

Self-Silencing in the Early Modern Theater

by

Penelope Krouse

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Curtis Perry, Co-Chair
Ayanna Thompson, Co-Chair
Cora Fox

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers why several characters on the Early Modern Stage choose to remain silent when speech seems warranted. By examining the circumstances and effects of self-silencing on both the character and his/her community, I argue that silencing is an exercise of power that simultaneously subjectifies the silent one and compels the community (textual or theatrical) to ethical self-examination. This argument engages primarily with social philosophers Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Badiou, and Emmanuel Levinas, considering their sometimes contradictory ideas about the ontology and representation of the subject and the construction of community. Set alongside the Early Modern plays of William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Thomas Kyd, these theories reveal a rich functionality of self-silencing in the contexts of gender relations, aberrant sociality, and ethical crisis. This multi-faceted functionality creates a singular subject, establishes a space for the simultaneous existence of the subject and his/her community, offers an opportunity for empathetic mirroring and/or insight, and thereby leads to social unification. Silence is, in its effects, creative: it engenders empathy and ethical self- and social-reflection.

DEDICATION

To Brian, for his unwavering conviction that I could and should do it

To Annevyn, Tyndale, and Clarity, may you pioneer and persevere

To Mom and Dad, for hosting, babysitting, and, once or twice, asking what it was about

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CHAPTER 1

"LOVE, AND BE SILENT": STAGING SILENCE

Imagine with me, Cordelia upon the stage. A princess, she stands alone before her father and his kingly retinue and international guests, suitors for her hand and lands. He proposes to award her, the youngest and dearest of three daughters, a third of his lands if she will, in purple prose, out-perform her sisters' expressions of paternal love. Her father awaits confidently her profession. And she refuses to speak. She will speak: "nothing."¹ When Cordelia declines to "heave/[her] heart into [her] mouth" (1.1.93-94) early in Shakespeare's King Lear, she executes a rebellion of silence with a provocative bounty of meanings. Her silence simultaneously mobilizes and subverts the familial, social and political authorizations of speech, the capital of reigning rhetorical methods, effectuators of social valence, nihilating fractures of representation, and performances of love. Her silence destabilizes not just her fictional community, but also the community it represents, and the one to whom it presents. In contrast to Gloucester's cavalier inclusion of his bastard, Cordelia enacts radical self- and social-severance in order to signify absolute allegiance. She employs paradox not to reveal incompatible social binaries, but points to the unifying path beyond them. In other words, in her disobedience lies obedience. Her unwillingness to articulate love signifies her deeper and more genuine affection, as Kent and the King of France clearly perceive. Some of these manifold layers of meaning have been previously extricated and illuminated by thoughtful scholars, but the antithetical power and function of self-silencing remains uncharted. This dissertation presumes to analyze moments of staged self-silencing in light of recent theories of subjectivity and sociality to argue that self-silencing functions to subjectify the silencer, expose civil anomie, and restore social unity.

Discussion about silence has taken two primary forms in recent scholarship: silence is oppressive and silence is inaccessible. The critical perspective that those who are silenced endure oppression has been fruitful in both analyzing patriarchal hegemony as well as in reclaiming lost voices. Deconstruction, on the other hand, suggested that meaning may be found in the margins rather than in the text, but ultimately denigrated marginal silence as inaccessible, its meaning, therefore, lacking determinant potency. These perspectives are not sufficient to fully account for the multifaceted silences richly employed in literature, and leave a void in our theoretical treatment of silence. While I recognize that to analyze silence in any way, is to ask it to “speak,” or to make meaning of it, some modern theories of subjectivity and sociality allow us to do so in such a way that grants silence a power and significance of its own, not dependent on surrounding language, not a marginal meaning. In an effort to focus on the power aspect of silence, and to set this work apart from the silence-as-oppression perspective, I have chosen to look specifically at examples of self-silencing. Choosing silence when speech seems warranted pointedly exercises a type of resistant power that is repeatedly evoked in Early Modern literature. Silence is most easily accessed theatrically; on the stage we are able to see silence at work in a community, as it were. Although plays are, of course, artificial microcosms and thus not necessarily “real,” the simulation of reality allows us to watch silence work without being dependent upon textual exposition. Thus I will be looking at instances of self-silencing on the English Early Modern stage. These examples offer a look at philosophy in action, as we see the effects and affects of silence.

Before exploring the plays, I want to say more about both the silence and the philosophy I’ll be referencing, as well as provide the historical context in which the analysis is placed. The silent moments I’ll be considering are initiated by various types of characters and at varied times but they are all self-instigated. The character

independently chooses not to speak when urged to do so by either convention or community. I will not be studying pauses, aposiopesis (incomplete or broken off speech) or textual elisions. Nor will I be looking at the stereotypical silence of emotional extremes such as grief or joy. I focus specifically on silences that surprise us, and these may manifest diversely as absolute silence, embodied silence, evasion, or representational speech. Significant about most of these moments is the attention given to the character's silence. Not only is their silence unorthodox, but it is obvious, self-conscious silence; silence that is intended to be recognized as silence, and thus intending to communicate something. However, this express parameter does not so simply inhere in the outworking of silence. Especially in regard to gender, we will find that silences that are nearly imperceptible at the lateral level of the conceit, in fact reveal their self-consciousness from the metatheatrical perspective. My guiding question throughout is what does this silence mean for the character's subjectivity and how does it affect the community? This dissertation marshals philosophic work about language, subjectivity and community to theorize what in fact these reflexive, self-silencing moments are accomplishing.

The contemporary need for a viable social ethic is anxiously acute, specifically in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11 and the "war on terror." Although the undermining of authority accomplished with postmodernism established a healthy skepticism toward social and political structures, it failed to produce a guiding communal ethic. The post-structural cycling of differences in conjunction with ontological ambiguities opened an appreciation for the Other, that has not quite succeeded in managing mutually contradictory beliefs within the global community. Psychoanalysis, never especially focused outside the subject, continues its narcissistic cycling of what is Real and Imaginary, but is not particularly effective in dealing with sociality. As Alain

Badiou has written, “moral philosophy disguised as political philosophy” led to reactionism and paralysis, “philosophy was reduced to being either a laborious justification of the universal character of democratic values, or a linguistic sophistry legitimating the right to cultural difference against any universalist pretention on the part of truths.”² Today’s thinkers, therefore, are resuscitating and re-formulating ideas of the human, even while maintaining their skepticism toward authority and epistemological certainty. The expectation is that a revised conception of the human will authorize a viable behavioral and political ethic. To study the human is to conceive of the subject, and perhaps surprisingly, this study of subjectivity converges upon silence. With language one has familial and social relationships, political opinions, affiliations, in short, a constructed identity. Apart from language, however, theorists can attempt to access what unifies. Note that apart from language does not necessarily mean prior to language, does not necessarily obtain essence. Rather, accounts of humanity look at what is beyond language, partly what precedes it, but also what limits it and defines it. Judith Butler has recently written,

If the humanities has a future as cultural criticism, and cultural criticism has a task at the present moment, it is no doubt to return us to the human where we do not expect to find it, in its frailty and at the limits of its capacity to make sense. We would have to interrogate the emergence and vanishing of the human at the limits of what we can know, what we can hear, what we can see, what we can sense.³

Butler’s emphasis on knowledge via sense perception is highly relevant to the outcomes of this dissertation. With the aid especially of Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Badiou and Emmanuel Levinas, I hope to consider what it means subjectively, representatively, and ethically for a human to communicate at the limit of language: self-silence. That non-linguistic communication entails a sense-able knowledge acquisition. Any revelations afforded by self-silencing then inform upon the epistemological, ontological and ethical nature of sociality.

Although structures of authority pervade readings of subjectivity and sociality, silence is not a strategy of hegemonic regimes, who are generally more interested in shaping perspectives, often via propaganda. Self-silencing is a tactic of the disenfranchised, which is not to suggest that it is equivalent to being oppressed into silence. On the contrary, choosing silence suggests active agency, although it is often resistant agency. Even more strongly, we might say that at the moment of self-silencing, the subject is at his most liberated. This choice, made publicly, separates the silencer from his community, but because he still belongs to the community, he occupies and points to the threshold between human ethical and civil practice. From this position, the self-silencer activates a temporal, auditory space for ethical reflection while still remaining a part of the subjectifying dynamism. The witness to the self-silencing, on the other hand, must grapple with the sudden appearance of the “gap” of being, that inarticulate space that somehow effectuates the transfer of non-being into being’s appearance in the sociality. Slavoj Žižek might call this philosophical wrangling of the witness a “short circuit” or a “parallax view.”⁵ “The standard definition of parallax is the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight” (17). The self-silencer effects a change of perspective in the observer by defying expectations of speech. Žižek argues that in a true parallax view, no synthesis or mediation between observed and observer is possible. This does not necessarily preclude, however, unification amongst multiple observers, the sociality.

