorded. The "Book of Life" can also be the memory of those

who survive after her death such as Frankford, their children, relatives, friends and all who might hear about her transgression and subsequent repentance.

Anne demands and receives an unconditional pardon from her husband for her sins:

Even as I hope for pardon at that day
 When the Great Judge of Heaven in scarlet sits,
 So be thou pardoned. Though thy rash offence
 Divorc'd our bodies, thy repentant tears
 Unite our souls. (17.105-109)

Sensing his wife's imminent demise, Frankford comments on her other worldly state: "I see you are not," and he "weeps" at her pathetic appearance. This is an intimate moment for the two. Knowing that he is partly to be blamed for her dying, and sensing a renewed love for his wife, Frankford offers that which is no longer meaningful to her—"lost names" and renewed marriage vows. They are intangible ideals that can only pacify her wandering mind. Those renewed married vows also place her back into the paradoxical role of wife. She dies triumphantly believing that her chastity has been restored through sacrifice and her husband's pardon, announcing that her soul will rest free in heaven: "Pardon'd on earth, soul, thou in Heaven art free; / Once more thy wife, dies thus embracing thee" (17.121-122). This is a victorious death for Anne who utilized her agency to fight a battle based on bodily integrity even as it is religiously and culturally stained and exiled.

Viviana Comensoli writes that "Anne's starvation, which her punishment precipitates, would have been interpreted by early modern audiences as a form of purification of the soul, a practice synonymous with the suppression of lust" (81-82). Religiously, Anne is newly baptized in her death, symbolically washed in the tears of her guests, reborn to a new chaste life in Christ.

It is in her dying that Frankford can regain his manhood, because she is cleansed in death; hence, he remarries her: “I wed thee again” (17.117). Anne’s victory in death is not unique to her, but the fact that the only form of agency open to her is death is unsettling, because Wendoll walks away from the incident unblemished, a free man to repeat his offence. Her complicity in the adulterous affair affords her just one choice to make amends--death. Anne knows that although Frankford never mentioned her dying, it is the only option for her to right her wrongs. He points out to her that she has spotted her body with “bastardy” which makes it incapable of bringing forth untainted offspring:

Yet for these infants, these harmless souls,
 On whose white brows thy shame is character’d,
 And grows in greatness as they wax in years—
 Look but on them, and melt away in tears.
 Away with them, lest as her spotted body
 Hath stain’d their names with stripe of bastardy,
 So her adult’rous breath may blast their spirits
 With infectious thoughts. (13.120-127)

He also refers to his children’s “white brows” as marked with the shame of adultery in the same manner that Anne tells her brother and Sir Charles that her “fault [is] writ in my cheek” (17.56). There are religious overtones in their statements. Frankford’s allusion to their children’s “white brows” stained with sin suggests that the “shame [is] character’d” and bears a specific color. Their children’s sins are of a different color not white. Whatever the color of that shame of sin, he suggests that it will be visible to the world as a mark of their mother’s indiscretion and “her spotted body.” The children’s name is also stained and their paternity in question since Anne’s

“spotted body / Hath stain’d their names with stripe of bastardy.” The bodies of Anne and her children are socially and politically marked spaces. Anne is conscious that her indiscretion can potentially harm her children’s chances in society. Their future marriages and potential in society can be destroyed as a result of her adulterous behavior.

Towards the end of her life, Anne is absolved from her adulterous behavior, but she continues to be denied intimacy. She spends her final hours in a space that Frankford provides for her, one that is devoid of intimacy. She dies with a gaping crowd of on-lookers making comments on her life and imminent death. Her brother, Sir Francis Acton suggests:

Peace be with thee, Nan. Brothers and gentlemen,
All we that can plead interest in her grief,
Bestow upon her body funeral tears. (17.130-132).

Sir Acton’s final statement in the play gives Frankford the comfort that he needs in his time of sorrow; but Anne’s death, by choice, gives her the final victory even as she is denied intimacy. Like Imogen, Anne’s death brings about a new kind of life. In dying Anne is restored to a chaste life because her sins have been forgiven spiritually as well as humanely on the part of Frankford:

As freely from the low depth of my soul
As my Redeemer hath forgiven his death,
I pardon thee. (17.93-96)

A similar form of forgiveness occurs when Imogen awakens from her comatose state to a new life of forgiveness from Posthumus who finds out the truth about their relationship. She is restored to her father’s good graces and she gains his approval for her marriage to Posthumus:

Nobly doomed!
We’ll learn our freeness of a son-in-law:

Pardon's the word to all. (5.5.423-425)

In addition, she is restored to her long lost brothers: “[A]nd at first meeting loved, / Continued so until we thought he died” (5.5.384-385).

Restoration to good graces and to old loves and private spaces is central to the plays. The husbands, too, are restored to their manhood as the censure of cuckoldry is removed from their good names. In each play the women react differently to male advances. Imogen rebuffs Iachimo and scolds him for his offensive behavior. She tells him: “Thou wrong'st a gentleman who is as far / From thy report as thou from honour, and / Solicits here a lady that disdains / Thee and the devil alike” (1.6.144-147). Understanding her role as a wife and being intimate with the secrecy of her marriage, Imogen's rebuff of Iachimo stems from fear of betrayal of her secret and her understanding of chastity in marriage. Imogen also knows that her honor is at stake and although she doubts that Iachimo will publicize his private attack on her, she must guard against adultery. Her self-awareness is evident in her response as she defends Posthumus as a wronged “gentleman.” Imogen protects herself and Posthumus in her response to Iachimo. Anne, on the other hand, after briefly reproaching her seducer, quickly agrees to his request for her sexual favors. She responds to his request: “O with what face of brass, what brow of steel, / Can you unblushing speak this to the face / Of the espous'd wife of so dear a friend?” (6.119-121). Later she agrees: “Well, you plead custom; / That which for want of wit I granted erst / I now must yield through fear” (11.111-13).

Imogen's argument with men who betray/violate women is that they should not be trusted: “O, / Men's vows are women's traitors!” (3.4.53-54). Comparing Posthumus to Aeneas, Imogen condemns men for their false nature. She describes men as “Corrupters of [my] faith! You shall no more / Be stomachers to my heart” (3.4.83-84). Anne's argument concerning the

opposite sex is based on her own indiscretion. Entreating her husband as he confronts her with her adulterous affair with Wendoll, Anne reminds him of his goodness as a man and her husband:

When do you spurn me like a dog? When tread me
Under your feet? When drag me by the hair?
Though I deserve a thousand thousand fold
More than you can inflict, yet, once my husband,
For womanhood—to which I am a shame. (13.92-96)

In pointing out to her husband the things that he has never done to her Anne is listing the abuses that are commonplace among spouses during the period, while indicating that she is ashamed for all women and deserves terrible punishment “a thousand thousand fold.”

A pattern of sexual knowledge also emerges in the two plays. Both sexes are aware of their responsibilities in their marriage relationships as rigorous boundaries are set in place to help to prevent sexual violations. Laura Gowing argues:

Sexual knowledge was recognized by both men and women as being one of the markers of gender, age and marital status; to infringe the boundaries of knowing, or to claim to do so, was to attempt to cross the boundaries of authority in households and communities. (47)

However, transgression of patriarchal boundaries brings to the female transgressor a level of agency that disrupts early modern culture and initiates a sense of anxiety within the audience.

But female transgression against patriarchal norms was not the norm for early modern women, who were charged with keeping their bodies chaste and who were, at the same time, ill-equipped to defend themselves against unwanted male sexual advances. Imogen finds herself in

a paradoxical space although it is her home. It was originally also home to Posthumus, her father's ward and her husband. Her secret marriage to Posthumus makes the palace her marital home as well as her father's home under whose protection she resides. The king's recent hatred for Posthumus makes it impossible for the newlyweds to consummate or reveal their marriage to the parents. Living as single individuals makes their home indistinguished, because they are single and married, and separated yet together. Their existence apart after Posthumus is banished from the palace makes their relationship paradoxical because they are married and single at once. The intimate information that they share concerning their marriage is restrictive because they cannot live as a married couple and Imogen, in particular, cannot participate in the cultural practices of choosing a husband. Merry Wiesner writes:

For the vast majority of women in early modern Europe, the most important change in their lives was marriage. The choice of a spouse, whether made by themselves or their parents or a larger kin group, determined their social and economic status and place of residence. (52)

Imogen resists this tradition when her father chooses Cloten for her after she has voiced her desire to be Posthumus' wife. But Imogen's desires are secondary to her father's as she already knows. Imogen and Anne's "boundaries of knowing" are insufficient to protect them from male predators in their open households. These open households fail to provide them with protection against their husband's male guests, and allow limited space for the development of intimacy. In fact, the demise of intimacy in the two plays evolves from a lack of privacy in the open household.

The two plays offer some insights into violation of intimacy in the early modern household and the indistinguished spaces that women occupy. The importance of space in the

plays cannot be overstated, especially spaces such as the body, bed, bedroom, and the home itself. Clearly, there are different expectations for men and women in early modern society. Women are held accountable for their bodies in a manner that men are not held responsible. Female chastity is the essence of that gender, while men are seldom asked to account for their sexual behavior. In each of the plays the women pay a price for inappropriate or allegedly inappropriate behavior, particularly adultery. Intimacy becomes an indistinguished ideal in the plays.

Chapter Three

Intimacy and Cultural Difference

Cultural difference stems from, among other things, not understanding, valuing or participating in what goes on in other societies that differ from yours. It entails distancing from that which we are not and from what makes the other unique to his/her particular place. Whereas cultural similarity includes participating in shared human activities and experiences, cultural difference creates division in society, a divided self, and division between the self and the “other.” Culture influences people; it is performing what you do in your daily life, and is learned behavior. Culture is always changing and growing to accommodate the individual and the community as people advance in their daily lives. Finally, culture imbricates itself within the individual and is a form of inwardness.

In this chapter I will examine *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra* to elucidate Shakespeare's representation of how cultural differences impact intimacy between characters. In addition, I examine cultural difference in terms of inwardness and interiority, bicultural, intimate relationships, the political binary of conquering and conquered nations, and the impact of cultural social obligations to show how these differences affect intimate relationships in the two plays. Through the war rhetoric that permeates the two plays, the idea of deep wounds provides imaginary space into which the characters submerge themselves to find intimacy. To begin, I examine inwardness in the two plays to illustrate its relationship to intimacy and cultural difference, as well as its relationship to selfhood. Sigmund Freud explains, “the repressed is foreign territory to the ego—internal foreign territory—just as reality (if you will forgive the unusual expression) is external foreign territory.” In *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, there is an important connection between the “internal foreign territory” of the protagonists’ minds and

the “external foreign territory” of the plays’ distinct geographical settings—Venice and Cyprus, Egypt and Rome. We are led to believe that Venice is a cosmopolitan, Christian space, while Cyprus is made up of “barbaric” Moslems. Rome is portrayed as civilized, superior and masculine, while Egypt is cast as uncivilized, debased, and feminized. Like its queen, Egypt is positioned to be conquered by the masculine force of Rome. Romans also view Egypt and its culture as exotic, and its transvestitism as licentious. As I will argue later, the intimate relationships formed by Othello and by Cleopatra are thwarted by the problematic perceptions of self and other that derive from cultural difference.

Othello

In *Othello*, the formation of intimate relationships is from the start attached to notions of cultural identity and difference. Desdemona, the young daughter of a wealthy, Venetian aristocrat, chooses to ignore her Venetian culture and elope with a soldiering Moor who is many years her senior. According to the standards of early modern Venetian culture she thus trespasses against patriarchal rule and racial taboo. As she stands before the ruling senate, she responds to her father’s question about her loyalty: “Do you perceive in all this noble company / Where most you owe obedience?” (1.3.205-206):

But here’s my husband.
 And so much duty as my mother showed
 To you, preferring you before her father,
 So much I challenge that I may profess
 Due to the moor my lord. (1.3.213-218)

Her response shows a level of maturity and cultural awareness as she explains her cultural

obligation to her father and spouse. As a young Venetian woman, Desdemona has misplaced her loyalty and her respect, and has committed an act of rebellion against her father. Dympna Callaghan explains that “[r]ebellion against the father therefore also constituted treason and heresy” (18). Her bold reply, that she owes her father thanks only for nurturing and educating her, suggests that her understanding of the Venetian parent-child relationship is that he is obligated to do such things as educating her.

Beyond Callaghan’s explanation, I argue that Desdemona’s “rebellion” against her father, and by extension against Venetian cultural practices, is a manifestation of an inner-self of which she is not aware, a self that she does not actualize in her consciousness. Kay Stockholder explains that during the English Renaissance “one’s place in the world was identical to one’s self-definition. And to ‘know oneself’ was...to know the duties entailed by one’s membership in an order on the hierarchical ladder.” Desdemona’s position in the play is somewhat paradoxical because on the one hand she does understand her place within her community as she demonstrates in her response to her father’s question, while on the other hand, she fails to show any recognition of the fact that she has violated her place within the Venetian social hierarchical ladder. She does not fully actualize the consequences of her act of elopement.

While Stockholder argues that early moderns knew themselves by knowing their place in the world, I argue for a psychological reading of Desdemona’s motives for “rebellion” against her father and Venetian culture which is that she aspires to be manly in her outlook as her request to follow Othello to the war theatre suggests. Inwardly she harbors desires to be independent of patriarchal rule. Throughout the play she questions both Brabantio’s and Othello’s authority. Desdemona refuses to acknowledge that she is dependent on both her culture and her father for her sense of self. But, she cannot function or isolate herself from the two because they are a part

of who she is.

Desdemona's rebellion against culture and father can be explained in Freud's words as "aggressive instincts [that] are never alone but always alloyed with the erotic ones." She is a product of society in which "restriction of the individual's aggressiveness is the first and perhaps the severest sacrifice which society requires."¹² Othello, on the other hand, is not restricted in his behavior like Desdemona. Indeed, Iago's insinuations about Desdemona's sexuality embrace Freud's theory that aggression is aligned with eroticism:

His soul is so enfeathered to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. (2.3.312-315)

Iago endows Desdemona with the "appetite" of a "god" that is capable of unmanning her husband "with his weak function." According to Iago she engages in a pattern of sexual behavior that reinforces Freud's theory concerning aggression and eroticism. Iago explains that Desdemona leaves her father's house in the still of night to be "covered with a Barbary horse," (1.1.125) in the company of "a knave of common hire, a gondolier / To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor" (1.1.140-41). Iago further explains to Brabantio that Desdemona is aggressive because she "hath made a gross revolt" (1.1.149). Her "revolt" is aligned with her inner being, the essence of self that remains unconscious. Her father responds in like vein confirming her aggressive nature: "O treason of the blood" (1.1.191). Desdemona herself admits to the tempestuous nature of her actions: "That I (did) love the Moor to live with him / My downright violence and storm of fortunes / May trumpet to the world" (1.3.283-284). Othello hints at her

¹² Freud explains that living within one's culture can be threatening and difficult which leads to aggressiveness in some individuals. Desdemona's aggression results from her impulse to defy cultural expectations (138).

erotic aggressiveness when he accepts that she accompany him to Cyprus: “I therefore beg it not / To please the palate of my appetite... / But to be free and bounteous to her mind” (1.3.296-300). Iago’s reference to Desdemona’s aggressive and erotic nature when he tells Cassio to approach her for help in securing his position as Othello’s lieutenant is impregnated with innuendoes that suggest Desdemona controls her husband’s sexuality and that Othello is incapable of sustained masculinity. He is dependent upon Desdemona for his manhood. All of these sexually aggressive behaviors ascribed to Desdemona portray a young woman outside of the cultural norms of Venetian society as sexually deviant.

Unfortunately, Iago’s speech disenfranchises Othello in terms of his masculinity, while at the same time accusing Desdemona of violating cultural order through her alleged sexual aggressiveness. For, since Iago alleges that Othello is “weak in function” he is no match for Desdemona, whom Iago describes as having an insatiable sexual appetite. How does Iago know about Othello’s sexual abilities? Among many early modern myths is that of the erotic nature and sexual potency of black and brown-skinned peoples. That Othello is reputed by Iago to have “a weak function” is contradictory to cultural conceptions of the period, and suggests that Iago attempts to defame Othello’s imagined sexual performance through his own cultural performance and knowledge of Venetian cultural beliefs as they relate to sexuality. Iago contradicts himself because earlier in the play, he reports to Brabantio that Othello is a virile man who is capable of diluting Brabantio’s genes with “nephews [who] neigh,” giving him “cousers for cousins and jennets for germans” (1.1.126-127). To show Othello’s imagined sexual nature, Iago goes on to describe him as “a lascivious Moor.” Not only could Othello sire his own children and their relatives, he could also sire his grandchildren with Desdemona.¹³ Such potency

¹³ There is a pun on “his” meaning both Othello’s and Brabantio’s grandchildren. Iago’s point being that Othello is sexually aggressive and virile.

Iago ascribes to the “lascivious Moor” in order to prove the moor’s over-sexed nature.

Emily Bartels explains that Othello becomes demonized and mired in the desires of Europeans who struggle to delineate space as they create boundaries between the self and the “Other.” I suggest that the visual knowledge that Iago presents to Brabantio and to the audience is prefaced upon early modern Europeans’ desire to distance themselves from such foreign “unchristian” behavior, while at the same time participate in fantasies that they could not actualize. But, since Iago presents the audience and the reader with no “ocular proof” concerning Othello’s sexual performance, then we can rest assured that he has none. For the overall premise of his scheme is deception. Iago is a home-grown psychologist who studies his victims’ personalities in order to develop his schemes. He perturbs familiar Venetian cultural performances and societal expectations through his manipulations.

Iago studies his subjects in a personal way. He listens to their way of thinking, learns the humaneness of their speech then he devises a plan of action. At the very beginning of the play we see his artful, psychological approach to unsettling Brabantio’s fatherly nature and his investment in Venetian cultural practices: “Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God if the devil bid you. But we come to do you service and you think we are ruffians, you’ll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse” (1.1.122-125). He continues:

Do not believe

That from the sense of all civility

I thus would play and trifle with your Reverence.