I propose to analyze silence in different characters highlighting, I believe, differing metaphysical quandaries that each present. For women, silence raises the question of epistemology—how can we know when silence is signifying and what then it means? Villains and tricksters test our understanding of ontology, prompting us to ask

what is real, of what is the social fabric constructed: evil, goodness, folly? And revengers require us to consider the ethical obligations of community. Epistemology, ontology, and ethics are, of course, inextricably bound together and so we will make recourse to all, but the various characters' personal circumstances initiate differing responsive emphases. That this should be so reflects, I think, the paradigms of sociality in which the characters are embedded. For this reason, it has proven illustrative to utilize social theorists to unmask the communal webs in which these characters reside.

Because I am attempting to access interiority through silence and am looking at self-silencing as a social action, I will be utilizing the schemas and terminologies of particular social theorists to map the relational connections and meanings as they seem appropriate to differing characters and situations. Rather than selecting one theorist in an effort to illumine all, I am using three. Just as different characters choose to self-silence for different reasons, and just as the effects of their silence vary depending on the silencers role in the community, so varying theorists best access the social networks in force in the different plays. None should suppose me to believe that these theorists have some special access to the truth of Early Modern sociology. Rather I use these thinkers' ideas as implements of interrogation. The benefit of using articulated theories of social relations, regardless of any metaphysical truth-value, is that they exert a revelatory pressure on that to which they are applied. The effort to fit a relational schema onto a social network necessarily reveals something about both the schema and the network. For our purposes here, the focus is on the network. What happens to our understanding of misogynist Padua and its "silent" shrew if we apply Bourdiou's concepts of *field* and *habitus*? What does Badiou's schema of inclusion tell us about tricksters Iago and Dauphine as well as their victims? What can Levinas' notions of proximity reveal about Hieronimo's self-silencing? These are not historical so much as social and cultural

questions. Their answers offer insight into relational attitudes and expectations that, I think, distance Renaissance playwrights from their Early Modern connection. Although, these plays produce echoes of the self-silenced that resonate still today, the relational obligation, the social embeddedness of being as a source of agency is much complicated by the identity tourism and self-authorization manifested in today's social media. It is a subsequent project to address the specific historicity of these discoveries. For now, the effort is to use underlying relational structures to discover what comprises, complicates or confounds the social interactions of self-silencers and their communities so that we may better understand the function of silence.

The social theory of Pierre Bourdieu, though not as contemporary as the subsequent philosophers engaged here, offers the great advantage of *praxis*, the choices and consequences of a sociality whose exercise manifests their underlying beliefs. Bourdieu's concept of linguistic exchange, social capital as well as his access to subjectivities as they manifest within a *field* and *doxa* allow us to find self-silencing where it is undisclosed. "The principle of practices has to be sought instead in the relationship between external constraints which leave a very variable margin for choice, and dispositions which are the product of economic and social processes that are more or less completely reducible to these constraints, as defined at a particular moment."⁶

Although highly reductionist, Bourdieu's analytic framework for conceiving of behavioral motivations nonetheless proves revelatory as to subjective navigation within confining social roles as we encounter in Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew. In some ways, this play may be conceived almost entirely as an indictment of social practice and habit. However, Bourdieu's establishment of a *field* of behavior permits us to assume a revelational meta-stance oriented toward the operations of the given community. Thus we can perceive that self-silencing is used as a tactical resistance to

social tyranny. As such, however, we must acknowledge that unlike other manifestations of silence that are also resistant, gendered silence is invested in discretion. It best conveys ethicality and authorizes personal agency when it is not perceived as resistance. This type of silence stands alone in this regard.

Alain Badiou's thesis in Being and Event, ontology is mathematics, places subjectivity in the context of set theory, wherein we are urged to consider an individual as a multiple. While there is singularity of circumstance, one nonetheless is part of a set, a singular multiple. This terminology articulates a universality in human experience that is readily recognized, but also attempts to demonstrate how subjective experience can encounter and illustrate ontological truth. In a given ontological situation, what appears as one is actually one multiple of many in a set. As such, what is real for the apparent one is real for the multiple. Badiou argues that a subject encountering a truth event is a subject only within the process or action of the unique situation. And in the action of the situation, the subject place is that of a multiple. The social effect of the set makes a multiple of the self-silencer, who, in his singularity represents and reflects back to the community themselves, those who belong to the same set. In this way we can understand the unifying power exerted in the act of self-silencing. The community (or set) looks for speech, they are met unexpectedly with silence that initiates a reflective thought process involving the presence of human life, the meaning of said appearance, and consequent ethical imperatives. This reflective thought process aligns the community in their own belonging, even as it may affect the silencer's relation with the set. Badiou's theory is thus most helpful in drawing out the ontological questions of being and being as multiplicity that we encounter in Othello and Epicene.

Like Badiou, Emmanuel Levinas conceives of being socially and extra-lingually. He configures the sign of being not in speech but in proximal relation to another.

“Signification as proximity is thus the latent birth of the subject....As a latent birth, it is never a presence, excluding the present of coinciding with oneself, for it is *in contact*, in sensibility, in vulnerability, in exposure to the outrages of the other. The subject is the more responsible the more it answers for, as though the distance between it and the other increased in the measure that proximity was increased....The latent birth of the subject occurs in an obligation where no commitment was made. It is a fraternity or complicity for nothing, but the more demanding that it constrains without finality and without end.”⁷

The social responsibility of the subject here is all the more intriguing since it is not manifested in speech, but in silence. Or what Levinas calls “face-to-face” proximity. “Saying is not a game. Antecedent to the verbal signs it conjugates, to the linguistic systems and the semantic glimmerings, a foreword preceding languages, it is the proximity of one to the other, the commitment of an approach, the one for the other, the very signifyingness of signification” (5). We might easily parallel the silence that signifies with the ethical imperative summoned with proximity—both require a sensing presence (visual, intuitive) and neither require language. The inherency of social meaning that Levinas posits is inescapable. Transversing the gap of non-being, being accrues interest, social indebtedness that place it in a perpetual, substitutable relation of obligation to the Other. Levinas, most of all, illumines the ethical and empathetic call of self-silencing.

Using these theorists, it is possible then, to position the study of self-silencing in this intersection of the personal and the social. Both one and the other, neither fully one nor the other, self-silencing occupies that threshold place that philosophers are currently interrogating to derive both subjects and ethic. The choice to self-silence is an individual one, and in order for this choice to be meaningful both for the silent one and those who witness it, we must study the choice in its circumstantial milieu. If it is the case that the

subject is always in some relation to others, how do we understand this interaction, especially in the case of a silent subject?

I have referred throughout this analysis to those who encounter a self-silencing moment as “witnesses,” although, more accurately, they should be called “listeners” of the silence. These persons comprise the community of the self-silenced one, and usually, in the moment of self-silencing they are awaiting some type of communication from the silent person. The communicative act of self-silencing solicits a response from its community, but the response is one of thought, not necessarily action, although behavioral revision is generally warranted. The solicitation itself, inherent in the self-silencing, is an act of power used tactically both for and against the community. This opposition should not be thought of as hostile, though it may in fact feel that way. Although the silent one separates from his/her community, that separation often simply illustrates a pre-existing isolation that the silence is designed to resolve. We might consider this move along Kirkegaardian lines as Zizek has interpreted, “...every translation of ethics into some positive universal frame already betrays the fundamental ethical Call, and thus necessarily gets entangled in its inconsistencies. Is the only true ethical stance, therefore, acceptance of this paradox and its challenge?” (87). This is the call of the self-silenced one: a demand that witnesses/listeners consider the shared nature of the human, and correspondingly, the appropriate ethical procedures for human sociality. The silent person does not advocate a particular ethic, but reminds the community of the ontological presence of and need for an ethical reality.