Your daughter...hath made a gross revolt,

Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes

In an extravagant and wheeling stranger

Of here and everywhere. (1.1.145-152)

In referring to Othello as a Barbary horse Iago is appealing to Brabantio's racist sentiments and his proprietary right in Desdemona in the hope that he would create anger which, in turn, will arouse his instinct to preserve his white, Venetian ethnicity. Brabantio's desire to protect his property and his investment in whiteness, are major factors that prompt his emotional response to the news of his daughter's elopement with the moor. Knowing Brabantio's self-preservation nature and his aspiration to keep his species/ethnicity "white Venetian" in tact, Iago plays the race card by referring to Othello as a "Barbary horse." I agree with Arthur Little Jr. when he explains, "Shakespeare's play is the text that will at once unsettle and fill in, substantiate and resolve what the audience suspects it already knows about the essence of blackness as the savage and libidinous Other." But while Brabantio is cognizant of his culture's expectation, protecting his white Venetian identity, Othello is unable to see through his host country's superficial acceptance or tolerance of his presence. To be sure, Venetian fantasies about racial difference serve to occlude Othello's own self-knowledge, and hence prevent him from achieving a fuller understanding of and intimacy with his wife.

Interestingly, because he lacks insight into the cultural norms of Venice, Othello is unable to tell what others think of him and his savage, libidinous culture. He embarks on a marriage to Desdemona on the basis of his love for her. However, incognizant of Venetian myths and culture, he demonstrates no cognition of any differences between his culture and that of the Venetians. Like Desdemona, he is unaware of his "essence of self," that which guides his principles and performance. He fails to show overt knowledge of who he is as a foreigner, and this is troubling to others, such as Brabantio and Iago. To Venetians, Othello is a predatory being outside of his boundaries. Knowledge about his Moorish culture is inward and not

publicly expressed except on that one occasion when he explains to Desdemona the origin of his handkerchief. Like Hamlet's inwardness, Othello's inwardness is invisible to others and it is threatening. Katharine Maus explains, "For Hamlet, the internal experience of his own grief 'passes show' in two senses. It is beyond scrutiny, concealed where other people cannot perceive it. And it *surpasses* the visible—its validity is unimpeachable." For Othello this "internal experience" of concealed culture is not something that he can articulate or demonstrate except on occasions when he is under extreme emotional turmoil as he does show when Iago taints Desdemona's character by accusing her of adultery. Othello shows a continuous pattern of not truly understanding Venetian culture throughout the play.

When Brabantio shows his displeasure with Othello's marriage to his daughter, because he is a black moor, Othello shows little cognizance of cultural knowing and racial othering. Brabantio argues before the senators, "she shunned / The wealthy curléd (darlings) of our nation, / Would ever have, t' incur a general mock, / Run from guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight!" (1.2.86-90). In response Othello humbles himself and offers an explanation for his marriage. Like Iago, Brabantio is intimate with the cultural practices of his community and the state, Venice, in referring to his daughter's risk and fear of "incur[ing] a general mock." Brabantio admits that all of Venice dislike Moors and by extension, foreigners. Such intimacy comes from knowing each other. Othello, as a foreigner and social visitor to Brabantio's home, is allowed to see only what Venetians want him to see. The generalization pronounced by Brabantio of Venetians in their dislike of "sooty bosoms" is a public pronouncement of his country's culture of dislike for people of dark skin. Inherent in his pronouncement is William Vaughn's reminder that people's passions and innermost fears are "concealed in a man's heart, as like unto a tree, which in outward appearance seemeth to be most

beautiful, and is full of fair blossoms, but inwardly is rotten, worm-eaten, and withered.”

Brabantio’s dislike for moors is evident in his speech and like Vaughn’s tree, what he presents outwardly to Othello on his visits to his house is the opposite of his inward nature. He is a racist, like Iago who refers to his General as “black Othello” (2.3.25). Iago dislikes Othello’s blackness and Moorishness. Brabantio’s true nature is manifested when his daughter’s elopement with the moor is revealed. However, Othello is unaware of the culture of dislike that pervades Venetian society as he perseveres in his romantic illusion. As a result, he allows himself to be guided by Iago. Thus, he becomes the object of Iago’s hatred and desire to destroy him and his marriage.

But Othello’s lack of intimate knowledge of Venetian culture should not be construed as failure. He testifies to the Venetian senate:

For since these arms of mine had seven years’ pith
Till now since nine moons wasted, they have used
Their action in the tented field.
And little of this great world can I speak
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle. (1.3.83-85)

His admission of knowing only the life of a soldier helps to explain his lack of exposure to Venetian culture. However, his handicap may also have stemmed from a culture of limits that was placed on him as a foreigner. Irene Dash explains: “Othello, unfamiliar with Venetian ways, enters a foreign territory both emotionally and socially. False reports of Venetian patterns of marriage delude and confuse him.”¹⁴ His inability to participate in Venetian ways of life goes beyond Dash’s explanation. Othello comes from a Moorish culture that precludes Christian practices of love and intimacy as we will see later, in his explanation about the handkerchief that

¹⁴ Irene Dash argues that based on cultural differences, Othello is unable to see through Venetians’ behavioral patterns which puts him at a disadvantage in his relationship with Desdemona (213).

he gave to Desdemona. As a result, he confuses the reality of his circumstances with what he thinks he knows about Venetian culture, and Desdemona creating a worldview of love and marriage that is unobtainable for non-Venetians, “racial others,” in particular.

As an outsider within the Venetian community, Othello has difficulty obtaining his dream of being an integrated Venetian with Desdemona as his wife because he is excluded from practiced cultural performance. But, he sees himself as a Venetian and not as a “blackamoor.” In the presence of his Venetian hosts he is tolerated and welcomed as a general. However, in intimate matters, he is excluded and Iago is aware of this because he is a part of this culture. Othello’s presence at Brabantio’s home as he testifies to the senators, “Her father loved me, oft invited me” (1.3.149), is mere outward, cultural show of courtesies extended to the Venetian army general, but one that excludes him from family intimacy because of his color and nationality.

Othello’s exclusion from Brabantio’s family intimacy results in his inability to follow their important religious practices. Unknowingly, he excludes Brabantio and his relatives from Catholic marriage traditions when he marries Desdemona without her father’s permission. His failure to participate in one of Venice’s important, cultural traditions—Catholic Church marriage rituals—increases the dislike for him among Venetians. I point to Dympna Callaghan to confirm this theory: “[A]ccording to Church doctrine, a father had the right to give his daughter or to keep her as a virgin” (*Women* 55). Also, because he is not of that religion Othello would have been denied permission to marry Desdemona. Then again, that Othello was not born a Christian does not mean that he is ignorant of all Catholic practices. He has some knowledge of Catholicism as when he kneels and swears to Iago: “Now by yond marble heaven / In the due reverence of a sacred vow, / I here engage my words” (3.4.321-322). He is also cognizant of

Catholic sacraments which gives him a sense of outward humanness because he identifies with Christian values. Although, for the audience, it is a good sign that he understands some Christian values, the fact remains, he denied his father-in-law that which “Church doctrine” declares to be his “right.” Desdemona, too, fails to adhere to Catholic practices and she also fails to educate Othello about such customs. As Othello testifies in Act one, he spent numerous occasions at Brabantio’s home having intimate discourse with Desdemona. However the two fail to engage in meaningful dialogue outside of their marriage plan, and as a result, their relationship remains in an infantile state.

Desdemona and Othello’s relationship remains in an infantile state because she distances herself from Venice’s Christian cultural practices, making it difficult for Othello to become part of that culture. Her failure to educate him on the religious customs of her family and state disempowers him. Such limited communication between the two retards the growth of intimacy between them. As the play develops we see a gradual distancing between the couple. Desdemona complains to Emilia that she does not understand the change in Othello, “Beshrew me much, Emilia, / I was—unhandsome warrior as I am!-- /Arraigning his unkindness with my soul” (3.4.171-172). Iago uses opportunities like these to insert himself into the relationship and Othello cultivates an intimate relationship with Iago while he distances himself from Desdemona. Unaware of Iago’s plans, Othello allows himself to be manipulated into further distancing himself from his wife and cultivating an intimate relationship with Iago. A rift develops between the couple making it impossible for them to share important cultural knowledge. Not knowing leads to not understanding what is expected in his marriage relationship with Desdemona. Instead, Iago engages him in continuous discussions about his wife’s “alleged” adulterous affair with Cassio. He provides him with misinformation that

solidifies his position as Othello's intimate confidant. As a result, uncertainty begins to develop within Othello

Not surprisingly, the more Othello distances himself from his wife, the more he shows limitedness in his ability to comprehend Venetian culture. He willingly accepts as truth Iago's discourse about his wife in terms of the alimentary tract, believing that Desdemona is serving Cassio the sexual "food" that is meant for him only. Blinded by jealousy and rage, qualities that early moderns ascribe to culturally different "others" such as moors, (although Shakespeare show non-Moors in some of his other plays to show jealousy and rage—Leontes, King Lear, etc.), Othello engages in a pattern of destructive thought that would lead to the breakdown of his marriage. He digests too much of Iago's lies "belch[ing]" up the wrong ideals—love and attention to Desdemona—while he absorbs the results of those lies—hatred and revenge. But, too much ingestion leads to indigestion leading to his alienation from his wife and a total devouring of his wife based on irrational thought.

Emilia understands the devouring role that men play in the lives of women. She tells Desdemona men, "are all but stomachs, and we all but food; / They eat us hungerly, and when they are full / They belch us" (3.4.121-123). She knows that Venetian culture allows husbands to feed on their wives and "belch" them up as they see fit. By regurgitating his wife Othello is getting rid of what he should keep. Both Othello and Iago prove Emilia right at the end of the play when they murder the two women, who are symbolic excess gas to be expelled from offended stomachs. Such intimate cultural knowledge as displayed by Emilia is the knowledge that Othello lacks. By distancing himself from Desdemona he loses the opportunity to learn from her about Venice's culture. His subconscious, that "essence of self" takes control of his rational thought and clouds his judgment. He believes that Cassio is "hungerly" eating his

“food” what he will “belch” up after he has had his fill. Othello refuses to eat the food (Desdemona) that Cassio allegedly regurgitates.

Othello would rather eat the poisonous food/lies that Iago regurgitates for him: “The Moor already changes with my poison” (3.3.374). Unfortunately, Othello values the lies that he believes to be the truth of Venetian culture, which lead to his demands for “the ocular proof” of Desdemona’s infidelity (3.3.412). So strong is his Moorish passion for “ocular proof,” that he swoons when Iago reminds him of an occasion when there was “ocular proof” on the day when Cassio, “had my handkerchief” (4.1.25). Othello confirms that he had ocular proof of Desdemona’s infidelity:

Cassio confessed it,
 And she did gratify his amorous works
 With that recognizance and pledge of love
 Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand.
 It was a handkerchief, an antique token
 My father gave my mother. (5.2.252-257).

Othello is unlike Venetian men whom Iago professes are accustomed to their wives’ infidelity,

Look to’t
 I know our country disposition well.
 In Venice they do let God see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands. (3.3.231-233)

Othello’s willingness to believe and value Iago shows that he does not understand Venetian culture. An early modern audience seeing the play would have been appalled by his gullible nature because it is contrary to Venetian male behavior and is based on myth. His mistaken

belief in Iago's falsehoods about Venetian men's disposition leads to extreme emotion. But, he is unable to "stomach" the news of his wife's alleged infidelity and "*He falls in a trance*" (4.1.50 sd). He is unused to a culture where it appears to be acceptable public knowledge that women "horn" their husbands.

This new information concerning Venetian women's unfaithfulness to their husbands leads Othello to admit, "a horned man's a monster and a beast" (4.1.60). He also demonstrates that he is outside of the knowledge community and outside of Venetian social conversations. His admission to a monstrous, beastly nature strengthens that Venetian myth about dark skinned moors / "Others" who desire to eat of their wives hungrily and treat them like "beast[s.]" But, it is Venetians' alleged custom of women's infidelity that leads him to such passionate outbursts. Othello's admission to being "a monster and a beast," also strengthens Iago's mythical ideas about the moor's rash and violent nature. He lacks cognizance of the social Venetian norms including sexual intimacy. Othello gives further confirmation of his monstrous nature in his response to Iago's insistence that Desdemona is having an affair with Michael Cassio, "Thou hadst been better have been born a dog / Than answer my waked wrath" (3.3.414-415), when compared to Thomas Heywood's Frankford, an English gentleman in *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, whose in-depth knowledge and understanding of his culture allow him to distance himself from the problem so that he makes a rational decision on fit punishment for his wife. Where Othello is drastic and barbarous, (as is expected of a moor,) Frankford, an English gentleman, is humane and civilized. Othello chooses to murder his wife in his endogamous relationship with her: "I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me?" (4.1.119), while Frankford sends his wife away from his presence with the idea of Christian sanctity of life uppermost in his mind: "I'll not martyr thee" (*WKK* 12.154). Frankford's response to being made a cuckold by

his wife is civilized in contrast to Othello's. Othello's violent response leads Iago to ask him, "Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense?" (3.3.427). Iago's questions leads us to believe that Venetians do not show such passionate displays, at least, not in public, so they do not value Othello's passionate display of rash emotion.

In an attempt to show Venetian's devaluing of Moorish culture, in the middle of the play Shakespeare displays Iago's Venetian mild temperament when the latter sings an English song for Cassio in Act Two, scene three, as a form of cultured civilized behavior:

King Stephen was and-a worthy peer,
 His breeches cost him but a crown;
 He held them sixpence all too dear;
 With that he called the tailor lown.
 He was a wight of high renown,
 And thou art but of low degree;
 'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
 Then take thy auld cloak about thee. (2.3.100-107)

While not much might be made of the song, the fact that Iago claims a culture akin to the English is a testament to his civilized nature. He responds to the intoxication of alcohol with a song. The playwright also shows Iago as having intimate knowledge of European peoples and their culture as he does his own country's, and he shows that he values English culture by singing their song. Iago tells Cassio how he learned to drink with songs: "I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your wag-bellied Hollander—drink, ho!—are nothing to your English" (2.3.79-82). He embraces European culture while he distances himself from Othello's Moorish culture because it is seen as primitive and violent.

While Iago continues to sow his seeds of doubt concerning Othello's lack of civility, the latter tries his wife singularly, not according to English justice but by what the audience consider his barbaric Moorish culture. He swears, upon seeing her innocent interaction with Cassio, "Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace / Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love, / Till that a capable and wide revenge / Swallow them up" (3.3.518-521). Othello's vile pronouncements, Maus explains, resemble "the epistemological dilemma of the English jurymen to whom everything is supposed to be manifest, but who is nonetheless forced to depend upon clues and surmises, who must treat as clearly visible that which is inevitably beyond sight." To that I add, Othello assumes that he is using the same cultural intuition that his mother's gypsy friend used to "read / The thoughts of people" (3.4.57-58). His Moorish culture guides him in this manner. Used to seeing and hearing, as an outsider within Venetian culture, he is what Maus describes as "an alien in a place where natives cultivate a sophisticated awareness of the difference between spurious surface and inward truth" (4). His soldiering travels fails to broaden his worldview leaving him in the same state of "darkness" as when he left his homeland. His failure to penetrate through and borrow from other cultures leaves him bereft of enlightenment even as he distances himself from Turkish culture. He charges Cassio and his other soldiers with Turkish behavior after their brawl in Cyprus.

To further understand the failure of intimacy between Othello and Desdemona, it is necessary to examine the relationship between inwardness and the outward behavior of the characters. Othello displays a spurious surface because he lacks sophistication. Desdemona, on the other hand, demonstrates cultural abundance and inwardness in her knowledge concerning the behavior of new brides who often rebel against their husbands. Carol Neely explains that there is a pattern in early modern tragedy that show young maidens who are newly wedded

experience a new-found exhilaration as a result of their sexual initiation and “Their disobedience is experienced by men as threatening, their subordination is demanded” (22). Desdemona should have been in her father’s “bag” in his house, safely kept under his protection. Instead, “thieves” stole her from her father’s “guardage.” Neely explains that Desdemona acts “independently” when she chooses a husband and her behavior becomes “unruly.” Her outward manifestation of her inward nature shows an independent spirited young woman who chooses her own path, while outwardly she seems to be a model daughter. Her father sees her as a model daughter, “A maiden never bold” (1.3.112).

Othello sees things differently. Outwardly he sees Desdemona’s display of love for him as a natural occurrence, as he tells the senators, “She loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity them” (1.3.166-167). Maus explains, “Collaborating in Othello’s fantasy that his autobiographical narration is self-evidently true, Desdemona imaginatively leaps the gap between self-knowledge and the normally more limited and conditional knowledge of another” (120). Is Othello’s inwardness a fantasy of what he claims to be a reality? Are his claims about Desdemona’s love a fantasy? Does Desdemona really know him from his narratives? She does not, as we see later in her confusion when he continues to demand his handkerchief back from her. She responds, “I ne’er saw this before. / Sure there’s some wonder in this handkerchief” (3.4.94-95). What began as inwardness for the two manifests itself outwardly when they least expect it. Othello’s inability to control that inner self when he is angry is a revelation to Desdemona who knows him only outwardly. The two are mistaken in their understanding of each other.

Desdemona is an outsider within. She is married to Othello but only knows him outwardly. However, no one really knows the inner thoughts of a person. The audience already

knows that his blackness is his essence and is a marker for his jealousy and rage, but Desdemona does not. She invests in a marriage that is based on narratives about his life journey. But, the cultural difference that draws her to him is the thing that will destroy them both. Little argues:

Frequently the Other's status as a cultural, aesthetic, or textual truth is created by the dominant discourse as it returns to and rehearses the Other's presumed originary history—that is, the moment when the Other first plays through the event that has made him or her essentially different. (305)

Desdemona marries a fantasy rather than a reality of her love. She fails to penetrate the outward man as he fails to penetrate his Venetian bride, instead he smothers her life breath, in an act of impotence not befitting a soldier. Desdemona sees Othello's outward man as culturally different and she loves him for this.

Harold Clarke Goddard explains that Othello's inward man is as beautiful as any other man's, and that his outward man is not a reflection of who he is inwardly. Goodard goes on to describe him as "neither a Negro nor a Moor" (81). Perhaps this is true; for what draws Desdemona to him is his humanness and what started out as his difference from the myths that are told about moors. But, when he is faced with difficult situations, Othello's subconscious, that "essence of self" takes control of his rational thought and clouds his judgment. He responds violently to Iago's lies, believing that Cassio is having an adulterous affair with Desdemona. On occasions like these, Othello's tangential behavior contradicts his superficial Venetian cultural values as he reverts to his Moorish culture. This is what he knows best and who he truly is, inwardly.