This dissertation focuses on and aligns three sets/types of dramatic characters whose practice of self-silencing is remarkable: women, villains and tricksters, and revengers. The first chapter studies gendered silence. The self-silencing of female characters has more variable effects, and demonstrates the importance of using social

theory to access and articulate it. Gendered silence deploys presentations of conformity to avert attention from personal agency. For women, their silence paradoxically subverts while condoning the idealization of feminine silence. What the masculine community sees reflected in female silence is an ethical ideal, their desire for the woman confirming their desire for the ethical. In either case, the community is called to ethical consideration. The second chapter looks at the villain-trickster. These characters are perhaps more commonly separate, but the social effect of their self-silencing is similar so I will consider them together. Villains and tricksters both violate public trust and practice dissimulation upon the community. When their deceptions are revealed, the community experiences outrage, naturally, but also a sense of shame and humiliation. It is as if the inexcusable and inexplicable nature of crime and deception causes the community to engage in self-reflection. It sees its own dark heart, and experiences an ethical shame, which functions to call the community back to an ethical norm. The last chapter explores revengers, individuals who redress an injustice, usually murder, that the ruling powers are neglecting, or more frequently, in which they are complicit. The revenger relinquishes his own liberty, a self-sacrifice that self-silencing mirrors moving the community to an empathetic and ethical subjective experience.

While I do not wish to suggest that these functions of self-silencing are limited to these character types or to Early Modern literature, it is necessary to focus on specific circumstances in order to articulate the functionality of silence. It is an *aporia* that is experienced, and so the unique experience informs both its function and its meaning. Consequently, before exploring the self-silencing tactics of these character sets, it will be helpful to remember some historical circumstances of this time that informed Early Modern England's understanding of silence and sovereignty. I am focusing primarily on English plays composed during an approximate twenty-year span from 1588 to 1610

encompassing the late Elizabethan and early Jacobian period. Although my project here is a philosophical analysis of self-silencing, and not about making a specific historical claim, it is nonetheless helpful to recognize that there were political and cultural considerations of silence and sovereignty circulating at the time of these plays.

The late medieval period had seen a rise in vows of silence as common monastic practice, and the Carthusian Order, among others, had instituted practices of silent, devotional reading. These silences are early examples of the dynamic, social silences I will be exploring in this dissertation. Far from being an absence or void, these silences were supposed to allow their practitioners to disengage from the frenetic practice of self-fashioning in order to better understand divinity. The silence of the monk permitted God to speak, or at least to be heard. The devotees relationship with God and his creation was nourished, and thought to flourish, with silence. Although for monastic participants, silence yields its benefits primarily to themselves and the God they worship, it was thought that their example would register for many the spiritual and social value in self-silencing. Jessica Brantley writes, “This oscillation between the most private of eremitic devotions and a demonstrated engagement with more public, pastoral concerns is a hallmark of late-medieval Carthusian piety, and it finds reflection both in the verbal and in the visual arts.”⁸ Thus we see that this silence is also an effort at social unity, and just as we will see in the theatre, it is the response of silence, when speech is customary, that provokes new understanding and transformation.

In response to the treason trial of Thomas More, Parliament passed a statute in 1541 that read in part: “[whomever] obstinatlye refuse to answeere directly to the same offences...or...stande muett and will not speake, then such pson or psons so refusing to answeere or standing muett shalbe convict judgd and demed guyltie of the thinge...”⁹ Contrasting with the common law right not to incriminate oneself with speech, this

statute initiated a shift in the English government's perspective of silence. No longer was silence an epistemological enigma, it now constituted guilt. Approximately fifteen years later, Queen Mary's inquisitorial use of the *ex officio* oath resulted in several Protestant martyrs' burning at the stake. The oath, administered before the interrogated was informed of any charges against him or her, was a vow to answer truthfully any questions that might be asked. Many refused the oath on legal grounds and others equivocated, but those who took the oath and subsequently chose to remain silent were convicted as if guilty. Public attention to the epistemological nature of silence was further excited in 1583 when the Archbishop of Canterbury decreed that the *ex officio* oath was mandatory, and any who refused to take it were condemned as guilty without the trial by jury promised in the Magna Carta. The Archbishop's move, criticized by Lord Burghley and Francis Bacon, was nonetheless supported opportunistically by both Elizabeth I and James I. Christina Luckyj points out that both accusers and accused practiced silence, the first obscuring the charge against the second, and the second preserving, in Thomas More's words, "the secrets of our hearts [of which] God only is the judge" (quoted in Luckyj, 33). As Luckyj writes, "Silence in the late sixteenth century was a site of conflict between the authorities who paradoxically both enforced and outlawed it and the subject who found in it both oppression and licence" (36). This paradox of silence will repeatedly appear on the English stage.

If the silence of an interrogated person must be understood as assent, silence suddenly had definitive meaning: "Yes, I did commit murder or treason"; "Yes I am a Catholic or a supporter of Essex." Parliament's action effectively turns the silent agent into an interpellated object, it "subjects the subject" to a coerced interpretive reality. This oppressive legal action coincided with the brief surge in governmentally sanctioned torture of persons suspected of harboring information useful to the crown, and the general

rising conservatism of the English government. As Elizabeth P. Hanson has demonstrated, the torture was an effort to “discover truth,” an epistemic endeavor more than, though certainly not apart from, a penal one.¹⁰ Likewise, the silent assent statute reveals an epistemic imperative, choosing to insist on its own interpreted information over no information. And in assigning meaning, it acknowledges subjectivity in silence; it recognizes that silence is not absence or nothing, it is, in the eyes of Parliament, an act of resistance to authority by an agent. Thus the bill legally instantiated the abstract concept of silence with subjective agency, even while it anxiously denied that agency its resistant power by assigning it a ventriloquized voice. As long as there have been speakers, there have been those who choose to be silent, and aside the long historical record of rhetoric, there is, in its shadow, always an acknowledgment of silence as a form of discourse. The silent subject did not first appear, then, as Parliament passed its bill, nor was it necessarily a previously benign entity now made insidious, even criminal, via political machinations. But the bill functions as sixteenth century England’s explicit legal recognition of the power inherent in silence. No longer could the Elizabethan or Jacobean governments afford to leave its subjects in peace.

Censorship is another context in which the monarchies grappled with silence. We might initially suppose that state-sanctioned censorship was an oppressive action, silencing civil dissent and squelching public discourse. Deborah Shuger, however, demonstrates the oversimplification of this assumption.¹¹ Shuger reveals that the surprising goal of Early Modern censorship was not to protect political ideologies, but to discourage libel and slander. Shuger’s research demonstrates that, “The majority of texts condemned by the Elizabethan proclamations are...stuffed with defamatory lies. Many are products of the Roman Catholic slander machine on the continent, which seems to have been operating at capacity throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

centuries” (93). (The Protestants and Puritans took their turn during James’s reign.) Referring to the “...social operation of language, the ways in which words function to knit—or sever—the political and moral ligatures that collectively bind a people into community” (89), Shuger argues that the censorship apparatus was instantiated to curb libelous civil failings. “In the most literal sense, defamation law concerns civility: how people should behave toward each other. It is the means by which a society protects the social and religious ‘sacredness’ of its members, shielding them from insult, contempt, and degrading exposure” (98). This reading of governmental censorship reveals the importance, to the Early Modern mind, of silence in maintaining sociality. The governmental censor indeed imposes silence, but it is silencing lies. Shuger sees the censorship effort arising out of a reflexive expectation that English society is rooted in Christian virtues of truth and charity and a “theological right to privacy” (101). For our purposes, it is illuminating to recognize the way in which the monarchies used censored silence to secure the social ethic. Relinquishing his own “sacred” right to privacy, the self-silencer exposes himself to scrutiny, to a “reading” beyond his verbal control. An act so startling, that just like civil censorship, the self-silencer draws attention to lapses in civility.

Although typically considered a time of literary and rhetorical flourishing, the Early Modern period had reason to experience a concomitant and deeply-felt mistrust of language. The articulation and spread of calumny, projects of dissimulation, and the commonplace linking of tricksters with rhetorical skill created a climate of respectful suspicion of speech. Caution regarding language invariably reflected an epistemic crisis: how can we know? How can we know truth? Allow me to postulate some of the dominating contingencies that have shaped this conclusion. In *Signifying Nothing*, Brian Rotman demonstrates that the Renaissance witnessed the development of “meta-signs,”

signs without referents, signs that gesture to metaphysical nothingness.¹² These meta-signs, found in the Hindu zero in counting methods, paper money in capitalist financial systems, and the vanishing point in the visual arts, all manifested nearly simultaneously in the Early Modern world. This confluence of events created both a pragmatic, psychological and philosophical rift in metaphysical reality that is reflected throughout cultural productions. This rift reverberates, I believe, in the many and peculiar silences found in the literature of the period, both poetic and dramatic. Inasmuch as silence is a sign whose referent may or may not exist, it too is, pragmatically, a meta-sign, and accordingly, it shares the same power as the other meta-signs: it ambiguates ontological certainty. Silence makes “a thing” out of a “non-thing,” and is unknowable, even while it demands response. Like the numeral zero, silence functions relationally, it affects other things (meanings) without having a discreet, discernable meaning itself. As Rotman says, “The effect of meta-signs is to draw attention that representation is a fiction” (57).

Failures in representation also manifested during the Protestant Reformation wherein Martin Luther objected to the Catholic Church’s sale of indulgences.

Indulgences, David Hawkes has argued,

...represented fetishized labor. They were representations of human actions, which were ascribed supernatural, magical power in the popular imagination. Their role was essentially financial. Just as money establishes a medium of representation which enables us to conceive an equivalence between human labor and various objects, so indulgences provided a common denominator which made it possible to imagine an equivalence between penitential tasks and divine grace.¹³

The signifying power of indulgences was undermined, but perhaps more devastatingly, so was the representative authority of the papacy. The Reformation produced especially acute concerns about representation for England because of the particulars of Henry VIII’s split with the Catholic Church. By appointing himself head of the Church of England, he not only represented God politically but theologically as well, creating a

dominance of representation that rendered his legitimacy suspect. Furthermore, this already dramatic and distressing claim to authority was complicated by the brief but vexed reign of his Catholic daughter Mary, and then another subsequent revision under Elizabeth I. Of course, this overweening representational position was even more fraught when the office is held by a woman. By the end of the sixteenth century, England was actively exploring the nature of representation, and grappling with corresponding philosophical skepticism about knowing what is real or what is true.

This epistemic crisis was aggravated by the rise of capitalism that dismantled seemingly tidy distinctions of class, ownership, and ultimately identity. As capitalism makes an object of human labor, that which is human becomes exchange-able, sale-able. Because labor is an object, it dehumanizes the laborer; he himself becomes the object, exchange-able. Furthermore, the acquisition of objects becomes the sign of identity, but the objects remain alterable, trade-able and thus not truly identifying. Exchange value negates any inherent value, and turns everything including people, into commodities. That the forces of capitalism were coming to dominance in the Early Modern era exacerbates the already raging suspicion of representation and underscores the ontological skepticism with which the period is often defined.

This particular historical confluence of epistemological problems manifests, I believe, in the persistent problematizing of representation. Stanley Cavell's 1987 book, Disowning Knowledge, made a surprising claim: Shakespeare's characters were not responding to the representational skepticism of their age by seeking to know, to solve epistemological mysteries, but were seeking to avoid knowing or being known.¹⁴ In a naturally self-interested way, many characters wanted to know, categorize, reduce, and manipulate others, but spent the bulk of their energies on concealing themselves from "the gaze," which, as Cavell points out, results in a sense of shame. Similar to Jeremy

Bentham's Panopticon, in Cavell's formulation, the gaze was experienced as an intrusion into the private, inner spaces of the subject. Even seemingly positive approaches to gaining personal knowledge such as the desire to love demonstrated by Cordelia toward Lear, or the citizens' desire to look upon and admire their hero Coriolanus, were interpreted by Lear and Coriolanus as violations. Although Cavell does not consider silence directly, there seems to be every reason to avoid speech if one prefers, as Cavell argues, to avoid being known (interpellated) or becoming a part of a corrupted community. In fact, it would seem that silence is one of the better ways to preserve subjectivity in an age where the self is always subordinated to the monarch, the monarch's religious impositions, religion's own behavioral expectations, material constraints such as the sumptuary laws, and even cultural (and literary) conventions as to acceptable speech and action. Cavell's reading reveals the truly extraordinary behavior of the self-silencer who invites public scrutiny, but without controlling its interpretation. In effect, the self-silencer throws the gaze back upon the witness resulting in their sense of shame.

Problems with representation are especially acute in a study of silence. The silent subject can only be approached obliquely. No diaries, legal records or other cultural matter can exist which document the subjectivity of the silent in the moment of their silence. The action of silencing oneself can only be accessed via recollection, remembering a silent response, or by observation of another. Even if a self-silencer later recounts his moment of silence to another, he is already a different subject, changed by the act of silence, if nothing else. This inaccessibility is, of course, part of the power of self-silencing, but for my purposes it creates an interpretive quandary such as that faced by Parliament's inquisitors. Unlike Parliament, however, I propose to consider the effects of silence by examining other types of forensic evidence to reach my conclusions.

Answering such questions as: who self-silences, under what circumstances, what happens when they do, how does their community react, and does silence function to persuade should provide enough data to draw some meaningful conclusions. Since part of my governing assumption is that silence is a form of rhetoric, I intend to explore specifically the literature of the Renaissance for my investigation.

This choice is based on two factors. First, representational faultlines notwithstanding, I do believe literature offers a perspective especially useful to the study of subjectivity. Literature may be, in fact, the only way to witness the performance of historical silence. On stage there is, at the least, an attempt to recreate the experience of human discourse, silence included. As such, it offers the best opportunity to examine how the silent subject functioned in Early Modern England. Furthermore, theatrical performance complicates the reading of silence insofar as the spectator's position mirrors that of the interrogator, both seeking to know and understand. And as the source of silence's interpretation, both are subjectified in the process. The spectator, however, is deeply engaged in his own self-silencing, a fact acknowledged repeatedly by Renaissance playwrights. Literature's dynamism of subjectivity warrants its position as the primary source for my study of the mechanics of the silent agent.

The second reason for focusing on literature is the special discomfort Early Modern theatre repeatedly expresses toward its own representational occupation. The self-consciousness and reluctance of many period plays to claim mimetic authenticity reveals a hesitance toward representation that, I believe, is akin to the failure to present or represent found in the silent subject. Several recent books have explored the problematics of representation for the early modern culture. Arnold Oliver's The Third Citizen interrogates the parliamentary conceit of a voice for every citizen, noting its conflation of actual presence with representative presence. Likewise, Dympna

Callaghan's Shakespeare Without Women makes present the implications of absence, exploring the effects of failed theatrical representation on cultural formations of racial and gendered identities. Jon R. Snyder's Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy explores actions of dissimulation as a cultivated art.¹⁵ Ultimately these works all occupy the chasm between a presumed ontological reality (socially constructed or otherwise) and its inexact representation. I believe my analysis of the silent subject will participate in this discourse by showing that silence, as an intentional failure to represent, is often a paradoxical position of autonomy and empowerment.

Apart from the theorists I have spoken of in this chapter, I will make recourse to several other scholars in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. In examining Katharine in The Taming of the Shrew in chapter two, Frances E. Dolan serves as a sparring partner, and Elizabeth Gruber offers important revelational insight into gendered, knowledge-seeking projects. My analysis of villains and tricksters (in Othello and Epicene) in chapter three is critically dependent upon Wayne A. Rebhorn's analysis of the Renaissance trickster and Thomas M. Greene's formulation of centering in the work of Ben Jonson. The fourth chapter on Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy is informed by, and then dramatically differs from, studies by C.L. Barber, Katharine Eisaman Maus and Carla Mazzio.¹⁶

The "age of eloquence" may be called thus because it grappled with articulation, with rhetoric as a way of knowing, and much of literary history has been concerned to understand the ways in which language and articulation participate in knowledge and subject formation. The *ex officio* statute, however, serves as a marker of a corresponding rhetorical problem of the early modern era: the silent subject. Despite the legal and political upheavals connected with these Early Modern statutes on silence, due attention has not been given to the ways in which self-silencing may construct, contain, and

confirm personal agency. Neither has silence's influence on community been analyzed or even acknowledged. Nor have critics considered the ways in which these specific political expediencies played out culturally in Early Modern England. My purpose in this dissertation, then, is to explore these areas by using literature as a point of access into the nature and effects of self-silencing. From sermons exhorting parishioners to "tame their tongues," to suspected traitors willing to endure torture rather than make a coerced confession, to the many characters populating the early modern stage who choose to be silent, self-silencing is a common, but little understood phenomenon of the period. Or, more accurately, the phenomenon of choosing to be silent is not limited to an era, but the anxious skepticism of the Early Modern period presents an opportunity to study the silent subject when its epistemology is both concentrated and variously figured.

Returning to Cordelia, we see she is no longer alone on the stage in her silence. Standing beside her are other characters, male and female, young and old, of varying classes and social authorizations. They are all silent. And at first, that silence is directed toward one another, but then as one, they turn and look at us. What are they conveying? What do they make us feel? Is it Stanley Cavell's shame? Is it a duty we owe them? A personal failure made manifest; a social problem neglected? Or is it, as with Cordelia, simply love. Does this presentation of silence compel our empathy and ethicality? Do we, like Lear, now recognize "true need?" (2.4.268) Do we, like Edmond, have "some good [we] mean to do"? (5.3.245).