The spaces where Othello and Desdemona spend their time contribute to their understanding of self and others. Othello is seduced by Venice and Cyprus because of his

military background and discipline. He imagines himself in these spaces as part of a multicultural universe. But, unlike Venice, Cyprus is an unruly place because of the war and also because Venetians consider Cypriots and Turks unruly people. Several incidents in the play support this theory—the drunken brawl that ensued on the first night of Othello and Desdemona’s “honeymoon,” Othello’s public “wife-beating” in the presence of Lodovico and others, the fight between Cassio and Roderigo, and Othello’s and Iago’s murderous conduct: all are moments of unruliness within the play. The people of Cyprus are non-Christians who are looked upon by Venetians as uncultured and barbaric, not unlike moors. Even Othello indulges in this type of anti-Turkish/Cypriot stereotype, because he sees himself more as a Venetian than a Moor, especially since he is the general of the Venetian army and his recent marriage to a member of the ruling class. His first question to Iago and the other rabble rousers is: “Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that / Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites? / For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl!” (2.3.182-184). Othello participates in a culture of “othering” without realizing that he, too, is a part of the “othered” group. Since he considers himself an outsider in Cyprus he distances himself from all things Cypriot or Turkish. He cries “for Christian shame” as if he is a Christian. He also accuses the citizens of Cyprus of barbaric character, a charge that Iago leveled against him at the beginning of the play. His cry yields up his secret thoughts as he places himself above non-Christians. Iago and Roderigo think otherwise. They see him as of a different hue, religion and origin which are all offensive to them. Othello resists such stereotyping through his use of language and military discipline. But Cyprus’ permeability seduces its inhabitants to participate in fantasies of carnivalesque behavior where inwardness manifests itself in public spaces not Christian-like but “barbarous.” Distancing himself from “barbarous” Turks is Othello’s response to his internalization of

Venetian culture. Othello, Edward Berry explains, “is not only richly complicated but individualized and set apart from Venetian society in almost every respect—in his blackness, his past, his bearing, and, above all, his language, with its unusual rhythms, grandeur, and exoticism” (“Othello’s” 316). Unfortunately, Othello is incognizant of his inability to penetrate Venetian culture. He is blinded not only by his uxoriousness but also by his overwhelming desire to be a Venetian.

Iago is adept in his psychological analysis of Othello. Despite Othello’s many attributes, Iago does not like him and does not hide his dislike for the general who is neither Venetian nor white. His pretense at drinking “the health of black Othello” (2.3.33) is as racist as Brabantio’s suggestion that his daughter would be loathe “[T]o fall in love with what she feared to look on!” (1.3.116). Iago’s description of his boss as “black Othello” denigrates the latter in the eyes of his lieutenant and the audience. Similarly, Brabantio’s disgust at a “black ram” “tupping” his white “ewe” (1.1.97-98) appears so loathsome that he “feared” for her wellbeing as well as the worth of his property, Desdemona. Both Iago’s and Brabantio’s cultural differentiation of Othello are in response to what they determine to be his outward vanity and his self-righteous pride. Iago and Brabantio also thrive on their cultural credit, because they know what Othello does not, that Venetians see him as barbaric and as an outsider. Iago plays on his general’s lack of cultural knowledge and what he perceives as the latter’s lack of skill in being “a proper man” (1.3.393), in Venetian circles.

Desdemona, too, is also limited in her knowledge about spaces outside of her home. She is an outsider within the cultural circle of the soldiers with whom she now lives in Cyprus. Their intimate culture of war and soldiering exclude her as she attempts to adjust to married life even as her husband refers to her as his “fair Warrior” (2.1.182). Her involvement in repairing the

divide between her husband and Cassio is a lack of intimate knowing about the culture of soldiering: “How now, my lord? / I have been talking with a suitor here, / A man that languishes in your displeasure” (3.3.45-47). Moreover, her presence as a mediator between the two soldiers is an intrusion that widens the rift between herself and Othello, because he sees her interference as proof of Iago’s insinuations. Her new-found status as wife and her newly acquired sexual freedom allow her to foray into spaces that she would not have dared to go into as a young maiden.

Entering the theatre of war, Desdemona finds herself in a hostile, welcoming space where housewifery and youthful, untried exuberance are not qualifications for a successful marriage relationship. She is catapulted from the safety of Christian “civilized” Venice into the non-Christian, tumultuous, war-torn “barbaric” island of Cyprus. It is as if the playwright uses the change of scene in an attempt to contextualize the couple’s marriage relationship. Desdemona’s discomfort in that space is akin to her discomfort in the marriage as she listens to Othello’s tale about the lost handkerchief. She admits to her discomfort: “Then would to God that I had never seen’t!” (3.4.90). She is also disappointed in his refusal to entertain her suit, as she asks him, “Why do you speak so startingly and rash?” (3.4.92). His former indulgences with her disappear now that he is under Iago’s control and in the comfort of the war zone. She continues to misinterpret his anger and points the finger in other directions: “What is he angry?” she asks her cousin Lodovico (4.1259). For Lodovico, Othello’s behavior can be explained in terms of Venetians’ internalization of the myth about moors: “Othello is black, and his blackness connotes ugliness, treachery, lust, bestiality, and the demonic” (Berry, “Othello’s”). Desdemona’s inability to comprehend Othello’s apparent contradictory behavior is telling because she too holds mythical beliefs about her husband. She is at a stage in life where

love and intimacy are more important to her than facing the reality of her relationship with Othello. She is at a stage of life that brings upheaval; thus, appearing to be confused about her role in the marriage as situations change and values unexpectedly fall apart. Desdemona chooses to blame his “rash” behavior on external forces.

Othello’s reaction to the loss of the handkerchief is nothing short of the subjugation of his wife. He makes her a present-day “battered wife.” His cruel response to Desdemona’s alleged adulterous behavior is within early modern cultural expectations of him and his group, as moors. Gowing explains that “early modern bodies were subject to the corporeal power of both family and state: they were publicly disciplined and punished. Sexual crimes were matters for church and state” (*Common* 5). Desdemona’s acceptance of Othello’s reaction to her carelessness may appear to be fear or low self-esteem, but it is, in fact, her understanding of cultural expectations of the early modern a wife. On the other hand, Desdemona is partially cognizant of her role as a wife. This, of course, is insufficient for successful intimacy within the relationship. However, she achieves limited intimacy with her husband. Cultural and patriarchal influences along with youthful expectations leave her disadvantaged in her quest for marital intimacy. Desdemona’s bewilderment at Othello’s jealous insinuations illustrates that she is unprepared for the situation in which she finds herself in Cyprus.

Unlike Desdemona, Emilia shows in-depth knowledge of Venetian culture. Her explanation to Desdemona concerning husbands who eat up their wives “hungerly” is impregnated with sexual innuendo and food imagery which points to her desire to fill her husband with pleasure (3.4.122). Her self-awareness and her intimate knowledge of husbands’ cravings is evident in that speech. She understands that early modern wives are objects whose duty is to please their husbands at any cost. The relationship between husband and wife,

according to Emilia, is to serve and be served, with wives assuming a role of servitude. Both Desdemona and Emilia understand what Venetian culture demands of them and, as Diana Henderson explains, “[I]ndependent speech and sexuality were both forms of female agency, and, especially when practiced by wives, functioned as direct challenges to the patriarchal order of things” (178). Cognizant of these facts, Desdemona and Emilia choose to be dutiful wives while they are in Cyprus. However, this cultural expectation of wifely duty leaves women like Desdemona and Emilia unable to fulfill their self-knowledge and establish more meaningful intimacy with their husbands.

Antony and Cleopatra

In reading *Antony and Cleopatra* I will widen my focus to include Shakespeare's preoccupation with cultural differences that include not only relationships based on race but myths about other cultures and places. Consciously or subconsciously, these myths about Egyptians as licentious are internalized by Roman (and, possibly, English) citizens. The play invites us to examine intimate relationships such as that between Antony and Cleopatra not only as lovers, but as political rulers. Antony and Cleopatra have difficulty achieving intimacy because of the many differences that separate the cultures of Rome and Egypt. Shakespeare develops a theme of social disorder that is endemic in Rome and Egypt, but characters of these two nations stereotype each other as disordered and unstable people. A culture of treachery permeates the play as rulers and subjects alike delineate antagonistic relations between classes as well as countries. Embedded within this discourse of cultural difference is the underlying tension between conquered bodies and domination, conquered lands and subjected/colonized peoples. Finally, Cleopatra is at her best when she is surrounded by her women only, while Antony shines when he is in the company of his soldiers, suggesting that there is a cultural opposition between men and women in the play.

As a dominant, conquering nation, Romans impart myths about Cleopatra's sexuality that suggest they understand her essential inwardness, something that is not knowable by outsiders. Rightfully, in *Othello* Iago says that woman's honor "is an essence that's not seen" (4.1.16)—but neither is a woman's interiority. Nonetheless, Enobarbus pretends to know Cleopatra inwardly as he discourses with his fellow Romans about the queen's "unknowable" self. The Romans imagine her as different in color and behavior from their own women. They describe Egyptians in terms of feminine excess and pleasure while fortifying their own culture as austere and

masculine.

The pressures of this masculine culture, and its cultural differences from what Egypt is imagined to be, also creates self-division within Antony. After their politically arranged marriage, Antony tells Octavia: “The world and my great office will sometimes / Divide me from your bosom” (2.2.1-2). His statement is impregnated with a variety of meanings, especially since early moderns strongly believed that a married couple became one flesh after they made their matrimonial vows. When Antony makes this disclaimer to Octavia he is already presenting a divided self. Not only will “the world” divide him from his wife’s bosom, Cleopatra will occupy a luminous space in that divided body. In admitting his divided self he is anticipating the “blemishes in the world’s report” that he will receive (2.3.8). For Antony, Rome and Egypt are “the world.” He is trapped not only in his imagination but also in a “world” that leaves him no room for intimacy. Since Antony knows that other Romans will openly discuss his intimate affairs, he makes this disclaimer to Octavia before reports or rumors about him reach her ear. As if to reinforce his knowledge, immediately after Antony parts with Octavia and Caesar, the Soothsayer approaches him: “I see it in my motion, have it not in my tongue. But yet hie you to Egypt again” (2.3.17-18).

In a culture where men are expected to show valor and constancy, the soothsayer’s foretelling of Antony’s future is troubling. Leaving Rome so soon after his marriage to Octavia to be with Cleopatra is only one half of the problem. The other half is Caesar. The Soothsayer warns him that his “spirit which keeps thee—is / Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable, / Where Caesar’s is not. But near him, thy angel / Becomes afraid, as being o’erpowered” (2.3.23-26). Does Antony subconsciously fear Caesar? Is his retreat from the battle at sea with Caesar, later in the play, a manifestation of this fear? Is Caesar’s presence, then, a threat to

Antony's inward man? It is arguable that Antony's rash agreement to Caesar's proffering of his sister Octavia as a marriage partner is proof of his inner resolve. Antony's Roman valor in the war arena, to which many has testified, show him as a man of mettle, but like Othello, his unconscious and inner-self lack the same valor that he displays on the battle field. His Romanness, simply put, "passes show." He is self-divided, imagined as unconquerable and un-Egyptian.

Romans portray Egypt's luxuriousness, Cleopatra's in particular, through the imagery of a divided body, sensuous and fecund. Cleopatra is said to be capable of making great Caesar put his sword to bed while at the same time allowing him to "bed" her: "She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed; / He ploughed her, and she cropped" (2.3.268-269). Her divided body is capable of much more, as Enobarbus tells Agrippa and Maecenas: "Other women cloy / The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies" (2.3.277-279). Egypt's luxuriousness will be Antony's downfall. In her book, *Suffocating Mothers*, Janet Adelman writes that the struggle between Egypt and Rome is an opposition between "male scarcity and female bounty" (177). But the play projects an excess of male valor in Rome that is emasculating for men like Antony whose subconscious, inward man overshadows his military fame in matters of intimacy, which he prizes as much as he does his military fame. Caesar alludes to Antony's insufficiencies as a Roman male when he reports news from a letter he received from Alexandria to Lepidus "From Alexandria / This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes / The lamps of night in revel, is not more manlike / Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy / More womanly than he" (1.4.4-7). Antony's pastime amusements, as listed by Caesar, are womanly sports unfit for Roman men. His behavior in Egypt is projected as a separate performance from his behavior when he is in Rome and on the battle field. Caesar explains that

Antony is “A man who is th’ abstract of all faults / That all men follow” (1.4.10-11). Antony’s behavior is confusing to his fellow Romans and Cleopatra. Arthur Little Jr. explains that the divided body belongs to the self and the significant other (305-307). Who, however, is Antony’s significant other? Antony is married to Octavia; he is partnered with Cleopatra. Both women display divided selves within the play and in their roles as women and partners.

Like Fulvia, Octavia is in a complicated position as Antony’s wife. Octavia is divided in her loyalty to her husband Antony as well as to her brother Caesar. As a wife she owes her undivided allegiance to Antony. However, when Antony abandons her for Cleopatra, abandons Rome for Egypt, and abandons his sworn oath to Caesar, Octavia waivers in her allegiance to him. Upon hearing that Antony is not in Athens as he had reported to her, Octavia laments, “Ay me, most wretched, / That have my heart parted betwixt two friends / That does afflict each other!” (3.6.87-89). Her divided loyalty is akin to her “heart parted betwixt two friends.”

Fulvia, on the other hand, is reported to have divided her loyalty between the battlefield and Antony’s brother, joining forces with the latter in the absence of her husband. The messenger explains to Antony how his wife and brother Lucius came together, “But soon that war had end, and the tie’s state / Made friends of them. Jointing their force ‘gainst Caesar” (1.2.96-97). Like Fulvia and Octavia, Cleopatra, too, in the last act of the play, detaches herself from Antony, returning to him only as he lay dying at her palace.

Cleopatra’s body is alleged to have been divided more than once because she had sexual affairs with Caesar, Pompey, and Antony, all Roman rulers who attempted to conquer Egypt. According to Roman (and early modern English) gender ideology, Cleopatra is a whore because she engages in sexual relationships outside of marriage. She is also mother to several children whose patrilinage sprouts from different Roman fonts. Moreover, her sexual prowess is

frowned upon in English and Roman societies because she is visualized as a female predator.

Enobarbus recounts her first meeting with Antony after she returned from a sailing expedition on the River Cydnus:

Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,
 Invited her to supper. She replied
 It should be better he became her guest,
 Which she entreated. Our courteous Antony,
 Whom ne'er the word of "No" woman heard speak'
 Being barbered ten times o'er, goes to the feast,
 And for his ordinary pays his heart
 For what his eyes eat only. (2.2.258-265).

For Enobarbus, Cleopatra is culturally different from Roman women. She is a devouring woman, because she openly and physically envelopes Antony as he devours her body with "his eyes," and while she steals his head, he "pays [with] his heart." Enobarbus implies that her sexual abundance is as conquering as Antony's sword: "I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle in death which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such celerity in dying" (1.2.156-160). With Mardian, the eunuch, and a retinue of female servants constantly at her side, Cleopatra is seen as lacking male figures and participating in a culture of femaleness. Roman culture keeps its women away from public gaze while men are allowed to openly display themselves at home and abroad. Cleopatra's three lovers saw her need for male companionship and filled it.

Additionally, Cleopatra is juxtaposed against Antony's wives, Fulvia and Octavia. Octavia is presented as a paragon of virtue—a good and chaste wife—while general consensus

denounces Fulvia as having masculine tendencies, foraging into male spaces under the guise of warrior, a pattern that Cleopatra follows, although she is Queen of Egypt and should be expected to defend and rule her land. Jonathan Gil Harris argues that “Within this disparaging assessment of Cleopatra as the archetype of a fallen femininity, there lurks a fascination with her as the irrepressible origin of male desire.” She is what Roman men desire as they demonstrate in their obsession with her. While among themselves they disparage her, privately, they desire her. Cleopatra is who Fulvia aspired to be, a ruler and a woman. However, in the end, it is Cleopatra who successfully navigates both worlds. Even in death she is victorious, outwitting Caesar.

As queen of Egypt, Cleopatra possesses a body that occupies an imaginary divide between politics and romance. But, according to early modern English culture, where subjects must emulate their monarch, she is the model that her subjects follow. Elizabethans espoused a culture that modeled “right way” from the top to the bottom, that is, from the royal household down to the working-class poor. Shakespeare suggests in the play that Antony and Cleopatra should model that “right way” for their followers: “For princes are the glass, the school, the book / Where subjects’ eyes do learn, do read, do look / ... Wilt thou be glass wherein it shall discern / Authority for sin, warrant for blame?” Interestingly, Antony and Cleopatra live carnivalesque lives that trickle down to their subjects as servants. Cleopatra continues to revel even while Antony is away because it is a way of live for her: “Give me some music—music” and “Let’s to billiards. Come, Charmian... My arm is sore. Best play with Mardian. / As well a woman with an eunuch played / As with a woman.—Come, you’ll play with me, sir?” (2.5.3-6).

Cleopatra puts forth a divided self in her relationship with her subjects and the invading Romans. At the beginning of the play Cleopatra seeks out Antony and when she is told that he is near she promptly leaves without waiting to acknowledge him. She tells Enobarbus “Seek him

and bring him hither” (1.2.90). Then, in an about face she tells her servant, “We will not look upon him. Go with us” (1.2.92). Later, she gives Antony assurances about her naval prowess which she abandons in the heat of battle. Upon hearing the news from a messenger that Antony is married to Octavia, Cleopatra moves from anger to repentance:

Say 'tis not so, a province I will give thee
 And make thy fortunes proud. The blow thou hadst
 Shall make thy peace for moving me to rage,
 And I will boot thee with what gift beside
 Thy modesty can beg. (2.5.85-89)

She denies with her “outward” self that Antony is married, but she accepts with her “inward” self that he is indeed married to Octavia. In an attempt to calm her Charmian asks: “Good madam, keep yourself within yourself” (2.5.94). Charmian is asking her queen to look inward and contain her passion. Cleopatra’s quick temper and outward show of rage as she draws a knife help to cement the myth about the hot-blooded nature of Egyptians. She continues to waiver between rational and irrational behavior throughout Act Two as she confronts Antony’s inconsistency and her own precarious position in her relationship with him, one that mirrors the on-going Roman-Egyptian conflict. Cleopatra shows her outward rage when she receives news that Antony is married to Octavia. She offers to punish the harbinger of bad news: “Rogue, thou hast lived too long” (2.5.91).

Shakespeare continues to portray Cleopatra as a divided self, presenting her sometimes departure from femaleness as she forays into roles of the manly woman who at the same time is faint-hearted. In an uncharacteristic show of soldiering she demands that the battle between Caesar and Antony for Egypt be fought at sea. Like Desdemona she is an untried soldier:

Sink Rome, and their tongues rot
 That speak against us! A charge we bear I'th' war,
 And as the president of my kingdom will
 Appear there for a man. Speak not against it.
 I will not stay behind. (3.7.19-23)

No sooner does the battle begin than Scarus reports to Enobarbus, “The breeze upon her like a
 cow in June, / Hoists sails and flies” (3.10.17-18). Her departure shows that she lacks that
 which Antony possessed up until then, “Experience, manhood, [and] honor,” qualities that
 Scarus accused Antony of squandering in a disgraceful manner as “did violate so itself”
 (3.10.27-28).