Notes to Ch. 1 “Love, and Be Silent”: Staging Silence

- ¹ William Shakespeare, King Lear, Ed. by Russell Fraser (New York: Signet 1998): (1.1.91). All further references will be to this edition by act, scene and line number.
- ² Alain Badiou, Being and Event, Trans. by Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2006): Xii.
- ³ Judith Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence (New York: Verso 2004): 151. Butler addresses issues of the ethics and the humane in musings composed after the terrorist attacks of September 11.
- ⁴ Jonathan Gil Harris, Shakespeare and Literary Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) writes, “All the major theoretical movements of the last century—from formalism and structuralism to deconstruction and actor-network theory, from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to feminism and queer theory, from Marxism and poststructuralist Marxism to new historicism and postcolonial theory—have developed key aspects of their methods in dialogue with Shakespeare” (3).
- ⁵ Slavoj Žižek, The Parallax View, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009). All further citations will be to this edition with page numbers cited. Žižek’s Lacanian perspectives are put to work here in a compelling discussion of among other things, epistemology.
- ⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice, Trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980): 50. All further references will be to this edition with page numbers cited.
- ⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence, Trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1981) 8th Printing, 2009: p.139-40. All further references will be to this edition with page numbers cited.
- ⁸ Jessica Brantley, Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): 22.
- ⁹ Christina Luckyj, ‘A Moving Rhetoricke’: Gender and Silence in Early Modern England (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002): quoted included on p. 33. All further citations will be to this edition with page numbers noted. Luckyj’s comprehensive chronicle of perspectives on silence is an extremely valuable resource.
- ¹⁰ Elizabeth Hanson, Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Hanson explores epistemic efforts as they manifested in legalized torture.

- ¹¹ Deborah Shuger, "Civility and Censorship in Early Modern England," Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation, Ed. by Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 1998): 89-110.
- ¹² Brian Rotman, Signifying Nothing: The Semiotics of Zero, (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993). All further references will be to this edition with page numbers cited in text.
- ¹³ David Hawkes, Ideology, (New York: Routledge, 1996) 2nd Printing, 2006: p.33.
- ¹⁴ Stanley Cavell, Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare, Updated Edition (New York: Cambridge UP, 1987). All further references will be to this edition with page numbers cited in text.
- ¹⁵ Oliver Arnold, The Third Citizen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Jon Snyder, Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Dymphna Callaghan, Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage, (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- ¹⁶ Frances E. Dolan, The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Elizabeth Gruber, "Insurgent Flesh: Epistemology and Violence in Othello and Mariam," Women's Studies, 32:4 (2003): 393-411; Wayne A. Rebhorn, "'The Emperour of Mens Minds': The Renaissance Trickster as Homo Rhetoricus," Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene, Ed. by David Quint, Margaret W. Ferguson, G. W. Pigman III, and Wayne A. Rebhorn (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992): 31-65. Thomas M. Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 10:2 (Spring 1970): 325-348. C.L. Barber, Creating Elizabethan Tragedy: The Theater of Marlowe and Kyd, Ed. Richard P. Wheeler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Katharine Eisaman Maus, Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Carla Mazzio, The Inarticulate Renaissance: Language Trouble in an Age of Eloquence, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).
- ¹⁷ Mazzio, 18.

CHAPTER 2

"MY TONGUE WILL TELL": SPEAKING SELVES

It is, perhaps, paradoxical to begin an account of self-silencing with a study of speech. But paradox weaves like a thread between the two, uniting them as well as defining them. If we are to study how one works, we must unravel the paradox that binds them. Speech, it is thought, reveals the mind, and in revealing the mind, reveals the subject. Silence, it is presumed, conceals the subject. But of course the ease of these assumptions belies the complexity of their function. Derrida and others have effectively dismantled the commonplace of speech as revelation. Lacking an ontological correspondence to its referent, speech confounds revelation. Speech intends more than it means, and means more than it intends. Its ultimate revelation is its own reflexive failure to represent. Silence, on the other hand, has been left in relative peace. Allowed, for the most part, to enjoy a quietude of critical inquiry. I propose to agitate this repose however, and discover the effects of self-silencing upon a subject and his/her community. Does silence indeed conceal, permit dissembling and subterfuge, or does it also operate as a revelator? If so, what is revealed, and about whom? Since self-silencing, like speech, is a highly contingent activity, its meaning and effects derived from the particulars of its usage, it is imperative to turn now to the play with which I propose to engage this analysis: William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew.¹

Performances, adaptations and scholarship of Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew have focused on answering an important question left unanswered in the text: is Katherine tamed?² Is her final speech on the submission of wives spoken sincerely or ironically, perhaps with Mary Pickford's infamous wink? The play is silent about the sincerity of her speech. Despite attention given as to how to read Katherine's speech, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the fact of the question. In other words,

answering the question has become a favorite critical past-time, but articulating why we ask this question in the first place remains unexplored. The reasoning behind this lack seems obvious: that which the play neglects to tell us nonetheless forms the crux of our interpretive understanding of the play. While I don't disagree with this formulation, I do think the play means something even without a clear answer to the "is she or isn't she tamed" question, or rather that the ambiguity is an interpretive point in itself. In failing to explicitly reveal Katherine's true motivations, Shakespeare places the audience or reader in that most anxious-making of positions for the Renaissance (and perhaps for us): a state of ignorance. Our inability to neatly categorize and contain the ending of the play, as well as anxieties arising from that inability, transform us into a Hamlet or an Othello, seeking to know what cannot be known. It is, perhaps, the play's goal that because of its silence on the matter we continue to think about and discuss Katherine's character and her relationships long after the curtain falls. Since Katherine's personal agency is the scaffolding upon which most arguments—either for or against her transformation—are built, embracing the ambiguity of the play necessarily offers its own answer to the taming question. But the compelling need to resolve the epistemic quandary discloses a compulsive need to know and the corresponding search for a knowledge methodology. The play, like theatre itself, ultimately promotes a subversive counter-argument to the cultural ideal of transparency: perform an identity in order to preserve an identity. In so doing, The Taming of the Shrew hails subjectivity, gender relationships, the social and representational function of theatre as well as philosophical skepticism.

Shakespeare's silence about Katherine's interiority implicates language as a failed epistemology along with Othello's ocular proof, and Hamlet's artistic emulations. Furthermore, and unlike other of Shakespeare's work, rather than trying to resolve epistemic quandaries in the manner of a Hamlet or Othello, the characters in The Taming

of the Shrew strive to create them. In this play, possessing public knowledge of an individual grants power and dominance to the community but denies the individual representational autonomy. Consequently the individual must cultivate obscurity in order to retain personal agency. As the play demonstrates in its presentation of Christopher Sly, Bianca, Petruchio, and Katherine personal power is obtained via public performance not public revelation. This performative obstruction is set against the social expectation and idealization of transparency. As Holly A. Crocker says, “When the play begins, identity seems to be transparent, correspondence among appearance, performance, and absolute essence.”³ The community at large seems to assume that both speech and silence reveal the true person. To better grasp the notion of social expectations, and the influence they exert upon personal subjectivity, it is helpful to borrow some terms from sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and apply them to the The Taming of the Shrew. The metadramatic conceit of a play within the play introduces what Pierre Bourdieu would call the “field” of investigation.⁴ The *field* is a social space with encoded rules and relationships training us, as well as its subjects whose behaviors constitute and reinforce it, to the functionality of the community. The *field* of the induction introduces the Petruchio/Katherine story as representational fiction within a representational fiction. Their story, however, takes place within the social *field* of patriarchal Padua, conceivably a stand-in for contemporary England. This plot, occurring at a double-step remove from the audience and “reality,” seems to require the wholesale creation of a space for its being. It presents, in other words, a stage behind which it enacts its tale.

And indeed it is being that is at stake here, being and how we access it: epistemology. As the hostess threatens Sly with stocks and calls him a “rogue,” (Ind.1.2) Sly claims a venerable family line, that he is nobler than his intoxicated appearance and behavior reveal. Easily dismissed as drunken boasting, Sly’s claim

nonetheless raises the question of how identity is determined. To the hostess, he is a thief; to the advancing Lord, he is a beast, a drunkard, and even a vision of “grim death” (Ind.1.35). But to Sly himself, he is a man of consequence bound by no ordinary laws. This claim to intrinsic nobility is useless in the face of Sly’s uncouth and degrading performance, no one, including presumably the play’s audience, believes him. Nor, it seems, are we intended to. Sly is displaced from his ordinary experience and the new, elegant environment, clothes, and social interactions surprise and confound him. He reflects on himself and what he knows of himself. “Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now?” he wonders (Ind. 2.69). Reality is no longer apparent to Sly; even the reality of his own identity is undermined in the presence of the nobleman’s luxurious commodities. Kate, of course, will experience a similar displacement when she visits Petruchio’s home, and as Garber notes, “the suspension of certainties and the interchangeability of reality and illusion result in a heightened self-awareness.”⁵ A self-awareness that in metatheatrical terms, now extends to the audience as well.