Cleopatra and Antony mirror each other in their display of rage after the two receive
 news that they do not wish to hear. In a similar fit of rage in Act Three, when Thidias brings a
 message to Antony from Caesar proclaiming himself as “One that but performs / The bidding of
 the fullest man and worthiest / To have command obeyed” (3.13.107-109), Antony departs from
 his usual controlled behavior as he commands his servants:

Approach there!—Ah, you kite!—Now, gods and devils,
 Authority melts from me. Of late when I cried “Ho!”
 Like boys unto a muss kings would start forth
 And cry “Your will?” Have you no ears? I am
 Antony yet. (3.13.111-115).

This response from Anthony is very unlike his usual behavior with his inferiors. In the first act
 of the play, upon hearing the news that Fulvia was dead he responds to the messenger: “Things
 that are past are done, with me. 'Tis thus / Who tells me true, though in his tale like death, / I

hear him as he flattered” (1.2.104-106). Antony shows wisdom and understanding as he learns of Fulvia’s death. This earlier behavior contradicts his present where he flies in a rage and punishes a servant. This new display of irate behavior is more like Cleopatra’s and it suggests that Antony’s earlier manliness is waning.

Antony’s and Cleopatra’s relationship is unpredictable at best. Antony makes promises to Cleopatra before leaving for Rome which he does not keep:

Hear me, queen:

The strong necessity of time commands

Our services awhile, but my full heart

Remains in use with you...

My more particular,

And that which most with you should save my going,

Is Fulvia’s death. (1.3.52-68).

He leaves his full heart, his “inward” man with Cleopatra while he transports his “outward” man to Rome and willingly presents that self to Octavia. His contradictory behavior mirrors not only Cleopatra’s but also that of his inferiors, such as Enobarbus, who rejects Antony at the end of that same act—“I will seek / Some way to leave him” (3.13..241-242)—contradicting his earlier resolve. As a woman, Cleopatra is expected to be fickle, but as a Roman soldier Antony is expected to be firm and unwavering. Before Antony returns to Rome upon the death of Fulvia, he tells Enobarbus that he must get Cleopatra’s permission to leave Egypt: “I shall break / The cause of our expedience to the Queen / And get her leave to part” (1.2.193-195). Such a request is a mere formality between the two and heightens their love relationship, but it also shows Antony’s unmanly bending to the will of a woman. Later in the play Enobarbus’ decision to

leave Antony and join Caesar's camp stems from his disgust with Antony's seeming lack of manliness when he allows Cleopatra to make decisions that a woman should not.

Influenced by his culture of female subjugation, Enobarbus provides the audience with a patriarchal view of early modern English society. He sees Cleopatra as a force that weakens Antony through her sexuality. When Antony says that she is cunning, Enobarbus replies:

Alack, sir, no, her passions are made of

Nothing but the finest part of pure love. (1.2.162-163)

To Antony's regret that he had ever seen her, Enobarbus responds, "O, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work, which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel" (1.2.169-171). Enobarbus is a part of the reason why Antony and Cleopatra fail to achieve the intimacy that they seek in their relationship. Enobarbus' misogynistic attitude towards Cleopatra stems from his beliefs that she is not, as a dark/tawny skinned woman, a part of the war culture in which she participates. Fulvia's whiteness allows her to participate as a "near equal" in a male theatre of war. Fulvia's death is mourned by no one in the play, but she is blamed for disruptions in friendships and alliances. Elizabeth's only presence in war was to give moral support to her soldiers prior to their departure to the battlefield, even as she declared herself an able soldier. Enobarbus sees Cleopatra as an impediment to Antony's success and as a leech that sucks sustenance from Antony's better parts. He complains: "Your presence needs must puzzle Antony / Take from his heart, take from his brain, from's time / What should not then be spared" (3.7.13-15). Enobarbus craves those spaces for himself as an ally in the war against Caesar. Anthony, however, crowds those spaces with intimate thoughts of Cleopatra as he goes to war, because they can sustain him. His action in the height of battle proves that she is his intimate, better self. When she leaves the battlefield on the high seas to return to her castle

he follows her, not because he is a coward (he has proven himself in many battles) but because she sustains him. Their love is a uniting force and they are both acutely aware of this.

As a soldier, Enobarbus does not understand the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. He is an outsider looking in and his interference will help to destroy their intimacy. He responds to Antony's request for loyalty from his men for the last time:

What mean you, sir,
 To give them this discomfort? Look, they weep,
 And I, an ass, am onion-eyed. For shame,
 Transform us not to women. (4.2.44-47)

He sees women as the weaker sex not to be envied by men.

Caesar describes Antony to Octavia as a weak man:
 No, my most wrongèd sister. Cleopatra
 Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire
 Up to a whore, who now are levying
 The kings o' th' earth for war. (3.6.75-78)

Cleopatra's "nodd[ing] him to her" (3.6.75-76), betrays what the soldiers of Rome think of Antony and his relationship with Cleopatra. Caesar believes that "He hath given his empire / Up to a whore" (3.6.76-77), but what is more important is that Caesar involves himself in Antony's intimate relationships with his women.

There is always already a cultural gulf between Antony and Cleopatra and while they may not recognize it, Caesar and Enobarbus do. In attempt to bring Antony back into the manly Roman fold, Caesar abruptly arranges a marriage between his sister and Antony: "There's my hand. / A sister I bequeath you whom no brother / Did ever love so dearly" (2.2.179-181). This

“hand” that Caesar offers to Antony is a left “hand” that is not necessarily given with the best of intentions, but is the hand that is offered for the ring in marriage. But it might also be concluded that since Caesar claims that he loves Octavia “so dearly,” then her left hand might well be a right hand because Caesar’s intentions are not well-intended and he means to destroy Antony, so the proffer of the left “hand” to Antony is the correct hand to give to one who is an enemy.

Not only does Antony betray his intimacy with Cleopatra through a public marriage to Octavia, he sees Cleopatra as one with Egypt and he personifies Egypt in her. When Alexas brings her greetings from Antony, it is an intimate yet politically charged message:

“Good friend,” quoth he,
 “Say the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
 This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,
 To mend the petty present, I will piece
 Her opulent throne with kingdoms. All the East,
 Say thou, shall call her mistress.” (1.5.49-55)

At other times, Antony’s internalization of Roman cultural “othering” of Egypt and its people surfaces in his objectification of Cleopatra, his treating her as a sex toy and a playmate:

Now for the love of Love, and her soft hours,
 Let’s not confound the time with conference harsh.
 There’s not a minute of our lives should stretch
 Without some pleasure now. What sport tonight? (1.2.50-54)

Stirred by Cleopatra, he suggests that they waste no time outside of “pleasure” and “sport” when they are together. Knowing that the span of time and space between winning and losing the inevitable war with Caesar is short, and he wants to make the most of his time with Cleopatra.

What Antony and Cleopatra enjoy is less true intimacy than sexual “sport” that is publicly discussed by Romans. It is known that they spend their nights in revelry and go to bed in the wee hours of the morning intoxicated by their drinking and licentiousness. Pompey elucidates for Menas what takes place in Egypt:

But all the charms of love,
 Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!
 Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both;
 Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts;
 Keep his brain fuming. Epicurean cooks
 Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
 That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honor
 Even till a Lethe'd dullness--. (2.1.25-32)

For Romans, Egypt is a “libertine” culture that encourages excessive love-making, intoxication through the liberal intake of alcohol, and spicy foods that whet the appetite and encourage luxury day and night. Like the other Romans, Antony projects this view of Egypt, inviting Cleopatra:

Come,
 Let's have one other gaudy night. Call to me
 All my sad captains. Fill our bowls once more.
 Let's mock the midnight bell. (3.13.221-224)

Pompey scorns such a place because it lacks seriousness and detracts from “honor.” Antony distances himself from the culture of war in Rome so that he can enjoy the “brazen din” and drink to “the next day’s fate.” He aligns himself with the Bakhtinian culture of carnival in Egypt, where the high becomes low, and everything is inverted (Bakhtin 5-27).

Prior to his Egyptian encounter with Cleopatra, Antony proved himself to be a superior soldier in numerous battles alongside Caesar. Once he has been emasculated by Cleopatra, his marriage to Fulvia fails because she wears men's apparel fighting wars like her husband. His subsequent marriage to Octavia proves to be a failure as well, because of his adulterous relationship with Cleopatra. He distances himself from Roman-styled marriages where women are reported to be subservient to their husbands, and cleaves to an Egyptian arrangement where women like Cleopatra appear to be co-equals in their relationships with men. These intimate relationships are difficult for Antony, because he is attending to two different cultures at the same time. He has children with both Octavia and Cleopatra on two different continents. Each of these relationships, politically and militarily overshadowed, also evolve under different cultural expectations. Like the biblical Babel with all of its conflicting languages, Antony's relationships with his wives and mistress create internal conflict that result in him making poor military and private choices. Additionally, Antony seems to occupy a space between Rome and Egypt. He belongs to himself and seems to fit in neither space.

Antony seems best suited to the theatre of war where he leaves his mark before the battle on the Nile, and his earlier fame precedes him. Pompey talks of his coming to Rome after Fulvia's death:

Menas, I did not think
 This amorous surfeiter would have donned his helm
 For such a petty way. His soldiership
 Is twice the other twain. (2.1.39-42)

Antony's "twice" divided "soldiership" is seen by Caesar as a marked change from his intimate relationship with Cleopatra. Caesar buries Antony's past valor beneath Antony's imagined

conquest by love. However, upon Antony's death Caesar laments:

The breaking of so great a thing should make
 A greater crack. The round world
 Should have shook lions into civil streets
 And citizens to their dens. The death of Anthony
 Is not a single doom; in the name lay
 A moiety of the world. (5.117-22)

Caesar describes Antony as a valiant and tried soldier loving him in death in the same manner that Antony portrayed upon the news of Fulvia's death. It is in Antony's death that Caesar finds some semblance of intimacy with him. "The round world" called upon to shake "lions into civil streets / And citizens in their dens" symbolizes for Caesar Antony's greatness. His relationship with Antony, though tumultuous, and based on Roman manliness, failed to endure during Antony's lifetime because Roman culture did not create spaces in relationships for overt, intimate display. Any such behavior must be publicly condemned and punished as Enobarbus and Caesar showed. In the end, after his death, Caesar forgives Antony for his failings, as a manly Roman should.

Throughout the play Antony is divided between his "inward" and "outward" man. This is apparent in numerous missteps he takes in his intimate relationships. Inwardly he struggles to be himself, a man in love with Cleopatra. Outwardly he finds himself in a relationship that puts him outside of the cultural realm of Cleopatra and Egypt. As he struggles to ready himself for battle he calls for his man Eros to help with his amour. Cleopatra offers her help and he refuses explaining: "Thou art / The armorer of my heart. False, false. This, this!" (5.5.9-10). This contradictory speech reflects his inner turmoil. Undoubtedly, no one can know his inner feelings

so it is left to Antony to tell what he feels. When he expresses his feelings to Cleopatra, the audience is led to believe that he prefers the culture under which Egyptian women function than his own Roman culture. Antony understands that his “wrangling queen” is one with her country and she displays a softer side of humanity that is alien to Caesar’s Rome.

Despite the pleasure in which he immerses himself in Egypt, Antony understands Cleopatra’s need to protect and defend her country. He is prepared to help her because their happiness is entwined. Advising her on the state of Egypt he explains:

Quarrel no more, but be prepared to know
 The purposes I bear, which are or cease
 As you shall give th’ advice. By the fire
 That quickens Nilus’ slime, I go from hence
 Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war
 As thou affects. (1.379-84)

He shares power with her and he offers her the opportunity to affect political decisions.

The position that Antony takes in the matter of the war is bold and does not make him look like the “dissolving warrior” that Laura Levine describes when she argues that, like the eunuch, “Antony’s captain heart” is becoming the “bellows and the fan / To cool a gypsy’s lust.” Rather, Antony fights his compatriots’ desire to unman him because he engages in Egyptian cultural practices. Enobarbus trades barbs with him as he prepares to leave Egypt for Rome reminding him: “the business you have broached here cannot be without you, especially that of Cleopatra’s which wholly depends on your abode” (1.2.189-191). He represses the reality that Cleopatra was a “third-hand” mistress who had intimate sexual affairs with his predecessors. He tells Cleopatra: “I found you as a morsel cold upon / Dead Caesar’s trencher; nay, you were a

fragment / Of Gneius Pompey's" (3.13.146-148). More importantly, he fights his own personal wars against his conscience as he leaves Cleopatra in Egypt and attempts to make peace in Rome aligning himself with Caesar, Lepidus and Rome:

As nearly as I may
 I'll play the penitent to you. But mine honesty
 Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power
 Work without it. Truth is that Fulvia,
 To have me out of Egypt, made wars here,
 For which myself, the ignorant motive, do
 So far ask pardon as befits mine honor
 To stoop in such a case. (2.2.110-117)

But all of Antony's attempts at reconciling his differences fail because he lacks intimacy. At every he turns that he makes, there is someone watching him. Making peace with Caesar because of Fulvia's military transgression proves futile. In asking Caesar "pardon" he "stoop[s] in such a case" only to be rebuffed by Caesar who has already been briefed on Antony's behavior in Egypt.

Like Antony, Cleopatra carves out her own space in the relationship. It is a bifurcated relationship where she rules on one hand and chooses to be ruled on the other. Boundaries between the two are drawn and redrawn to accommodate their changing needs. Cleopatra is as political as she is feminine. Her love for Antony is strengthened by her loyalty to him:

Who's born that day
 When I forget to send to Antony
 Shall die a beggar.—Ink and paper, Charmian.—

Welcome, my good Alexas.—Did I, Charmian,
 Ever love Caesar so? (1.5.74-78).

Her intimate relationship with Antony would have raised some serious questions in the audience's minds. With the memory of Elizabeth as the "Virgin Queen," Cleopatra's displaying her open sexuality on stage must have caused some concern in a culture that hazarded so much on female chastity. Before the play begins, Cleopatra has already had two Roman lovers, Pompey and Caesar. She has a son from Caesar, Caesarion, and she has children from Antony. Her difference would have also been problematic to the audience because as Kim Hall explains, gender is a "primary site for the production of blackness" and "female bodies serve as the testing ground for the symbolic boundaries of culture and race." (101). Cleopatra's darkness therefore is an articulation of the racial fears often realized by early moderns. It participates in what Hall describes as "rhetorical miscegenation," often discussed in the writings of the period such as Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* in terms of the dark/fair dichotomy and Jonson's *Masque of Blackness*. Karen Horney also addresses this issue:

At any given time, the more powerful side will create an ideology suitable to help maintain its position and to make this position acceptable to the weaker one. In this ideology the differentness of the weaker one will be interpreted as inferiority, and it will be proven that these differences are unchangeable, basic, or God's will. It is the function of such ideology to deny or conceal the existence of a struggle.

(35)

I agree with Horney that this "differentness" in the play translates into inferiority in Cleopatra. Her brown skin and agency is performed in direct contrast to Octavia's cultural acceptance of the *status quo*.

Dympna Callaghan writes that “woman is constructed as simultaneously central and yet tangential to the tragic action. Woman in tragedy is a site of both ambivalence and contradiction” (*Women* 55). While Cleopatra does display “both ambivalence and contradiction” she also shows political will and cultural knowledge of female learned behavior:

See where he is, who’s with him, what he does.

I did not send you. If you find him sad,

Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report

That I am sudden sick. Quick, and return. (1.3.3-6)

This is a strategy through which she hopes to win sympathy with Antony and bring him back to her, but Cleopatra’s performance is construed by Philo and Enobarbus only as female, weak, and seductive. Cleopatra must navigate a man’s world both within her relationship with Antony and the political world. She rejects the Elizabethan notion that women must sacrifice those sexual desires in favor of greatness and society’s endorsement.

As a soldier she tells Enobarbus that in spite of his misgivings she will take part in the war: “I will be even with thee, doubt it not. . . Why should not we / Be there in person?” (3.7.1-7). She knows that she has “power” over Antony and that inwardly he belongs to her. While the audience might choose to interpret her leaving the battle scene between Rome and Egypt, ahead of Antony, as the tide turns against them, as female weakness, it might well be that should the battle end victorious for Egypt, she wants the fame to be Antony’s. It is unfortunate that her flight cost Antony the war, his stature in the eyes of his men and Caesar, and a temporary rift in their relationship. Antony’s leaving the battlefield, however, shows weakness as he cries: “All is lost! / This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me” (4.12.11-12).

As Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra engages feminine charm with her political opponent,

Caesar, to actualize her agency. She charms Caesar with her low bow and her superfluous greetings: “Sole sir o’ th’ world” (5.2.149). He, too, “words” her but she comes out the victor of the event: “He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not / Be noble to myself” (5.2.230-231). She promptly arranges her demise: “I am again for Cydnus / To meet Mark Antony” (5.2.278-279). Dash explains:

Perceptive, uncompromising, she achieves her goal. A political person as well as a woman of genius, she has no difficulty convincing the guard to allow the Clown with the basket of figs—and the asp—to enter. She suggests the potential for women if they could have self-sovereignty and function as complete people, not in a sexless world or a world where, like Queen Elizabeth, they must choose between marriage and career, but in a world where true mutuality might exist between men and women. (247)

Cleopatra’s agency is assured in Egypt because she is Queen of Egypt and she remains in control of her sovereignty throughout the play. Romans see her as a sexually, provocative female, she portray herself as a wife, “Husband, I come!” (5.2.287). Cleopatra refuses to be portrayed in Rome by some “squeaking” boy who publicly presents “i’th posture of a whore” (5.2.267-268).

Compared to Cleopatra, Octavia has no agency. The culture of female subjugation is evident in the manner in which Caesar takes care of her welfare. Although she is a widow, she is married off to Antony before she is even acquainted with him. Caesar tells Antony:

There’s my hand
A sister I bequeath you whom no brother
Did ever love so dearly. (2.2.179-181)

She is incapable of defending herself. In contrast to Cleopatra, Octavia’s willingness to be

subjected as a woman is unappealing to Antony making it difficult for him to desire intimacy with her. When Caesar announces to her that Antony is with Cleopatra in Egypt and not in Athens as she suggested, she chooses to respond to his threats of war instead:

Ay me, most wretched,
That have my heart parted betwixt two friends
That does afflict each other! (3.6.87-89)

Octavia appears in a more favorable light in Dryden's *All For Love*. In that play she travels with their children to Egypt to confront Antony and Cleopatra. Here she does have some agency although she achieves nothing by her visit.