And yet, Sly is not precisely self-aware; he may be self-concerned, but his knowledge of his identity is confused and unsure, we might even say unaware. It is, however, a key moment of reinvention whose success depends upon Sly’s epistemic engagement. The jesting Lord uses both empirical and social means of deception. Sly is surrounded by the luxury items of the nobility: costly clothes and food, sweet music and fine art. However, if Sly simply woke among fine things he would not, as the Lord hopes, “forget himself.” He would still be Sly, just Sly among fine objects. Consequently, the Lord directs his servant Barthol’ mew to pretend he is Sly’s noble wife. This theatricality on the part of the servants is key to activating both the confusion and the transformation. Sly’s new community destabilizes his self-conception and constructs a new identity for him. The consistency and verisimilitude of their performance is

critical to the joke's success as is demonstrated in the Lord's lengthy directions as to how the page should act his role, even suggesting the use of an onion to elicit the required tears. It is, then, the social performance of the Lord's servants that most effects Sly's transformation, not simply the new physical circumstances. The community creates Sly's self—or, from another perspective, there is no Sly without his sociality. He abandons the tinker he knew and embraces his new socially and materially constructed identity. Thus the play begins with identities that are only real insofar as they are socially performed. Sly's noble lineage cannot be real since he behaves like a cur, but Sly's believes Barthol'mew is his wife because he performs the role. In the theatrical playing field, nothing is what it is. Reality in The Taming of the Shrew is performance. The Lord's microcosm of willing performers mirrors that of Padua where successful social interaction requires performing (or conforming) to expectation.

Shakespeare is always most interesting when he violates generic expectations and that is true for the popular taming genre as well. Kate appears to deviate from the taming genre insofar as she is at least as famous for her silences as for her scolding tongue. As Frances E. Dolan has remarked, "...she is characterized more by silence than by speech at several important points in the play."⁶ Silent as Petruchio confirms the marital arrangement with Baptista, silent as he drags her off to his house after the wedding, and silent about whatever may or may not have motivated her taming, Katherine is perceived as an enigmatic character. She purportedly disallows the Paduan public, and by extension the reader, access to her private thoughts, if indeed, she has any. Dolan continues, "These moments of silence baffle critics, actors, and directors. How do we know what Katharine thinks, feels, and wants?" (24). This is indeed the crucial question to ask of a silent character, and it is the one critics most frequently assign to Katherine, but I am not persuaded that Katherine is as silent or as unknowable as critics would have

her. Katherine strikes me as voluble and accessible. The insensitive behavior of her family and community elicit justifiable reactions from her that reveal a woman who is witty and clever with words, sensitive to public appraisal, versant in the social hierarchy, and cognizant of her own social role. Kate's manner of speaking through most of the play is in fact highly revelatory of both her social identity and her personal subjectivity.

Stereotypically, a "shrew" is a woman with a well-exercised tongue. The shrew speaks, usually pejoratively, in contrast to the ideal woman who is silent. The ballad "The Cruel Shrew" written by Arthur Halliarg (c1625) illustrates shrewish verbosity as the male narrator tells bachelors a cautionary tale of his "unquiet wife,"

She never lins her bawling,
her tongue it is so loud;
But always she'll be railing,
and will not be controlled.... (cited in Dolan 250)

As scholars have frequently remarked, this ballad links women's speech with insubordination. The problem with shrews, then, is not simply that they speak, but that their speech articulates independence and rebellion against authority. Shrews could be either male or female, but when a shrew is female her speech undermines the gender hierarchy naturalized religiously, culturally, and legally in the Renaissance.⁷

Accordingly, when we meet Katherine she is using her considerable wit to insult those who have insulted her, and in doing so demonstrates resistance to their authority over her. Her first lines of the play interrogate her father's desire to marry her off before Bianca, "I pray you, sir, is it your will to make a stale of me amongst these mates?" (1.1.57-8). The clever wordplay of stale (joke or prostitute) and mate (with suggestions of mirroring and marriage, as well as a defaulted chess game) reveal her ready wit and linguistic dexterity. Her query might suggest the fun-loving banter of Much Ado's Beatrice, except she is not speaking to or before an indulgent male community. Interestingly her question does not immediately follow her father's announcement. She actually speaks directly after

Gremio's very rude reaction to Baptista's decision, "To cart her rather," he says, "She's too rough for me" (1.1.55). Does Katherine speak at this point because she has been publicly insulted, and her father has inexplicably allowed it?⁸ Katherine specifically addresses her complaint to her hierarchical head, her father, not Gremio her insulter, drawing Baptista's attention to Gremio's slight and Baptista's failure to provide the social protection a father is obliged to offer. Minimally Baptista himself should respond to Gremio's insult, maximally he would not put her in a social position destined to disappoint so many bachelors. Even after Katherine's reminder, though, Baptista fails to respond thereby allowing Horatio to criticize her as well. Katherine's anger magnifies, along with her verbosity. The curiosity here rightly ought to be upon the men of Padua who so defy common courtesy as to publicly insult a woman, and upon Baptista for permitting it. Their symbolic violence reveals this dysfunctional patriarchy's failure to care for those it subjects.

Again, Pierre Bourdieu offers some helpful sociological terminology. The behavior of any given agent, the Paduan men or Katherine, for example, can be termed their *habitus*, their subjective dispositions that derive from the objective conditions of the field in which they are considered. In this case there are two *fields*: the metatheatrical one of Sly's world, and the patriarchal Paduan community, which may be a stand-in for England itself in the minds of the play's auditors. Within the patriarchal *field* of her community, we see that Katherine, in her *habitus*, is socially ostracized for her failure to perform in accord with social *doxa*. *Doxa*, in Bourdieu's definition, are the prevailing beliefs and values of a sociality that are naturalized into authority; the "presuppositions...of the game" (66). The patriarchal *doxa* so ingrained in the Paduans, however, has failed to accommodate a woman who does not want to be publicly taunted and humiliated, but has no one to defend her. Katherine's *habitus* arises from these

neglectful characteristics of the *doxa*.⁹ Thus the *field* of Padua is implicitly criticized for the distortions of patriarchy manifest in Baptista, Gremio and Hortensio. Katherine's failure to recognize or participate in the doxic requirement for feminine silence reveals her social ignorance, however. Katherine does not understand the nature of social identity as it is constructed in the play. Her *habitus*, her social being, experiences the consequences of misconstruing the *doxa* in which she is situated: she is bereft of social capital and unmarriageable.

By calling her, quite publicly, "rough" and "devilish," Gremio and Hortensio simultaneously affirm and insure the community's, and the reader's, understanding of Kate's character. As Althusser has demonstrated, to interpellate Katherine with shrewish monikers is the social equivalent of making her a shrew.¹⁰ Likewise, the public name-calling insures that she will be a shrew since it, and Baptista's failure to respond to it, elicits an outraged response from Katherine. In this way Katherine participates in constructing her shrewish reputation: she verbally objects to her mis/treatment in the community, trading insults, threats, and even violence. Theoretically both the community and Katherine herself are invested in maintaining this arrangement. Although Katherine objects and complains, her objections and complaints reinscribe her role. Although the community rejects her for her shrewishness, they nonetheless continue to publicly offend and humiliate her. Even Baptista and Bianca scapegoat Katherine, benefiting presumably, from their own subsequent social inclusion. The cycle is mutually affirming in that it offers both Katherine and Padua confidence in their rhetorical epistemology and performative sociality. By calling Katherine a shrew, Padua insures that she will be one; by responding to the insult, Katherine is assured of her social role and how to fulfill it.

Is it only a role? Is she actually a lovely girl, as obedient as the best of them? It seems unlikely. Katherine's participation in her interpellated identity suggests that she behaves this way willingly. While options were few for women, the one choice Katherine certainly has is to remain silent in the face of her offenders. She does not, and is construed as a shrew. Her continuing participation in assuring her social ostracism, coupled with her private behavior indicates that Kate is indeed "cursed." Nonetheless, this initial exchange in the community suggests that her shrewish identity is not so simply constructed. The complicity of Baptista, Gremio and Horatio demonstrate the personal force of *doxa* and social ostracism. The shared belief in Katherine's irascibility held by the Paduan men must be seen as culpable in shaping the reality not only of the Paduan community but of Katherine herself. Though she does not choose silence Katherine does verbally defy her accusers, but succeeds only in cementing their accusations. It is unclear how much of her shrewish speech derives from a shrewish nature and how much from a reaction to a socially unjust persecution. Just as the servant's treatment of Sly creates a new identity for him, so do the Paduan men make Katherine into a shrew. That both Sly and Katherine participate in this creation reveals the epistemic power of *doxa*, of social beliefs, as they are manifested in public speech. In other words, shrewishness has become a *habitus* for Kate—an identity she might perform that makes space for her within the confining *doxa* of her community.

It is useful, at this point, to bring Bianca into our analysis for the contrast she offers to our understanding both of Kate's speech and the Renaissance ideal of silent women. The sisters' relationship is fraught with tension and competition. Early on we see Bianca pleading to be released from the ties with which Katherine has bound her, but Katherine demands first to know which of the suitors Bianca prefers, warning her not to dissemble. The warning completes a chain of metadramatic references that not only offer

our only early access to Bianca's interiority but link her *habitus* with performance, and consequently insincerity. As Baptista bustles Bianca indoors after pronouncing his plan for the marital disposition of his daughters, Kate expresses frustration with his favoritism, "A pretty peat! It is best / Put finger in the eye, and she knew why" (1.1.78-9). The implication here is that Bianca, as the favored daughter, should summon some artificial tears to show her own displeasure with Baptista's decision. Presumably her tears would flow naturally if she felt true frustration or sorrow, but there are no tears and Katherine refers to a theatrical trick to make the eyes water insinuating that Bianca often uses such tricks to gain Baptista's sympathy. Further, this moment echoes one in the induction when the Lord advises Barthol'mew to use an onion to elicit tears in his performance. These layered metadramatic moments remind auditors of the representational *field* in which these agents move, suggesting that Bianca is role-playing before her father and all of Padua. Bianca is not an entirely persuasive performer, however. Katherine, at least, believes she is something other than what she seems. Certainly Bianca's response to Baptista articulates a suspiciously conventional obedience "Sir, to your pleasure I humbly subscribe" (1.1.81.). Katherine's eagerness to fulfill the role of shrew, coupled with her suspicions of Bianca indicate that she, unlike Bianca, is not pretending to be something she isn't. Socially influenced or not, she is a shrew. Bianca's nature, on the other hand, remains unclear.

Access to Bianca's interiority, unlike Katherine's is thwarted at most early attempts. Overhearing Katherine's bickering in the initial scene, Tranio sees some entertainment to be enjoyed, but Lucentio is enraptured by Bianca, "But in the other's silence do I see / Maid's mild behavior and sobriety" (1.1.70-1). Tranio responds, "Well said, master. Mum, and gaze your fill" (1.1.73). Tranio lightly mocks Lucentio's confused construction of both sentence and senses. His synesthetic eyes see silence, and

through silence he knows Bianca. To him, her silence epitomizes desirable maidenly qualities: mildness and sobriety, and as he says minutes later, wisdom and modesty as well. And yet Bianca's interiority is in no way accessed at this moment. Lucentio's epistemology reveals more about him than it does about the woman he professes to love. Lucentio's *habitus* conforms to the *doxa* of patriarchy; there is no need to know more of Bianca than her silence. Bianca's silence transparently conveys her chastity and obedience. It is clear that her *habitus*, like Lucentio's, conforms to the dominating *doxa*. She performs the role of the ingénue, represents the maidenly ideal, and the suitors fall for it. Bianca's prosaic obedience before the watchful audience of her suitors combined with Katherine scoff at its sincerity suggests, however, that Bianca is not what she seems. For the audience, Bianca's contextual silence and the theatrical fractures that accompany it suspiciously mystify her character's interiority.¹¹

Accordingly Katherine's interrogation of Bianca's romantic desire does not prove especially revealing about Bianca. Bianca answers Katherine's question of which suitor she prefers in an unspecific manner: "Believe me, sister, of all the men alive / I never yet beheld that special face / Which I could fancy more than any other" (1.2.10-12). It is possible this answer is true; it is not textually apparent whether Bianca notices Lucentio, her future husband, as he gazes on her. But the response does not, as the question required, select one among her suitors as most favorable. Instead Bianca enlarges her circle of suitors to include all men alive, apparently deferring her answer until the time that she is able to choose between that inconceivably vast collection. Whether or not this is supposed to be a legitimate response, Katherine disbelieves her and Bianca's subsequent taunting of Katherine by offering up her own suitors for Katherine's love suggests that Bianca may be dissembling in order to annoy Katherine. Bianca's silence and her mask of orthodox behavior construct her, not Katherine, as the

inaccessible entity. This epistemic challenge, of knowing the reality of silence and seemingly appropriate behavior, lies at the heart of Claudio and Hero's conflict in Much Ado About Nothing. Claudio's suspicion is that silence and obedience are only the "sign and semblance" of virtue, not its substance. In this play, Katherine alone is suspicious about Bianca. "Her silence flouts me," she says of Bianca (2.1.29). Katherine construes Bianca's silence not as virtue, but as a weapon of social warfare or means of deception. Katherine's rejection of this manner of behavior suggests that Katherine herself would not dissemble her true feelings, that she would not deceive or withhold information about herself from others. Thus Katherine's speeches, shrewish or otherwise, make her knowable to her community and to auditors of the play. Her articulation offers us access to her interiority. But Bianca's silence reads as an intentional social action designed to secure her agency via performativity.

Bianca's suitors and her father all appear to be persuaded by Bianca's performance, at least for awhile. Apart from Tranio's initial hesitation to participate in Lucentio's reading of Bianca, most of the men do engage in what Elizabeth Gruber calls "ventriloquism, ...knowledge-seekers projecting their ideas onto inert objects."¹² Bianca is not precisely inert, but her intentional performance of silence and obedience render her as much an object as is humanly possible. The bartering for her hand in marriage emphasizes her objectified status. As Baptista remarks of the marital arrangements, "...now I play a merchant's part / And venture madly on a desperate mart" (2.1.318). She is a necessary commodity in establishing a noble household. Just as Sly was not persuaded of his new status until presented with a tearful wife, Padua is filled with bachelors eager to marry and secure their own respectable social position. The whole appeal of the silent and obedient maiden to the Renaissance man is her supposed inability to act apart from his will. She is necessary, but she is, as Natasha Korda has argued,

simply another luxury good solidifying her husband's reputation.¹³ As Gruber has demonstrated, this illusion of control over the wife corresponds with an illusion of knowledge. Like many male knowledge-seekers, Lucentio, at the moment of seeking to know Bianca, fails to understand that he is actually projecting his own idealization of femininity onto her; he is not actually knowing her. It's worthwhile to reprint here a portion of Gruber's argument about Othello as it pertains to the issues of knowledge-gathering and subjectivity we're considering in Shrew:

In assigning to its hero the prerogatives of the knower, Othello shows how subject/object relations are embodied in gender difference and staged in the arena of epistemology. This dynamic proves typical of calumniated-woman plays. Such texts appear to raise questions about the identity and existence, even the ontological essence of a particular woman, but the relevant narratives actually focus upon the torment and desire of man: it is his knowledge, usually hard-won, that defines the epistemological journey inherent in the calumniated-woman genre. In proper Cartesian fashion, it is the knower – the man who seeks knowledge of his wife – who is endowed with subjectivity. (395)

Lucentio's reading of Bianca's silence, then, subjectifies him and objectifies her. As such it is an effective epistemology only insofar as one is seeking to know themselves. It offers little in the way of knowledge about that which is apart from the self, thus placing Lucentio in a precarious position of unacknowledged ignorance: he doesn't know that he doesn't know.