In the end, the carnival culture in Egypt can not sustain the affront from the warlike Roman culture. The "riggerish" Cleopatra, unused to battle, flees the war theatre leaving Antony to founder and follow in her stead: "All is lost! / This foul Egyptian hath betrayèd me" (4.12.11-12). All is lost at sea between Antony and Caesar, but not in the palace between Antony and Cleopatra. He participates in Egyptian culture until his death. Cleopatra apologizes:

O my lord, my lord,
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought
You would have followed. (3.12.57-59)

Antony responds:

Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by th' strings. (3.12.60-61)

The intimate union between Antony and Cleopatra is evident in their final speeches. Antony admits that his heart is to Cleopatra's "rudder tied by th' strings" and that she knows this. Her apology, "forgive my fearful sails," betrays her womanhood even as she braves the battlefield in

support of Antony. Finally and tragically, Cleopatra turns out to be more than “a morsel, cold upon / Dead Caesar’s trencher,” and more than “a fragment / Of Gnaeus Pompey’s” (3.13.146-148). She dies as Antony’s “better half” even as she questions his intimate knowing of her: “Not know me yet?” (3.13.193). Their relationship is not without complication especially when Cleopatra is not sure that Antony knows her love and her loyalty to him. Othello and Mark Antony take their lives as a result of their wives’ death. The circumstances are different but at the heart of the four deaths is the lack of intimacy that informs a marital relationship. Early modern marriages within the two plays lack spaces where couples could be truly intimate and in its stead we find places that are at cultural variance with each other, leading to the demise of the protagonists.

Egypt and Rome are cultural opposites in the play. Subordinating one culture as inferior and making the other superior undermines the intimate relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. Cleopatra’s performance presents us with an understanding of her inwardness or “essence of self” as an Egyptian queen. Her relationship with Antony gives the reader a picture of a woman who is as manipulative as she is sensuous. Both Cleopatra and her land are conquered by Romans who consider Egyptians and their country culturally inferior. Like a female body, Egypt is considered a feminine land to be conquered and ruled by Rome with its imperialist values and cold relationships. Antony is invigorated by Cleopatra’s open and inviting displays of sexuality and gaiety. The relationships in the two plays are resolved in death when the husbands finally understand their wives and are prepared to die for them.

Chapter Four

Intimacy and the Public Realm

In this chapter I explore how the public realm frustrates the development of intimacy for the characters in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Based on contemporary notions of privacy, the early modern aristocratic household, including palaces and castles such as that of the Duchess of Malfi and Cleopatra, functioned as private residences, but because the residents of those households were political figures, their lives were deemed public. Also, the presence of numerous servants and supporters within great households rendered such spaces open to public scrutiny. Under these conditions, intimacy becomes paradoxical and almost unattainable. In what follows, I examine how public spaces affect intimacy in the two plays, paying particular attention to the roles Antony, Cleopatra, and the Duchess of Malfi play as political figures and heads of state as they develop relationships with their partners. For the Duchess and Cleopatra, attempts at establishing intimacy are thwarted by men who abuse patriarchal powers to control the sexuality and lives of women.

Because their homes function as public spaces as well, the Duchess and Cleopatra are able to achieve only limited intimacy with their partners. These two women behave as private citizens within their households, maintaining their political positions while cultivating personal, romantic relationships. The Duchess and Cleopatra have young families with whom they share their lives while navigating the many hurdles established by cultural expectations of femininity. Both women believe in their individual agency and their capability to function as political leaders and heads of household. Generally, women in the early modern period were not envisaged as power brokers; instead, they were expected to conform to the dictates of society. Even women who did achieve positions of authority were expected to perform roles of

nurturing mothers in order to survive. Queen Elizabeth proved to be an exception to this norm as she demonstrated in her refusal to marry in favor of political leadership. Leadership and motherhood were seen as competing roles for women. Hence Lisa Jardine argues that the Duchess of Malfi performs as a “stereotypical nurturing mother...stripped of dynastic power” (82), while Wendy Wall writes that the Duchess “uses tragic maternalism to pit a newly affirmed family life in opposition to a sordid public life” (“Spoonful” 49). Both Jardine and Wall acknowledge that women were placed in a position where maternalism was favored over politics.

Instead of focusing on maternalism in the plays, my aim in this chapter is to show that privacy is elusive because the public sphere derives its significance from the fact that acknowledging a person’s intimate life, publicly, is necessary for such privacy. The situation is paradoxical because on the one hand individuals want to shield their private life from public view while at the same time they want their personal, private, intimate conditions such as chastity to be acknowledged by the public. Members of the public also had the right to keep watch over their neighbors to enforce societal rules. I will begin by examining Webster’s play, *The Duchess of Malfi*. The Duchess, as a public, female figure, is expected to behave in a chaste manner. She is dependent on her brothers for moral, political, and social guidance. According to her culture, she must wait for her brothers to find her a suitable husband although she is a widow, and by right, an independent woman. But, in reality, the Duchess is not as independent as she would like to believe. Contrary to her own desires but in accordance with societal beliefs and practices, her brothers own her. She must content herself with the limited autonomy that her titles afford her and accept her brothers’ control and public intrusion, all of which are meant to safeguard her chastity and good name. The Duchess must struggle for privacy and intimacy in her private life because of the constraints placed upon her as a widow. Her political title does

not provide her with the same authority that her brothers Ferdinand and the Cardinal enjoy and she resists those constraints.

Contrary to her brothers' understanding of women's role in society and their limited power in political rule, the Duchess mistakenly believes that her title entitles her to the privilege of a private domestic life. She also believes that she has power. Although her brothers attempt to divest her of any thoughts of personal agency, the Duchess privately marries Antonio in an act that exposes her to public scrutiny. She mistakenly believes that she has the agency to create a private, domestic realm. Contrary to those beliefs her home is viewed and utilized as a public space by her brothers and members of her household staff. She is under constant surveillance by her brothers and by their agent, Bosola, and is held up for public scrutiny by her ever watchful staff and the general public. According to Lee Bliss, the Duchess attempts to "establish a private sphere, a world of intimate relationships and family concerns to which she can devote herself as a private individual" (140). I will add to Bliss' argument that the Duchess is incapable of defining public and private and as a result she blurs the two making it easy for servants like Bosola to invade her "privacy." Her attempts prove to be unsuccessful because public figures are the source of public news.

Since her body is subject to be policed by all, the Duchess' home is, in effect, a public realm that does not lend itself to intimacy. There is constant surveillance within and without the palace and this puts the young Duchess in a defenseless position which also opens her to public ridicule when she chooses a suitor. She is a shrewd individual, as she demonstrates in her careful orchestration of her marriage ceremony but, she is not shrewd enough. While she might be intimate with the practices of her society and is partially aware of the intrusive nature of her subjects, as she attempts to separate her private life from her public life she is not equipped with

the kind of intelligence and surveillance that is necessary to keep secrets in such a large and open household. Theodora Jankowski argues that the Duchess' withdrawal into the private realm is a "remarkable political move" as she attempts to separate her political, public self from her private domestic being. I argue that the Duchess fails in her attempt to achieve such privacy because she is a woman. Such a move, while it might augur well for her political leadership, does not help her in her private life. In making that "remarkable political move," the Duchess also raises suspicion among her subjects and her brothers. Moreover, the constant flow of "outsiders" and courtiers into the palace makes it a dangerous place for such a "remarkable political move." Because of its numerous functions, the palace is a public realm and a dangerous place to keep secrets.

In her struggle to keep her marriage a secret, the Duchess exercises her will as she carves out a space within the palace that she attempts to seclude from public access and public view. She vocalizes her will to her maid Cariola: "If all my royal kindred / Lay in my way unto this marriage, / I'd make them my low footsteps" (1.1.341-343). She asserts her will as a widow in defiance of her brothers' will that she be chaste and circumspect. She fails to understand that she serves as her brother's "low footsteps," because she has long internalized their oppression and does not see it as such. She muses:

Even in this hate, as men in some great battles,
 By apprehending danger, have achieved
 Almost impossible actions—I have heard soldiers say so—
 So I, through frights and threat'nings, will assay
 This dangerous venture. Let old wives report
 I winked and chose a husband. (1.1.344-349)

The Duchess mans herself in “this dangerous adventure,” comparing her resolve to that of soldiers. Her war metaphors are apt in her “dangerous” battle against her brothers. But her power comes not from public displays of physical prowess, but from private speech acts. As Lorna Hutson explains, “the power of eloquence is dramatized as a form of social agency which is demonically oblivious to the material and emotional significance of the bonds of love” (1). Her power can be interpreted as private, in her relationship with Antonio because, publicly, she has no power. The Duchess’s “wink[ing]” amounts to a blind spot in her personal agency. This blind spot or pause in thought allows her to imagine that she has agency. It gives her a false sense of security which, in turn, leads to flawed judgment. The Duchess thus becomes emboldened by her newfound “apprehending” of “danger,” entering a new married life with her steward, Antonio. The love that she bears Antonio helps to override her fear of her brothers and their ability to punish her should she fail to follow their instructions. The social agency that Hutson talks about is mere imagination and is fleeting because “old wives reports” are born of public discourse that is, in turn, threatening to the individuals.

To further actualize what she deems to be her new-found agency the Duchess privately writes her will in favor of Antonio and their children, should she come to an early demise—“I am making my will (as ’tis fit princes should)” (1.1.375)—but her personal and political will is constrained by her gender. Her will must be made public in order for it to have any importance to the inheritors. Pointing out that she has will because she enjoys the kind of princely authority that is usually invested in men, the Duchess believes that she has power. Like Elizabeth I, she calls herself prince. Unlike Queen Elizabeth, however, the Duchess is a female prince with limited agency. She does not have the same powers that Elizabeth enjoyed, neither does she have the wit that Elizabeth displayed. As a sister, widow, and shortly as a wife and mother, the

Duchess does not enjoy the full privileges of princely power. She makes her will surreptitiously, as she makes her marriage privately. For her political will to be truly effective, this private act would have to become public. The private provisions that she make for Antonio and her children might well be a farce, because her brothers are able to challenge her will. For example, at the beginning of the play Ferdinand discourages her from marrying again: “Marry! They are most luxurious/ Will wed twice” (1.1.297). The Duchess rejects his suggestion—“Will you hear me? / I’ll never marry” (1.1.302)—but as her brother, and in the absence of a father or husband, Ferdinand exerts the right to supervise her body, despite her nominal status as prince.

Misunderstanding the power that she is granted by virtue of her title, the Duchess unsettles the palace through her willful marriage to Antonio, her steward. She distorts public constructions of the patriarchal household by appropriating to herself manliness and resistance to male authority. She thus displays her internal “will” outwardly as a form of ambiguous domestic and political authority by marrying Antonio. The Duchess takes upon her self the masculine “authority, the intentionality, the will in a sense analogous to Hegel’s *Zweck*, Augustine’s *arbitrium*, Luther’s *Wille* and *Williglichkeit*, that we have come to ascribe to Shakespeare” (Freinkel xxii). When the Duchess insists that she “will assay / This dangerous venture” of marriage to her social inferior, she refuses to accept that she is subject to her brothers’ authority. Her disregard for authority will result in her failure to successfully negotiate the boundaries between private and public.

To some extent, of course, the Duchess understands her brothers’ power as patriarchal lords, and acknowledges their powers as such, especially since she is a royal, public figure. She both admits and questions Ferdinand’s imposition of his will upon her freedom: “Why should only I, / Of all the other princes of the world, / Be cased up, like a holy relic? I have youth, / And

a little beauty” (3.2.137-139). Her acknowledgement that she is “cased up” despite having “youth, / And a little beauty” suggests isolation more than it does privacy, and promotes the idea that she is aware of her limiting powers and circumstances. It is because she understands the limitations of gender on her power that she marries in secret, without her brothers’ permission. Her request to Ferdinand for privileges as a “prince” is well within her rights, because, as I mentioned earlier, during the period widows had control over their bodies and property. Public custom supports the Duchess’ claim to sovereignty. According to T.E., author of *The Law’s Resolution of Womens’ Rights*, women should rejoice when they become widows:

Consider how long you have been in subjection vnder the predominance of parents, of your husbands, now you be free in libertie, & free *proprii iuris* at your owne Law, you may see... That maidens and wiues vowes made vpon their soules to the Lord himselfe of heaven and earth, were all disauowable and infringible, by their parents or husbands...But the vow of a widow, or of a woman diuorced, no man had power to disallow of, for her estate was free from controlment.

However, Ferdinand is a patriarchal tyrant with no desire to entertain ideas that “her estate was free from controlment.” The laws concerning women’s rights were public knowledge; therefore both Ferdinand and the Cardinal are aware of them. However, Ferdinand resists these laws and his sister’s desire for sovereignty. The Duchess’ understanding of her status as a widow is at odds with her brothers’ insistence on controlling her and she ignores their demands for “controlment.” The brothers ignore these laws preferring to deny the Duchess her “rights.” Instead, the two decide that she belongs to them and they insist on “disavowing” those rights.

The Duchess’ performance of desire for rights as a prince evolves in a domestic setting, a reflection of her subordinate status as a woman. Webster creates no public performance roles for

the Duchess that shows her capabilities as a ruler. She is presented to the audience as an ineffective ruler. According to Catherine Belsey, “[d]omestic relationships are defined as affective rather than political in a discourse which works to suppress recognition of the power relations which structure the family” (*Subject* 196-199). It is clear that the Duchess’ roles as a “prince” and head of household are neither powerful nor political. Webster presents her as an early modern woman with a title but no benefits from her title. Public discourse remains in the domain of discourse rather than action. She is talked about by her brothers, servants, husband and subjects but, not as an active monarch. Much of her confusion as a “prince” stems from the ambiguous nature of her political role. Her apparent power in the play is, therefore, imaginary and is played out within the domestic realm.

Ferdinand’s claim to know that there are “some virgins / That are witches” suggests that he is aware that the Duchess is ascribing to herself powers that are outside of the legitimate female realm (3.2.140). Unlike “virgins,” “witches” have extraordinarily transgressive powers. The Duchess must reconcile herself to the fact that under a patriarchal system that would classify all women as either virgins or witches, she has limited agency and must accept patriarchal rules that guide and control domestic spaces. But, as we already know, the Duchess refuses to accept those rules. Her creation of a path for her independent spirit sets a precedent in *Malfi*, in the play and for early modern women in England, as she unsettles the constructions of the early modern household and its inherent patriarchal rule. Her behavior brings the royal household of Amalfi into public disrepute, not unlike Isabella who defamed women in Thomas Middleton’s play *Women Beware Women*.

The Duchess carves out for herself a private life outside of what Frank Whigham describes as “Ferdinand’s enclosure, [where] she also seizes self-definition, reaching out not only

past the interdicted purity of her own family but beyond the frontiers of her own rank, to marry her admirable steward” (201). Whigham’s argument overlooks the fact that the Duchess, by choice, marries her steward even after her brother offers to find her a suitable spouse within her social rank. Her bold move, despite her understanding of her brother’s power is remarkable for one so young. Resolute in her conviction that she is a “prince” with power the Duchess is willing to risk all as she prepares to defend her actions to her brother. Upon his arrival at her palace she reads Ferdinand’s countenance and is aware that her secret life is now public knowledge. Her question to Ferdinand upon his entrance to her private room—“Why might not I marry?” (3.2.109)—displays her level of disregard for customs relating to marriage and female chastity and her knowledge of the rights of widows. Katherine Crawford explains: “[B]ecause women were objects of exchange in marriage and their value was largely in their ability to bear children, women’s bodies were subject to great scrutiny” (3). The Duchess’ marriage to Antonio has not only lowered her status and property/body value, it is also an affront to her brothers’ patriarchal right to choose a spouse for her. The “scrutiny” that she attempted to evade during her pregnancy under her large smocks was merely one part of her marriage plan. The Duchess hopes to keep her entire married life away from public “scrutiny” while she and Antonio defraud the public about the true status of the Duchy. Since her subjects will be responsible in some way for the support and upkeep of the Dukedom, keeping the general public in ignorance, away from “great scrutiny” about her marital status and her increase in family is an attempt by the Duchess to surreptitiously impose her will on all. When the Duchess imposes her “will” and marries Antonio, she renders her brothers impotent and her subjects ineffective because she overrules them all.

The Duchess has a very narrow space between her body and her power, and between her body and the public. Because of her status in society her body does not altogether belong to her. Failure on her part to adhere to regulatory private practices means that the public debate that always already surrounds her body remains one of chastity which in her case, evolves into whorishness, as discussed by Ferdinand, the Cardinal and the general public. We learn from Antonio in act three in response to Delio's question, "What say the common people?" (3.1.24), that the "common rabble do directly say / She is a strumpet" (3.1.25). What the Duchess had hoped to keep private becomes public and she is now discussed by all as a fallen "prince." Gossiping servants see and tell all. As an explanation about the public's knowledge, Antonio tells Delio:

Say they,
Great princes, though they grudge their officers
Should have such large and unconfined means
To get wealth under them, will not complain
Lest thereby they should make them odious
Unto the people—for other obligation
Of love, or marriage, between her and me
They never dream of. (3.1.30-37)

There is a hint of admiration for his wife in Antonio's report to his friend—great princes...Of love, or marriage, between her or me / They never dream of." It is a dream for him that the Duchess would condescend to love or marry him, a commoner. Antonio is cognizant of cultural restraints that would inhibit such a relationship. He does not acknowledge that he has hazarded the Duchess's life but looks upon the relationship as a feat because he assumes that they have

been able to keep it a secret from the brothers and the general public. In his desire to share his joy with Delio, Antonio forgets that the state relied on the private household and also distrusted its internal activities. As Lena Cowen Orlin explains, the state “authorized the householder and also deployed the larger community to monitor his domestic conduct; it felt itself endangered by the castle [an emblem of the home] and also exploited the castle for its own purpose” (8). The Duchess, as an independent woman, defies any such community policing of her body. Her brothers take advantage of societal customs to invade their sister’s home and privacy. The Ferdinand and the Cardinal exploit the Duchess by abusing such patriarchal customs that include communal solidarity through their imposition upon her servants to monitor her activities within the private household. Communal monitoring of the Duchess’ behavior moves her from the private realm into the public realm. She succeeds in crossing patriarchal and societal boundaries but, only temporarily.

In crossing social boundaries, the Duchess ignores the practice of communal monitoring as she becomes aggressive and transgressive in her new marriage. She insists that in the case of her marriage to Antonio: “’tis the church / That must but echo this” (1.1.492-493). Her brother, the Cardinal, “echo(s)” this when he questions Ferdinand: “Shall our blood, / The royal blood of Aragon and Castile, / Be thus attainted? (2.5.22-24). The Duchess’s “attainted” body is a “microcosm,” Daileader explains, and as such it is hard for her to evade patriarchal surveillance (7). The Duchess cannot “evade patrimonial surveillance” because, as the audience already knows, Bosola has been assigned the job to police her body. She embodies the state, future, and womanhood—the offspring of her and Antonio’s bodies are expected to rule the Dukedom. But they (their children) will subsequently be denied that privilege because of their “attainted” conception with stripes of bastardy. The public has no knowledge of the Duchess’ young family

that will make it very difficult for them to be accepted as a part of the ruling Duchy. Ferdinand reminds her “For though our national law distinguish bastards / From true legitimate issue, compassionate nature / Makes them all equal” (4.1.36-38). The Cardinal, however, rejects the idea of “equal” in “nature,” because he condemns the Duchess and her children. Public knowledge of her marriage and the subsequent birth of her children are outward confirmations of what the Cardinal describes as a “Cursed creature! / Unequal [in] Nature” (2.5.32-33). For as much as she describes herself as a “prince,” the Duchess is a woman and, like the Biblical Eve, she is subject to patriarchal rule. Her public fall from virtue comes from her transgressive behavior with Antonio.

Ferdinand and the Cardinal, who were once closest to the Duchess’s body, are now the most threatened by her transgression and resistance to patriarchy as she replaces them with Antonio. Having direct access to the Duchess’s body assures a measure of intimate knowledge. While the marriage must be kept a secret, it does not diminish the intimate relationship between the Duchess and Antonio. Unfortunately, the Duchess’ palace is too public a space to contain unsanctioned relationships. Such spaces have been proven, historically, to retard the development of intimacy between couples and are dangerous spaces for their inhabitants. Patricia Fumerton portrays the early modern aristocratic household as a publicly exposed space. But these households’ close attachment to their community encouraged a weakening of the individual and the family structure which in turn strengthened patriarchal rule and the head of household’s authoritarianism against weaker members of the household. Arranged marriages in which the father of the bride gains a son while keeping close control over his daughter left women vulnerable. The family unit ultimately functioned as a public entity with its bodily exchange of sons and daughters (Fumerton 36-39). Unsettling domestic hierarchy, the Duchess

confronts public constructions of the household as she appropriates to herself manliness and resistance to patriarchy.

In her preoccupation with the imposition of her will, which requires keeping her marriage a secret, however, the Duchess forgets that she is a public servant and that her subjects, too, keep surveillance over her body. Subsequently, she fails to notice Bosola's attention to her daily functions and the public's awareness of her new marital status and motherhood. It is Bosola's reading of the Duchess's body as it betrays her sexual activity and resulting pregnancy that takes the relationship between the married couple from the realm of private to public. Lisa Hopkins explains, "The Duchess herself becomes, in Antonio's formulation, a sort of paradigmatic interior in which the absolute consonance between inside and outside means that her body functions not only as a window to her soul but also as a mirror" (21). Beyond this reading of the Duchess' body, a sort of "paradigmatic interior" is the betrayal of not only her body as it swells in betrayal of her fecund secrets, it is also the second sense of sight that Bosola claims for himself. He boasts of tricks that he can use to betray any unlawful behavior by the Duchess. Bosola's observation of her pregnant body is a part of an on-going reading of the Duchess' interior. Her "paradigmatic interior" invites the men who are connected to her to participate in an imaginary form of rape that centers not on sexuality but on her inwardness. Bosola and Ferdinand engage in readings of the Duchess' interior. Ferdinand warns her that he is capable of reading her innermost thoughts: "Your darkest actions—nay, your privat'st thoughts-- / will come to light" (1.1.315-316). He admits that he fantasizes about her sexuality "darkest actions" which would be visible to him in due course. For Bosola and Ferdinand the Duchess' has no real privacy because her outward appearances betray her inwardness.

Cariola's assurance to the Duchess and Antonio that their marriage will be kept a secret: "Both shall be safe / For I'll conceal this secret from the world / As warily as those that trade in poison / Keep poison from their children" (1.1.352-354), is insufficient because her ability to keep secrets is overtaken by Bosola's art, his second sense of reading the Duchess's exterior. By the time we get to the middle of the play Bosola's "poison[ous]" penetrating gaze has made public that which Cariola promises to keep private. If the Duchess's marriage to Antonio needs to be kept a "secret" as Cariola promises to keep it, then it is a form of "poison" that must be kept away from public view. Antonio and the Duchess' marriage is a contaminating force that must be "concealed from the world." It is this "secret" "poison" that Ferdinand fears might corrupt the public realm.

As is consistent with cultural norms, the Duchess' secret marriage to Antonio, once it becomes public, is considered an outrage among the aristocracy. According to Gowing's traditional social historical sources—legal records, cultural songs, popular jokes, personal diaries, and other social materials—early modern structures of surveillance helped in elucidating the general public's understanding of cultural norms, making the Duchess' marriage an act of transgression against those norms. Moreover, John Archer argues that sovereigns as rulers could not share their bodies with their subjects, because:

If the king shared a body with his subjects, then his intelligence was tainted with their corporeality; the imperfect intelligences of both monarch and subject could either supplement or undermine one another. (3)

What Archer describes here is akin to Bosola's second sense of sight. Because Bosola is able to read the Duchess' body only after she copulates with Antonio, the commoner, his intelligence "undermines" her resolve to keep her private life away from public view, and Cariola's promise

to keep the marriage secret. In marrying Antonio, the Duchess undermines her duchy and divests herself of the powers that are inherent in her title. She also pollutes the gene pool for successive dukes and duchesses of Malfi by co-mingling her royal blood with Antonio's non-noble bloodline.

Antonio's success at fathering male heirs to the Duchy of Malfi is as threatening as the attempt of the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven, Mervyn Touchet, to distort early modern laws of inheritance and patrilineage by inciting his servant Giles Broadway to impregnate his daughter-in-law Elizabeth. Had the earl succeeded, he would have disinherited his son by passing on the earldom on to the commoner, Broadway's progeny (Herrup). Antonio's own success at procreation can only be seen as an affront to Ferdinand and other members of the aristocracy because his children are a public representation of his and the Duchess's intimate, social, sexual transgression. Also, he hopes through his marriage to profit from her wealth. He tells her: "I'd have you first provide for a good husband. Give him all" (1.1.387).

As their marriage becomes public knowledge, Antonio is instructed by the Duchess to flee for his life and he is provided for as "a good husband." She gives him instructions to, "Hire a house there. I'll send after you / My treasure and jewels" (3.2.175-176). He is separated from the Duchess and their children as he escapes to Ancona. Once the relationship becomes public, the two no longer share intimacy. They reunite at Ancona but Antonio must once again flee for his life as advised by the Duchess: "I do conjure you / To take your eldest son and fly towards Milan" (3.5.57-58). The marriage disintegrates at this point because there is no safe space for the family in this public setting. The Pilgrims discuss the Duchess' plight as they bear witness to the Cardinal's outrageous banishment of his sister from the state of Ancona and his violent removal of her late husband's wedding ring from her finger: "What was it with such violence he

took / Off from her finger? Twas her wedding ring, / Which he vowed shortly he would sacrifice / To his revenge” (3.4.36-38). The Cardinal’s public exorcism of his sister’s embodiment of power alongside his own resignation of his religious hat marks the end of his supposed brotherly protection over his sister and the beginning of her public persecution and subsequent demise.

The Duchess’ brothers enter the play as her protectors and lords. The two are also emotionally and politically entwined in the affairs of their sister. They project public images of virtue, seemingly abiding by the laws that they help to create, while entertaining a tyrannical approach of patriarchal containment for their sister. Privately, the brothers depart sharply from those same rules as the Cardinal engages in an adulterous affair with Julia, the wife of Lord Castruchio, and Ferdinand desires to control and possess his sister. Contradicting church rules, the Cardinal transgresses in his private affairs by restraining his mistress, Julia, from returning home to her husband. He boasts to her:

You may thank me, lady,
I have taken you off your melancholy perch,
Bore you upon my fist, and showed you game,
And let you fly at it.—I pray thee, kiss me. (2.4.27-30)

Blurring the boundaries of public and private, the Cardinal uses a public image of hawking—showing Julia game for her to fly at—as he cajoles her into committing a private sexual misdeed: “I pray thee, kiss me.” He confesses the games that he plays in his adulterous affair with Castruchio’s wife. Bearing Julia “upon [his] fist” is akin to the precarious “melancholy perch,” a mental space, upon which the brothers place their sister as they play mind and spy games with her sexuality. The Cardinal puts the Duchess up on a “perch” even as he takes Julia down from her “perch” and “show[s] her game.” Hypocritically, he commits adultery while he resists the

notion of his sister copulating, or being “show[n] game.” The Cardinal’s “fist” is also symbolic of his power. He is able to raise Julia up from her status because he is a Cardinal and his relationship with her, although illicit, uplifts her status. Whereas he is able to maintain a public façade that speaks to his eminence, the Duchess is incapable of hiding her pregnancy, making her a public target for dishonor, especially because her husband is a commoner.

The brothers’ public personas as Duke and Cardinal contradict the private vigilante energies to which they subject the Duchess, whose intimate sexual prowess they publicly condemn as transgressive and contrary to cultural mores. Ferdinand’s parting words to the Duchess in Act One, “Farewell lusty widow” (1.1.340), emphasize his imagination of her sexual encounters. They constrain the domestic and conjugal rights of the Duchess, crossing personal boundaries as they reduce her body and her private abode into a stage character and a public theatre. At first, they objectify the Duchess’ body and use it as ocular proof for chaste womanhood: “Let not youth, high promotion, eloquence-- / No, nor anything without the addition, honour, / Sway your high blood” (1.1.295-296). Eventually, they use her body as ocular proof of fallen womanhood: “A sister damned! She’s loose i’ th’/hilts, / Grown a notorious strumpet” (2.5.3). Ferdinand and the Cardinal successfully negotiate the public/private boundaries surrounding the Duchess’ body in a way that the Duchess cannot, because of their patriarchal power.

The Cardinal’s warning to the Duchess at the beginning of the play: “[Y]ou may flatter yourself, / And take your own choice; privately be married / Under the eaves of night” comes to pass and what started out to be a secret for the Duchess becomes public knowledge by the middle of the play (1.1.316-318). The “eaves of night” promise cover for some time, but as the brothers point out to their sister, “Your darkest actions—nay, your privat’st thoughts— / Will come to

light” (1.1.5-6). The Duchess is a prisoner in her home, subjected and schooled by her brothers. Wall explains, “the household in the early seventeenth century was explicitly advertised as the formative site for instituting proper subjection and authority” (Wall, *Staging* 150). But the Cardinal and Ferdinand fail in their mission to keep their sister in a state of perpetual widowhood. The brothers utilize their power as men to subject their sister in her home. The two display extreme anxiety concerning the Duchess’ public image. As their suspicions increase, the brothers feel compelled to make public their demands on their sister on matters of propriety. Their public pronouncements: “[Y]ou are my sister-- / This was my father’s poniard. Do you see? / I’d be loth to see’t look rusty, ‘cause ‘twas his” (I.i.330-332) confirm their distrust of her. Ferdinand and the Cardinal behave like members of the Elizabethan court, which is often described as an intimate atmosphere that policed sexuality as a dominant mode of courtly observation.

Ferdinand’s and the Cardinal’s close watch over their sister’s body is not uncommon in the early modern period. Such scrutiny helped to keep women chaste in order to guard against illegitimate pregnancy. Gowing argues that “the boundaries between women’s bodies and a watchful community were constantly open to question, and the secrets of the body divided women more than they united them” (Gowing 156). Cariola’s promise to keep the Duchess’ and Antonio’s marriage secret is a threat to society. Her participation in the act of keeping the Duchess’ marriage secret helps to perpetuate early modern distrust of women and discourage the idea of women having private spaces for themselves. The bodies of single, aristocratic women were under even closer scrutiny. But the brothers’ particular watch over their sister’s sexual conduct goes beyond what was considered normal during the period and against early modern cultural expectations and notions of moral propriety. (Gowing 65). Also, scrutinizing the female

body to ensure chastity among that group in society “was justified by the imperative to shield the weaker sex from a morally dangerous visibility (Daileader 8). As a widow, the Duchess is entitled to freedom outside of her brother’s patriarchal protection. It is her right, as a young widow, to choose a husband of her liking without the consent of her two brothers. The Cardinal’s and Ferdinand’s insistence on keeping close watch and control over the Duchess’ body place them within the realm of dictators.

The Duchess and her brothers’ public discourse evolves into a public display of opposing “wills.” She will do as she pleases despite their warnings and oppressive imposition: “The misery of us that are born great-- / We are forced to woo, because none dare woo us” (1.1.441-442). She sees herself as having “sovereignty,” which Archer explains “signif[ies] a system of political power organized around the court of a single, personal ruler” (3). To ensure her lack of sovereignty, the brothers subvert structures of hierarchy not so much to maintain custom and order, but to satisfy their “will.” The Cardinal’s lack of honesty reverberates in his public speech to his sister. Ferdinand’s insulting condemnation of the Duchess’ alleged tendency to assign personal agency to herself confirms his anxiety about her “will” and her desire to oppose their command. But Antonio contradicts this notion when he reminds the Duchess during an intimate moment when the Duchess makes her will, “’Twere strange if there were no *will* in you / To marry again” (1.1.390). He sees in her that which her brothers fear: self-will. Ferdinand sees the Duchess’ denial of her desire or “will” to engage in a sexual relationship through early modern cultural beliefs that a woman’s no means yes. Cynthia Garrett points to what amounted to “a fact of English life and literature much earlier, appearing in tales and ballads of the *pastourelle* tradition and in proverbs such as ‘Maids say nay and take it’” (38). She adds that in the period dating from 1590s to 1609, lyrics, tales, and ballads depicted women as sexually

amenable, and in a series of Robert Jones songs women's paradoxical "yeses" were incorporated into female voices "to confirm that women mean 'yes' when they say 'no'" (38). The Duchess' avowal to remain a widow: "Will you hear me? / I'll never marry" (1.1.302), while it is deceptive, it is her right to dissemble. She is participating in cultural practices of her time. Her brothers are aware of these depictions of women and rightfully accuse her of this. Throughout their dialogue with the Duchess, the brothers show no brotherly love or intimacy with their sister. They acknowledge her not as an intimate close relation, but rather as a "thing" to punish and one who must be protected from herself.

On the other hand, the Duchess needs to be protected from her brothers. Their desire to protect her stems from their own selfish needs. Ferdinand visualizes her body as his other half from the womb but without warmth for her. His thoughts of her are incestuous. He acknowledges this publicly to the Cardinal: "O, confusion seize her! / She hath had most cunning bawds to serve her turn" (2.5.7-8). That he imagines his sister engaged in sexual intimacy is a part of a "sickness" that cripples Ferdinand in his search for the "truth" about his sister's sexuality. At the end of the play we will see him laid up then laid out as a result of this sickness that manifests itself in his obsession with the Duchess' chastity. He is submerged in a crisis where he struggles to read the Duchess' body for signs of its secrets—pregnancy and childbirth, the proof of her looseness "i'th' hilts." Bosola proves to have that second sight that Ferdinand hopes to gain. Although Ferdinand does not physically act upon his incestuous desire for his sister, his public vocalization of his thoughts likens him to Giovanni, who has an incestuous relationship with his sister, Annabella, in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Ferdinand covets his sister's body to possess and control her, while simultaneously entertaining lustful desires, as he publicly confides in Bosola: "I would not have her marry again" (1.1.256).

Ferdinand lays claim to his sister's body, in particular her reproductive space, as he allows his imagination to wreak sexual havoc on her potential intimacy. He is fascinated with the reproductive nature of her womb, especially its ability to perform as entrance and exit space. For Ferdinand, there is a parallel between her womb and her palace. Both spaces function as entrance and exit points. He knows intimately that he cannot control her body therefore, he must police her movements. His actions mark the Duchess' body, like her palace, as a part of the public realm. The brothers safeguard her body in a manner that is similar to her palace. She is a "prison[er]" in her body and in her home.

The Duke imprisons his sister's body mentally and physically. He recites his incestuous fascination with his sister's body to the Cardinal:

Methinks I see her laughing---
 Excellent hyena!—Talk to me somewhat, quickly,
 Or my imagination will carry me
 To see her in the shameful act of sin. (2.5.38-41)

This is a public confession in which he has trespassed into that distinguished, well-defined space that separates a brother's body from his sister's. His imaginary simulation of the Duchess engaged "in the shameful act of sin" with a member of the opposite sex is no different from Iachimo's mental assault on Imogen's virginity in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, and Giovanni's incestuous relationship with his sister Annabella in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Ferdinand's predatory imagination of the Duchess's laughter mocks his own "devil[ish]" nature as he struggles to contain his lust for her.

Unlike Ferdinand, the Cardinal views the Duchess's body as titled property that should be managed for its financial gain. As a high ranking Church official, the Cardinal, mindful of his

own adulterous practices, does not want his nefarious deeds concerning his sister known in public for fear that his reputation will be tarnished. While they are discussing the Duchess' behavior, he tells Ferdinand, "Speak lower" (2.5.4). He must be circumspect if he hopes to further his career within the Church. His actions both with the Duchess and with the adulteress Julia are contradictions of who he publicly represents himself to be. But, in the end, the Cardinal does make public his unchristian behavior towards his sister at the shrine of Our Lady at Ancona when he banishes her and removes her ring.

During Ferdinand's confession about his lust for his sister, the Cardinal scolds him "You fly beyond your reason" (2.5.46), but he does not counsel him about his inappropriate thoughts. According to Augustine in his *Confessions*, lust is a horrible sin, and chastity is "a virtue of the mind, and is not lost by rape, but is lost by the intention of sin, even if unperformed" (8.7.16). Augustine's teachings therefore, damns Ferdinand even as he pleads to the Cardinal to distract him from his impure thoughts. He is not sincere in his pleas because in the same moment he continues to admit his fascination with the Duchess' sexual intimacy, alleging that she participates in "the shameful act of sin," "happily with some strong-thighed bargeman" (2.5.43). The word "happily" suggests that he participates mentally in the act, and that his thoughts are also incestuous. His intimate thoughts are focused on the wrong thing. He asks, like Augustine, "*da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modo*": "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet" (*Confessions* 7.7.17). Augustine explains that the speech act—Ferdinand's confessions—should be private. Yet, Ferdinand chooses to openly tell about his lust as he shares his innermost thoughts with the Cardinal. He even pictures men "o'th' woodyard, that can quoit the sledge" in bed with his sister (2.5.44).

The complexity of the brothers' minds, steeped in incestuous thoughts and shameless vulgarity, prove to be a metaphor for the duplicity of their sovereignty. Ferdinand's outwardness, his public confession of his passion for the Duchess, and the Cardinal's lust for his "mistress" Julia, with her "whore's milk" and "whore's blood" (2.5.48-49), are moments of moral decadence and breakdown in the play and, by extension, in society. The brothers choose not to see their own flaws but rather concentrate on the Duchess' attempt at sovereignty. They prefer to ignore her desire for male companionship and family life. Instead, they indulge themselves in games that require extra perception well beyond their human capabilities.

Throughout the play there is an obsession with "seeing." Some characters like the Cardinal, Ferdinand, Bosola, and Antonio talk of seeing beyond the ocular projecting the future, very often the Duchess' that creates an aura of suspense and foreshadowing within the play. Ferdinand, in act one, warns the Duchess that he has foresight and can see that her "darkest actions—nay, your privat'st thoughts-- / Will come to light" (1.1.315). The Duchess advises Antonio "turn your eyes/ And progress through yourself" (1.1.436). Yet, the Duchess, upon whom all eyes are trained, acknowledges to Antonio repeatedly "You have made me stark blind" (1.1.410), and "I now am blind" (1.1.493), a claim that defines her continually all through the play. She displays none of the extra perception that the men around her boast of and her natural sight seems to be dim. She cannot perceive dangers around her in the manner that the men claim to do.

In describing the eye as a visible public space for the inner self, Phillip Barrow writes:

An eye therefore is a member, round, whole, and hard, as the ball of a foote, or as the scowred new bason full of cleare water, set in the well of the head to minister light to the whole body, by the influence of the visible spirits, sent from

fantasticall cell by a sinew that is called *Nervus opticus*, with the helpe of a greater light ministered from without.¹⁵

Barrow's theory of sight alludes to clarity and a dependence upon outward visibility for inward detection. The eye progresses from outward detection to inward refraction resulting in a sense of sight. However, characters like Ferdinand the Cardinal, Antonio and Bosola pretend to inhabit sight beyond Barrow's theory. They lay almost supernatural claim to additional sight that allows them to see the interior before the exterior, which is an act in itself opposite to Barrow's theory. When Antonio suggests to Bosola "I do understand your inside" (2.1.86), he is claiming that he has insight. Bosola professes to similar insight when he says: "So, there's no question but her tetchiness and most vulturous eating of the apricocks are apparent signs of breeding" (2.2.1-2). He is emphatic that from the Duchess' outward appearance and behavior she is pregnant. Later, he reaffirms that he has insights into the Duchess' bodily state when he decides that the noises emanating from the Duchess' lodgings are signs beyond what they portend to be: "I must have part of it; / My intelligence will freeze else" (2.3.5). Bosola believes these noises to be the Duchess' response to her labor pains. The Cardinal suggests to Julia that he would use Galileo's "fantastic glass...To view another spacious world I'th moon/ And look to find a constant woman there" (2.4.16-18). He acknowledges that what he sees in Julia is as distrustful as that which he sees in his sister. "Constant woman" is beyond the naked eye. In order to find it one must possess something additional or external to Barrow's "fantasticall cell." Bosola and the Cardinal "may go read I'th' stars" (3.2.59) that which they are unable to visualize naturally. Ferdinand, too, uses his "imagination" to see beyond the real. When he envisages the Duchess in "the

¹⁵ Philip Barrough. *The Method of Physicke, containing causes, signes and cures of inward diseases in man's body, from the head to the foote.* (1590), p. 49.

shameful act of sin” it becomes a reality to him so much so that he requires his brother’s restraint in order to obliterate the sight from his extra vision.

Engulfed with fear and hatred for his sister’s ability to transcend patriarchal sexual surveillance, Ferdinand shows a lack of the “cleare water” that Barrow discusses as inner light. His eyes become slaves to his passionate obsession with the Duchess, as he engages in a game between his emotions and her lack of real agency. His public outward performances are just that, insincere performances:

Rhubarb, O, for rhubarb
 To purge this choler! Here’s the cursèd day
 O prompt my memory, and here ’t shall stick
 Till of her bleeding heart I make a sponge
 To wipe it out. (2.5.12-15)

He turns his inward man outward with his pronouncements that he wishes to “wipe [it] out” like a “choler.” Understanding the seriousness of his unhealthy, lustful thoughts, Ferdinand wants to purge them from his “memory.” In revealing his thoughts to the Cardinal, Ferdinand moves from the private to the public.

The general public and the aristocracy in particular hold the brothers responsible for keeping their sister within the boundaries of their inner circle. She is a threat to aristocratic culture and tradition, because as a young widow her body is unstable. She is like most early modern women who “like that part which, like the lamprey, / Hath ne’er a bone in’t” (1.1.336-337). It is her woman’s ability, “like the lamprey,” to wiggle her way in and out of Antonio’s patriarchal grip, that causes such anxiety in her brothers. Ferdinand’s response alludes to two things; one, he dismisses the notion of boundary as he violates the Duchess’ personal space, and

two, he wants to be a “strong-thighed bargeman” or a “lovely squire” who wiggles his way into “her privy lodgings”; therefore he denies his sister the right to sexual intimacy.

Without privacy there can be no sexual intimacy for the Duchess and Antonio. Her privacy begins to decrease when Bosola accepts from the Cardinal and Ferdinand the position of secretly surveying her private actions, a position that continually violates the Duchess’ private spaces. The brothers widen the space between themselves and their sister when she is forced to hide her private actions from them. They also retard the growth of intimacy between the Duchess and Antonio, because the couple is forced to conceal their affection privately and publicly. The Duchess’s desire for companionship and sexual intimacy is not surprising because according to Mary Beth Rose, “During the English Renaissance, conjugal loyalty and affection replaced celibacy as the official idealized pattern of heterosexual conduct” (16). My own argument here is that the Duchess does not desire celibacy. Instead, she seeks a life within the bounds of marriage that guarantees her sexual intimacy and procreation. The Duchess idealizes “conjugal loyalty as she demonstrates in her relationship with Antonio: “O, let me shroud my blushes in your bosom, / Since ‘tis the treasury of all my secrets” (1.1502). In an attempt to prevent the Duchess from actualizing her fantasies, her siblings Ferdinand and the Cardinal install Bosola to report on her conduct to them. But such measures prove to be ineffective because the Duchess, as she proves, utilizes her will to actualize her desires. Bosola’s role within the Duchess’ palace is a reactive one that fails the brothers’ original purpose.

Bosola is a public spy, a role that is not uncommon to early modern culture and politics. Describing Queen Elizabeth’s reign, John Archer argues, “The queen solicited information from her mightiest servants, rewarding them with prestige and authority” (5). Webster ascribes this role to Bosola as a part of that courtly tradition. Bosola is just another spy for the duchy. He

takes information from the Duchess's inner chamber to her two brothers, making her private life public. Any information that he takes from the Duchess' palace to her brothers becomes public information, because it is no longer within the Duchess's privacy, but is in the public domain. Any attempt by the Duchess to assume a courtship or relationship with a suitor becomes public knowledge if/when Bosola reports her "haviour" to the Duke. According to Philippe Ariès, during the early modern period, "private was confounded with public," and "the community that defined the boundaries within which the individual moved—whether rural village, town, or urban neighborhood—was a familiar world in which everyone knew and kept an eye on everyone else" (1). Bosola's role within the play, as we already know, is to keep surveillance over the Duchess. Her behavior is not only challenging for her brothers but also for the servant Bosola who is assigned the task of watching her.

In order to penetrate the Duchess' privacy Bosola constantly changes his public appearance which becomes distracting to her. In Act Two, scene one, Bosola performs the role of gardener, offering the Duchess fruit and she begins to trust him. In a public space, the Duchess is unable to conceal her marriage and pregnancy from Bosola's vigilant watch. He muses:

I observe our Duchess
 Is sick o' days, she pukes, her stomach seethes,
 The fins of her eyelids look most teeming blue,
 She wanes i'th' cheek, and waxes fat i'th' flank,
 And (contrary to our Italian fashion)
 Wears a loose-bodied gown—there's somewhat in't!
 I have a trick may chance discover it. (2.1.66-72)

She cannot conceal her outward physical appearance even as she attempts to camouflage it with her “loose-bodied gown.” Her weight gain and pale face are old wives’ signs of pregnancy that confirm Bosola’s suspicion. His observation of her daily nausea is also shrewd, a sign of his second sight, considering that she took pains to disguise her pregnancy. He tempts her with apricots and waits for her anticipated reaction: “So, so: there’s no question but her techiness and most vulturous eating of the apricocks are apparent signs of breeding” (2.2.1-3). Under Bosola’s watchful eyes, the Duchess and Antonio increase their family. The secrets of her body, like her marriage will be her undoing as she becomes “troubled with the mother” (2.1.121), and she accepts his apricocks.

Stage representation of the Duchess craving “apricocks,” is twofold in meaning. There is a sexual implication in the word “apri/cock,” meaning “prick” and “cock.” Her craving for this phallic fruit (that has already temporarily imbricated itself in her womb) prejudices the audience against her because she appears publicly as a “lusty widow,” when societal customs demands that she appear weary of sexual desire and her knowledge of man, as Ferdinand reminds her in the first act of the play. But, the audience is aware that the Duchess is a married woman. Public stage representation of the Duchess is also a damning of her character that will make her brothers emerge as patriarchal keepers, rather than unfeeling inflexible men. In act three, scene two, Bosola becomes her confidant. She divulges her personal information to him: “As I taste comfort in this friendly speech, / So would I find concealment” (3.2.302-303). He portrays himself as a friend and loyal servant of the Duchess while he undermines her marriage. She confides in him the details of her marriage and the birth of her children as a result of her desire for companionship.

To Ferdinand and the Archbishop, the Duchess's increase in household is born of what Augustine calls "the muddy spring" of Christian society. Her marriage to Antonio is a sham and by giving birth under those dubious conditions, she dupes her subjects in putting forth their children as legal heirs to the duchy. Her children are not "pure pedigrees." Because their father is a commoner without a title they can lay claim to no particular aristocratic lineage. The children are, therefore, a threat to the aristocracy because of their patrilineage. It is from such a fate or future that Duke Ferdinand and the Cardinal try to protect the Duchess's unborn children, prior to her arrangement with Antonio.

Through her actions, the Duchess' children are bastards in the eyes of the Catholic church and the general public. Their titles are spotted with bastardy, because their parents were never married in the Catholic Church and the public is unaware of their patrilineage. The Duchess's behavior, if left unchecked, would lead to a breakdown of law and order in society. Laura Gowing writes: "Marriage made a wife's body both more, and less, her own" (207). Her body, therefore, is in a state of flux and ambiguity, because she is that which she is not—widow and wife—a state that is neither more nor less her own. Her children, too, are neither lawful nor bastard, thus making them subjects of public interest and scrutiny. Since the Duchess marries herself to Antonio, her children are legitimate. However, in the eyes of Ferdinand and the Cardinal, and the public, they are illegitimate children because the marriage between the Duchess and Antonio was neither sanctioned nor blessed by church authorities.

To compound the Duchess' quandary about her children's illegal status, Bosola presents her with a letter from her brother Ferdinand. He addresses the couple: "You are happily o'erta'en" (3.5.22). Indeed, the Duchess is "o'erta'en" because her private marriage is now public knowledge, in part because of Bosola's spying. Through his deception he is able to learn

of her plans to leave the duchy with Antonio. He betrays her confidence one again as divulges all that he has learned about her to Ferdinand. This report fractures the couple's relationship because they are forced to separate themselves forever.

Having learned the truth about the Duchess' children, Bosola publicizes the details, informing her brothers and the general public. As the Duchess and her family attempts to escape they are overtaken at the Shrine of Our Lady of Loretto. Here the Duchess' situation is publicly discussed divesting her of the privacy that she struggled so hard to maintain. The Duchess' public appearance at the Shrine of Our Lady at Loretto is an occasion for the common rabble, as Delio describes them, to gaze upon her, after waiting in line to see the fallen Duchess disgraced by her brother the Cardinal, who banishes her from Ancona as he resigns his Cardinal's hat and assumes the costume of a soldier. The Cardinal's resignation receives less scrutiny from the public than does the Duchess' fall from grace. Pilgrims at the shrine argue about the merit of her disgrace: "They are banished." "But I would ask what power hath this state / Of Ancona to determine of a free prince?" (3.5.27-29). Commenting on the reason for her fall, the second pilgrim explains that she was banished for "her looseness" (3.5.31). While they sympathize with the Duchess for her downfall and acknowledge her right to marry, they nonetheless show reverence for the Cardinal's resignation of his hat, while they frown on the Duchess.

Public forgiveness of the Cardinal's adultery is expected, because early modern customs cater to and encourage male aggression while condemning female prowess. This same culture is unforgiving of women like the Duchess who indulge sexual fantasies against patriarchal restraint. Public knowledge of her sexual relationships with the yet undiscovered Antonio fractures public expectations. Her illicit behavior brings public shame on her, her family's name, the duchy, and her brothers. Her cross-class marriage is a transgression of social rank and is

familial and cultural taboo. The disparity between her private sexuality and her public presentation of herself is that her intimate behavior becomes a public mirror of the familiar construct of woman as untrustworthy and potentially a “strumpet.” Her sexuality is also publicly seen as a crime against property. Since Antonio did not gain permission from Ferdinand and the Cardinal to marry the Duchess his sexual relationship with her is one of repeated rape and a crime against her brothers. Additionally, the Duchess’ worth far exceeds that of a lesser woman in society so the punishment for his crime would be based on the value of her body.

As the Duchess’ transgression is publicized and her brothers plot her death, Bosola is revealed as a dissembler with two public faces: one for the Duchess whom he pretends to support in her time of need, and the other for her brothers whom he promises to serve. Outwardly Bosola shows himself to be a “flattering pander” to the Duchess—“Come, be of comfort; I will save your life” (4.1.86)—while inwardly he schemes how and when he would destroy her. He is also a pretender to the “rich and o’erladen fruits” that are out of his reach. To complicate his outward show, he tells Ferdinand that he can never again see the Duchess “in mine own shape” (4.1.132). He is not his own man and therefore lacks “[his] own shape.” He disguises himself as an old man to confront her with death: “I am come to make thy tomb” (4.2.114). His malleability in the hands of Ferdinand and the Cardinal shows a lack of “will” and inconsistency in his behavior towards the Duchess. His changing face is confusing and frightening for the Duchess who cries out when she sees him in her prison cell: “Hah, my tomb! / Thou speak’st as if I lay upon my death-bed, / Gasping for breath: doth thou perceive me sick?” (4.2.115-117). In response to her fear of impending death Bosola tells her: “I am the common bellman / That usually is sent to condemned persons / The night before they suffer” (4.2.172-173). Unbeknownst to her, in death, Bosola presents yet another public face as he carries the Duchess’s lifeless body to her

women. This is the face of compassion, a complete opposite face from his earlier murderer's face. In his soliloquy upon the Duchess' death he shows remorse for his actions: "Come, / I'll bear thee hence, / And execute thy last will—that's deliver / Thy body to the reverent dispose / Of some good women" (4.2.367-371). Still, it is ironic that his compassion is entwined with the brothers' "will" and the Duchess' last "will."

Before her death, the Duchess languishes in prison with madmen for her companions. Upon the advice of Ferdinand, and with the aid of one of the attending servants, they publicly abuse the Duchess, taunting her with madmen and with impending death. Her life has become a public spectacle where private moments of despair are witnessed by Bosola and his henchmen and those who claim to be madmen. Ferdinand's and the Cardinal's had a vested interest in keeping their sister chaste because they prized her as property and as a pawn in their twisted scheme of things. Confronted with her death, Ferdinand confesses his greed: "Only, I must confess, I had a hope, / Had she continued widow, to have gained / An infinite mass of treasure by her death; / And that was the main cause.—Her marriage!!" (4.2.282-85).

The public realm cannot support such illegitimate intimacy. Monarchs have power which they use to further their agendas. Annette Flowers explains that "since rulers are lawmakers, they can use the law and their unique authority to justify their actions, to disguise their sin" (32). Knowing their rights, Ferdinand and the Cardinal condemn the Duchess and her family to death. Their power allows them to sign her death warrant while at the same time making them guilty of complicity to the act. After the Duchess' death, Ferdinand acknowledges to Bosola that he did not have the right to condemn his sister, who was also a prince. In response to Bosola's statement that he killed the Duchess upon Ferdinand's authority, the latter responds: "Was I her judge? / Did any ceremonial form of law/Doom her to not-being?" (4.2.298-300). Early modern

“justice,” Maus explains, “was often an extremely hasty affair” (107). Ferdinand’s questions to Bosola are responses to his grief upon seeing his sister who was also his twin. He regrets his action which he claims he made in haste, “when I was distracted of my wits” (4.2.278).

In examining the public nature of intimacy in Webster’s tragedy, *The Duchess of Malfi*, I have tried to establish a model for how intimacy, the public realm and patriarchy intersect and bring about new meaning in early modern drama. Intimacy, although a modern term, did exist during the early modern period, and as I demonstrate in this chapter, female consciousness of this act of privacy created much tension and anxiety among families and within the community. My findings show the complexity of finding intimacy within the “public realm” and by extension, the public household. I also clarify how community monitoring of public conduct, kinship, and surveillance of the female body become problematic because they are born of distrust. This distrust comes from an inability to monitor the private household’s inner sanctums that are just now coming into their own. Because the early modern household was the site for female subjection and patriarchal authority, the Duchess’ transgressive sexual behavior raises new questions about how early modern women actualized intimacy.

Antony and Cleopatra

In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* I turn my attention to the ways in which the playwright presents performances of intimacy within the public realm. My explication of public intimacy in the play centers on sight and perception. Roman soldiers in the play inscribe a sense of knowing authority in what they perceive as Romanness and Egyptian. These men also project a misogynist worldview of Roman women and the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra. Men like Enobarbus and Caesar put forth an "imagined" second sense of sight through which they can see beyond the present, into the future, and into the minds of others. Because this "imagined" second sight is unreal what it reveals to the individual character is a distorted picture of dramatic reality. Intimacy within the public realm centers around the places where characters actualize intimate performance. Cleopatra's palace is the focus of male gazers who disregard that space as private, because the lines between private and public at the palace are blurred.

As Antony enters the play he sights Cleopatra in a very public space, through "his goodly eyes" (1.1.2) as Philo reports. What Philo describes as eyes "now ben[t]...Upon a tawny front" (1.1.4-6), are, in fact, Philo's own imaginary ideas of Antony's ability to see beyond his emotions towards Cleopatra. Philo is a pretender to the art of mind reading. His "art" is immersed in racist rhetoric as he vents his anger in response to Antony's temporary respite from war and male soldiering camaraderie. Describing Antony as an emasculated Roman who has "become the bellows and the fan / To cool a gypsy's lust" (I.i.9-10), Philo demonstrates his cunning desire to end the relationship between his general and the queen. Cleopatra's "tawny front" is just one of Philo's many objections to Antony's now bending his eyes upon Cleopatra.

Among Philo's other objections to the relationship is what he deems to be Cleopatra's claim on Antony's time. I refer back to Chapter One where a similar problem occurs in

Marlowe's *Edward II* between Edward II and his barons who took objection to the king's intimate relationship with his minion Gaveston. In both plays men display jealous passion in objection to their leader's intimate relationship with one individual. Caesar, Enobarbus, Philo, and some of the other soldiers participate in this passionate objection to Antony's relationship with the Egyptian queen. The sight of Antony with Cleopatra presents a problem for those men throughout the play.

Enobarbus describes to Agrippa Antony's first public encounter with Cleopatra: "The barge she sat in like a burnished throne / Burned on the water. The poop was beaten gold, / Purple the sails, and so perfumed that / The winds were lovesick with them... For her own person, / It beggared all description" (2.2.227- 235). He continued: "and Antony / Enthroned i' th' market-place, did sit alone, / Whistling to th'air, which but for vacancy / Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too / And made a gap in nature" (2.2.252-256). His description of Antony's first "gaze on Cleopatra" affected his Roman sight leaving him with a "gap in nature." This "gap in nature" is, in fact, Antony's love for Cleopatra which affects his ability to perform as "true" Roman soldier—ruthless, cold and unyielding.

Knowing how his soldiers perceive his new love relationship with Cleopatra, Antony makes public attempts to disassociate himself from his intimate feelings for her. His thoughts of Cleopatra are beyond his sight of her. He engages in misogynistic word-play with Enobarbus, condemning her behavior towards him. Enobarbus' embellishment of the queen's emotional behavior draws a patronizing response from Antony who feels compelled to join in the degradation of women: "Would I had never seen her!" (1.2.168). But, Antony's response is superficial, because his next sentence, "Fulvia is dead" (1.2.174), suggests that he is in a state of turmoil. He is incapable, at this juncture, of deciphering his true feelings for Cleopatra. At the

same time he distances himself from his dead wife. Moreover, his internal battle with himself concerning his relationship with both women leaves him vulnerable to Enobarbus' compromising Roman nationalistic ideals. Enobarbus is of little consolation to Antony in this situation because he is a part of the problem, with his Roman ideas about women. What Antony sees in Cleopatra is the opportunity to achieve a loving relationship which is very different from what men like Enobarbus and Philo see in her. In fact, Enobarbus and Philo see the queen as a threat to their relationship with Antony, as well as a threat to their empire-building ambition.

Antony is first of all a Roman. Yet, from the moment that he first set his sight on Cleopatra he becomes incapable of maintaining his manliness. He is seduced by Egypt and all that Cleopatra embodies of Egypt. His Roman sight is affronted with what he considers to be the exotic performance of the queen. Cleopatra's luxuriousness on her badge and her bountiful festivities described by Enobarbus, threatens to unman him. He and Cleopatra publicly romance each other sometimes using their subordinates as go-betweens. Alexas repeats to Cleopatra Antony's message to her:

“Good friend,” quoth he,
 “Say the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
 This treasure of an oyster, at whose foot,
 To mend the petty present, I will piece
 Her opulent throne with kingdoms. All the East,
 Say thou, shall call her mistress” (1.5.49-55).

In placing his gift at Cleopatra's foot: “The treasure of an oyster, at whose foot...” Antony subordinates himself before Cleopatra in the name of love. This very public discourse though romantic, is un-Roman, first because she is a woman and secondly because Antony is a Roman

general. Such behavior belongs in the private realm. G. K. Hunter explains Roman virtues as “soldierly, severe, self-controlled, disciplined.”¹⁶ Antony is expected to show such virtues but since he does not, his soldiers take issue with him and complain to their fellow soldiers that he stoops to conquer the Egyptian queen. By the end of the play we will see that Antony is his own man and will do as he pleases despite Hunter’s argument about “Roman virtues.”

In Egypt, as well as in Rome, almost all of Antony’s and Cleopatra’s performances are done in the public realm. Because their lives are very public it creates a series of problems in the couple’s relationship. Their first meeting is a public one with attendants to the couple taking mental notes of their behavior which they will later discuss and report to others. These attendants, royal and soldiering, give advice to the couple even when it is not asked for. The eyes of the “world” gazing upon the couple’s intimate affairs likened it to spectacle and common sport. Philo beckons all present to “Take but good note, and you shall see in him / The triple pillar of the world transformed / Into a strumpet’s fool. Behold and see” (1.1.12-14). In each instance of “seeing” Antony and/or Cleopatra on stage there is a retinue of servants or soldiers not only attending to the needs of their sovereign and general but also making social comments and giving advice to the two. Antony’s soldiers and Cleopatra’s waiting women are deeply involved in their sovereigns’ relationship. Their lives evolve and depend upon it. It is, therefore, their responsibility to see all that goes on in the couple’s lives. But, these practices are divisive at times and often lead to disruption of intimacy between the couple.

Seeing what goes on between Antony and Cleopatra leads to a chain reaction in the play. Caesar’s report to Octavia, concerning Antony’s whereabouts and his actions: “I have eyes upon him, / And his affairs come to me on the wind” (3.6.71-72), while it might appear as a revelation

¹⁶ Hunter explains that masculinity during the Renaissance was modeled on Roman virtue which in essence meant masculinity. (In B.S. Lee, 1997, 93-100).

to Octavia is, in fact, a part of an on-going surveillance of Antony and Cleopatra's private lives. In addition to his need to be aware of Antony's military strategies, Caesar takes a close interest in Antony's private life because he has married his sister to Antony and because it is a Roman past time to publicize the private lives of their fellow countrymen lest they fail to live up to Roman manliness. Upset with Antony's performance abroad, Caesar reports to Maecenas, one of his soldiers that Antony contemns Rome, publicly in Alexandria:

I' th' marketplace, on a tribunal silvered,
 Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
 Were publicly enthroned. At their feet sat
 Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,
 And all the unlawful issue that their lust
 Since then hath made between them. Unto her
 He gave the 'stablishment of Egypt, made her
 Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia,
 Absolute queen. (3.6.2-11)

In response to Caesar's detailed report Maecenas enquires: "This in the public eye?" (3.6.12). Both Caesar's report and Maecenas' imply that Antony's behavior is troubling to the Romans. His behavior indicates that he has abandoned his place in the Roman triumvate, his wife and the decorum of Romanness. Sitting in the "marketplace" to crown Cleopatra "[a]bsolute queen" is an affront to Caesar and Octavia. But, this is Antony's way of publicly announcing to the world that Cleopatra is his "[a]bsolute queen" of his heart. The result of his action will be catastrophic on his intimate relationship with her because he has enraged Caesar by abandoning Octavia, an act according to Caesar, of "abuse[d] / Beyond the mark of thought, and the high gods, / To do

you justice, makes his ministers / O us and those that love you” (3.8.98-101). To see his revenge, Caesar must ruin Antony’s relationship with Cleopatra and Antony in the process.

Since Antony and Cleopatra perform their relationship in public, for the most part, they become targets for Caesar and his camp, for Enobarbus and the other disgruntled Roman soldiers in Antony’s camp, and for Cleopatra’s maids, who do not particularly like Antony because he creates instability in their palace, their lives, and their kingdom. Shakespeare involves everyone in the affairs of Antony and Cleopatra. What he presents to the audience is part reality and part myth. Under Elizabeth’s and James’ reign court entertainments such as masques and balls were very public affairs where commoners could wait at the gates to catch a glimpse of the guests and the festivities. Beyond those occasions, Elizabeth also appeared in public in a manly fashion, against the advice of her earls and barons, dressed in army uniform to extend her support to the soldiers and claim her title as Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Shakespeare places Cleopatra at the head of her Naval Forces too but, where Elizabeth was hailed by her soldiers Cleopatra was condemned. Enobarbus disdained the very idea that Cleopatra would advise Mark Antony to fight Caesar at sea:

Your presence needs must puzzle Antony,
 Take from his heart, take from his brain, from ‘s time
 What should not then be spared. He is already
 Traduced for levity, and ‘tis said in Rome
 That Photinus, an eunuch, and your maids
 Manage this war. (3.7.13-18)

Enobarbus accuses Cleopatra of draining Antony of his mind and heart both of which he desperately need for the war. Cleopatra’s responds, “Sink Rome and their tongues rot/ That

“speak against us!” (3.7.19-20). Because the queen and Antony are aware of Rome’s gaze on their relationship they become defensive at times. Upon meeting with Caesar in Rome after Fulvia’s death, Antony tells Caesar: “I learn you take things ill which are not so, / Or, being, concern you not” (2.2.38-39), and later, “My being in Egypt, Caesar, what was’t to you?” (2.2.47).

Enobarbus’ and Caesar’s meddling with Antony and Cleopatra’s relationship transforms the public realm into a threatening space for the couple’s intimate relationship. While early modern customs require the community to police each other’s behavior what transpires among Roman soldiers is against the development of intimacy between Antony and Cleopatra. Knowing that Antony is in love with Cleopatra, Enobarbus participates in the promotion of a marriage in Rome between the newly widowed Antony, and Octavia. Without much ado, the marriage ceremony solemnized, Enobarbus predicts that Antony would not stay with cold Octavia:

He will to his Egyptian dish again. Then shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as I said before, that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is. He married but his occasion here. (2.6.156-161)

Enobarbus’ prediction is correct but his failure to protect his General, being a close friend and ally, suggests that it is a matter of Roman manliness to allow Antony to share two wives in two separate places. Enobarbus’ condoning Antony’s breach of trust and faith between Cleopatra, his unlawful wife and Octavia his legal wife contradicts the ideals of loyalty and orderliness that is at once the hallmark of Romanness. For Enobarbus, it is acceptable for Antony to have a mistress, away from his wife, but it is unacceptable that he should dote on Cleopatra and place

her above his Roman wife, Octavia. Caesar's report that Antony crowned Cleopatra "Absolute queen" in the public market place confounds the ideals of Roman maleness. Antony and Cleopatra's public performance of their intimacy leads to strong negative reaction from all those who witness it. Caesar's desire to have Antony see his sister: "With most gladness/ And do invite you to my sister's view/ Wither straight I'll lead you" (2.2.202-204), becomes sadness when he sees Octavia arriving unaccompanied to Rome after Antony abandon's her, sending her back to Caesar in full public view without the usual Roman "ostentation" befitting Antony's wife and Caesar's sister. Caesar explains to her that she was sent in disgrace, "being an abstract 'tween his [Antony's] lust and him" (3.6.69).

In comparison to *Cymbeline*, where public performance is limited and centers on England's looking to Rome for its historical model, in *Antony and Cleopatra* the main idea is to valorize Rome's conquering power in a very public manner. Unlike his other Roman plays—*Titus Andronicus*, *Cymbeline*, and *Coriolanus*—where rival heroes are paired, Shakespeare subordinates this idea in *Antony and Cleopatra*, placing Antony as Cleopatra's rival, a move that is in itself a threat to Antony's Roman manliness. Antony must reconfigure the terms of manliness based on Roman ideals and Egyptian lack of masculinity. While in Rome masculine strength and valor defines the man, in Egypt a carefree life with eunuchs and soothsayers in attendants define that country's culture. Confronted with his Roman culture and presented with Egypt's bacchanalia, Antony remarks, "[T]hese strong Egyptian fetters I must break,/ or lose myself in dotage" (1.2.128-29). He understands that Cleopatra embodies her country's culture as he remarks, "I must from this enchanting queen break off" (1.2.143). Antony recognizes that their public performance of intimacy is detrimental to the survival of their relationship. *Antony and Cleopatra* overextends itself into the public realm. Cleopatra's barge, palace, the

marketplace, the public arena on the ship where the Roman generals hold their political meetings and the public streets of Egypt invite readings of Antony's and Cleopatra's palace are spaces that are too public for an intimate relationship to thrive.

There are too many eyes gazing on the couple in the public realm. The Soothsayer alleges in his prophecy to Antony that he has omnipotent knowledge about his future. We are reminded here of Othello's mother's Egyptian friend, the gypsy who gave her the handkerchief, and who possessed the ability to see inside another person's mind. Interestingly, Shakespeare's Romans participate in the soothsayers' cultism while his Venetians do not, as Desdemona shows in her response to Othello's anger upon hearing about the loss of his handkerchief. Warning Antony of Caesar's power, the Soothsayer foretells:

Antony, stay not by his side.
 Thy daemon—that thy spirit which keeps thee—is
 Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
 Where Caesar's is not. But near him, thy angel
 Becomes afeared, as being o'erpowered. Therefore
 Make space enough between you. (2.3.22-27)

Fearful of Caesar's scorn and public ridicule, Antony demands that the Soothsayer keep his prediction a secret. He cautions the Soothsayer: "Speak this no more" (2.3.28). Antony knows that public knowledge of the Soothsayers' prediction would doom him in the eyes of his comrades as a decorated general. Because both Romans and Egyptians participate in superstition, many among them would accept the Soothsayer's prediction without question. Antony must protect his public image as "the brave Antony" (1.5.81), "Herculean Roman"

(1.3.102), and “man of men” (1.5.85); therefore, the Soothsayer must not publicly reveal his prediction.

At sea, the theatre of war between Antony and Caesar, the Soothsayer’s prediction about Antony’s spirit becoming “afear’d, as being o’erpowered” comes to pass as Antony abandons the battle to follow Cleopatra back to her palace (2.3.26). Nonetheless, Antony blames his defeat not on the Soothsayers’ prediction or on fate, but on Cleopatra:

O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See
 How I convey my shame out of thine eyes,
 By looking back what I have left behind
 ’Stroyed in dishonor. (3.11.53-56)

Antony’s reference to seeing his shame in Cleopatra’s “eyes” harps on the intense intimacy that the two share. Cleopatra’s “shame” is Antony’s “shame.” But, more importantly, Enobarbus exposes Antony’s folly when he expresses skepticism that “high-battled Caesar will / Unstate his happiness and be staged to th’ show/ Against a sword!” (3.13.35-37). Antony has been “unstate[d]” and shamed by “high-battled Caesar.” This public “shame” will cost both Antony and Cleopatra their lives.

Spectacle defines the public relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. There is a pattern of public performance between the two that invites public gazing. Citizens of Egypt and Rome participate in this on-going carnival performance within the royal household and in spaces such as the market place and the open waters. Antony’s comings and goings to and from Rome and Egypt, always as a married man, makes for untidy relationships that capture the public eye. Upon his first encounter with Cleopatra he arrives as Fulvia’s husband, separated, but not divorced. He leaves Egypt for Rome to bury the now dead Fulvia promising to return a

widower. But, upon his return, we find that he has already married Octavia. Throughout his goings and comings, he remains actively in an intimate relationship with Cleopatra. Neither Antony nor Cleopatra makes any pretense at keeping their relationship private.

Their public performance of intimacy in Egypt hinges on spectacle so much so that Roman soldiers greedily ingest stories about the carnivalesque nature of Egyptians. As the theme of “seeing” continues through the play, Roman soldiers continue their gaze on the developments between Antony and Cleopatra put a strain on the couple’s relationship. Egyptian’s, too, gazed upon Antony’s soldiering body enchanted by his manliness often comparing him to Cleopatra’s two former lovers, Pompei and Caesar. They saw differences between these men and their relationships with their queen and they voiced these differences. Cleopatra’s response to her women’s assessment of her lovers was of course a violent one. She threatened then cajoled then stoutly declaring Antony her “man of men.” That the queen feels the need to defend her relationships suggests to me that she desired privacy because her palace proves to be too public for an intimate relationship between her and Antony. Still, the business of seeing overshadowed the play. Men used their sight to ridicule and pronouncement judgment on the couple. Caesar, Enobarbus, Cleopatra’s women and the Soothsayers offered insight and foresight concerning Antony and Cleopatra’s relationship. However, because the relationship was so public, Antony and Cleopatra are often inundated with advice and negative comments that created friction between the two where there should be love.

Public display like Antony and Cleopatra’s marketplace ceremony and her sailing trips on her barge constitute escapes from reality and provide the public with an opportunity to see their monarch as a public spectacle. Men like Enobarbus deny the visibility of truth when he erroneously envisages Cleopatra in the same manner that he does Roman women. Enobarbus

and the other soldiers enjoyed what they saw as Cleopatra's royal performance in her relationship with Antony. Their harsh comments on Egypt's daily entertainment stem from their own rigid Roman culture that encouraged hardiness and manliness for men and the subjection of women. Cleopatra is compared in the play to Fulvia who dies in her attempts to take on the role of a soldier. Cleopatra's death is the last of the public spectacles in the play. She performs her last right like an Egyptian goddess such as Isis. Dressed in her royal robes, seated on her royal throne next to Antony in his warrior gear, she places an asp to her breast, a public sign of the nurturing mother, and dies triumphantly over Caesar's quest to capture her as a war trophy. Antony's gaping wound, the greatest sign of his Roman manhood, is securely covered under his armor. His gaping wound is the well of new life between him and Cleopatra. The mysteries of Cleopatra's partially-covered body are juxtaposed against her exposed, asp-bitten breast as signs of her femininity and nurturing roles. For the Egyptians, the asp was a god with life after death. In a paradoxical twist of fate, the asp's life-taking sting gives new life to the newly dead Cleopatra who imagines beginning a new life with her "husband" Antony in the afterlife.

Public display of death in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Antony and Cleopatra* is symbolic of the public nature of domestic experience in the plays. The Duchess and her family are allowed privacy neither in life nor in death; Cleopatra chooses to display her body along with Antony's in death as she did in life. For both women, intimacy is thwarted by public intrusion, as aggressively patriarchal men seek knowledge of their private secrets and desires. As political figures, the Duchess of Malfi and Cleopatra are deeply involved in the public realm, but paradoxically, as women, having social and political power does not give them power to create viable private spaces in which intimacy can flourish.

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