Gruber's argument goes on to parallel, as does Elizabeth Hanson, the knowledge quest as an act of torture, ending as it does in Othello, Cary's The Tragedy of Mariam, and in Elizabethan treason trials in the physical restraint, torture, and/or death of the questor's object.¹⁴ As the citation from Gruber indicates, she finds the relationship of questor for knowledge and object of knowledge as uniquely male and female, respectively. In Shrew however, as we've just seen, it is Katherine who objectifies Bianca, binding and striking her in an effort to access Bianca's silence and ascertain its meaning. The play's narrative, like the ones Gruber refers to, focuses on the "torment

and desire” of the knowledge-seeker, Katherine, and thereby Katherine is the one subjectified in her epistemological quest. Katherine’s methodology is also peculiarly masculine insofar as she must immobilize the object of her quest. As Gruber writes of epistemic endeavors, the seeker “...will only have knowledge of his object once she has been immobilized” (398). Bianca’s silence was sufficient for Lucentio to read her as an object, but Katherine must physically restrain her and even strike her in an attempt to access her interiority. This may be because, as a woman and close relation to Bianca, she knows better than to assume what silence means. And yet, Katherine interprets Bianca in a manner similar to Lucentio’s ventriloquism. After Bianca confesses her inability to answer Katherine’s question, their brief exchange continues:

Katherine: Minion thou liest. Is’t not Hortensio?
Bianca: If you affect him, sister, here I swear
I’ll plead for you myself but you shall have him.
Katherine: O then, belike, you fancy riches more:
You will have Gremio to keep you fair. (2.1.13-17)

Although Bianca continues to evade answering directly, Katherine nonetheless interprets her evasions as sufficient evidence of a response. She rejects Bianca’s lack of a favorite as a lie, and when Bianca fails to say that Hortensio is her favorite, Katherine assumes it must be Gremio’s wealth that is most attractive. Katherine’s investigation of Bianca’s interiority is undoubtedly more thorough than Lucentio’s “ocular” effort, but it results in the same epistemological error, her own subjectifying and Bianca’s objectifying, and it fails to reveal Bianca’s true nature. Katherine usurps the uniquely male position of knowledge-questor in this scene, deploying masculine tactics and claiming a masculinized victory. Thus she is further revealed as a shrew: she not only fails to submit to masculine authority, she assumes that authority for herself. In her masculine subjectivity, she remains fully accessible as a character. She demonstrates the transparency that Othello makes claim to: her words and deeds reveal her self. Although

we're critically accustomed to thinking of Katherine as unknowable, at this early stage she is quite plainly accessed. Is this plain-speaking transparency surprising given that she has been raised—apart from feminine example—in a masculinized *doxa* where plain-speaking, even insult-hurling speech is the norm? As Bourdieu has described, Katherine's shrewish *habitus*, though self-defeating, legitimates the *doxa* by exercising its dominant modes of discourse and knowledge-gathering.

Of course, Bianca was raised in the same community and yet she seems to be the feminine ideal. What accounts for the difference? Bianca herself offers the explanation when, dismissed by Baptista, she obediently retreats indoors saying, "My books and instruments shall be my company, / On them to look and practice by myself" (1.1.82-3). Bianca echoes the Induction's Lord who plans to "practice" his deception on Sly. Hearing this reverberation of the theatrical *field*, the meaning of Bianca's statement is altered from that which it conveys to Baptista and the Paduan bachelors. They may hear a plaintive loneliness, but attentive readers or audience members hear that she will use artistic precedents with which to rehearse her performances. She will play the woman art has idealized: chaste, silent and obedient. Patricia Parker notes this use of artistic precedent in her examination of Bianca's lessons, revealing that Bianca "construes" these precedents in such a way that resists and shows up her *doxic*, would-be tutors.¹⁵ The scene begins with the two arguing over who gets to sit with Bianca first, and interestingly, it is Bianca who decides saying:

Why, gentlemen, you do me doubly wrong
To strive for that which resteth in my choice.
I am no breeching scholar in the schools.
I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,
But learn my lessons as I please myself. (3.1.16-20)

This speech could quite easily come from the mouth of Katherine, asserting her right to choose not only when she studies, but with whom as well. It is a vocal claim of

autonomy, and thus shrewish. Furthermore, Bianca acquiesces to Lucentio's teaching only provisionally. "I must believe my master, else, I promise you / I should be arguing still upon that doubt." When Hortensio reveals himself in a similar manner to Lucentio, Bianca swiftly and carelessly rejects his efforts. He is not her choice, so his "masterly" game is not worth playing. Her claim at this point is that "old fashions please me best; I am not so nice / to change true rules for odd inventions" (3.1.78-9). Since she has just responded favorably to Lucentio's "odd inventions" this is disingenuous. Further, she returns at this point to claiming preference for the old, established ways. This might be understood as traditional roles for men and women and traditional avenues of wooing. In a few short lines Bianca moves from the independent scholar to one who claims the role of blushing schoolgirl just as that patriarchal trope best serves her purposes. "Chaste, silent and obedient" is a costume to be donned and disregarded advantageously. And Hortensio is no longer persuaded by this performance. He threatens to drop her swiftly if she is as forward as her "wand'ring" and "ranging" eyes suggest. Bianca knows the role she is to play, but this scene, clearly reveals the willful woman behind the silence who is happy to manipulate her public perception to get what it is she really wants.

Interestingly, were Bianca to play the role of innocent ingénue in this scene we would have no access to her personal desires. It is because she speaks, and speaks with willful intention, that we and Hortensio finally begin to access her interiority. Her maidenly silence has been a performance, then, not the true Bianca. And really, there can be little doubt that a woman who elopes with her chosen mate without her father's approval, is a woman unafraid to assert her own will and agency. Bianca's independent willfulness in the final wager scene should surprise no one.

Rhetoric and performance aside, however, Bianca's self-silencing and evasion is her most effective tactic. Consider once more her maneuvering during Katherine's

inquisition. We've already noted the ambiguity of her response to Katherine's direct question about her favorite. When Katherine asks specifically about Hortensio, Bianca again evades answering. Her response however mirrors that of Katherine's. She interprets Katherine's query as if it has supplied her with information rather than required information from her. She assumes that Katherine is asking after Hortensio because she desires him for herself. Katherine has not said this, nor does she indicate so at any point, but in this way Bianca taunts her suitor-less sister with her own bounty. However, the epistemological maneuver of reading information about the questioner back into the question mimics what Lucentio, Baptista, and Katherine all do to her. It is a brilliant reverse ventriloquism. Bianca's use of this tactic enacts the stereotypical male/female relationship model of reflection, wherein the female is like the moon which reflects the light of the sun or male. This simile of course is employed later in the play at a crucial point in Kate's transformation. Bianca's is an utterly feminine gesture in the Renaissance *doxa* and would be deserving of all praise, but for the fact that she uses her ability to reflect as both a shield and a weapon. Enacting the sun/moon paradigm successfully deflects Katherine's attempt to access Bianca's private thoughts, at the same time that it further defeminizes Kate. But deploying this gendered ideal at the moment of questioning turns what is perceived as ideal into a type of power play, a tactic or militaristic maneuver. Michel DeCerteau in "The Practice of Everyday Life" divides social forces into strategic or tactical powers. Dominating powers are strategic in the sense that they have a landscape to defend and from which to prepare a plan to maintain and gain authority. Tactics, on the other hand, have no spatial location. They are the responses of the disenfranchised Other to the dominant powers or paradigms. By maintaining silence, those in impotent positions are able to exercise potent hegemony-resisting tactics that simultaneously create individual subjectivity while subtly

challenging and even changing the dominant geography.¹⁶ Self-silencers make space, take ground, on which to exercise social agency as personal entities. As Christina Luckyj writes in her study of silence, "...feminine silence becomes a useful instrument for making the limits of masculine discursive control and knowledge."¹⁷ Insofar as silence and reflection enable unaccessed interiority, they also enable agency. Keeping private one's identity or other information, knowledge of any sort, preserves it from public exploitation but also renders it useful only to that individual. In a sort of theft by omission, the community as a whole and individually are rendered impotent to act upon complete information. As such Bianca's silence reveals a key point in The Taming of the Shrew: silence and reflection are socially symbolic capital. With this maneuver, Bianca unobtrusively stakes out a new landscape in which the community is forced to navigate blindly and unknowingly in their social interaction with and about her.

Bianca's control over her social community dramatically contrast with Katherine's lack of power. Often what seems to be self-silencing from Katherine at moments when we expect raillery is actually a consequence of the inefficacy of her rhetoric highlighting her oppression. She has made it abundantly clear to Baptista that she is "forced/to give my hand opposed against my heart..." (3.2.8-9), but Baptista requires it anyway and so she is silent throughout the ceremony (as Gremio recounts it). She verbally resists leaving the wedding feast, but is unceremoniously hauled forth anyway, to the jeering laughter of the Paduan community. Katherine's forced removal from her wedding reception is often cited as a key moment of silence inexplicable in a shrew, yet she is not so much silent, as without recourse within the *doxa* for the indignities she endures. Her transparently rebellious speech avails her nothing; she is physically ineffectual at securing personal liberty; and is denied any social or familial protection. Thus it is only when she is bereft of resistant methodologies that she is quiet.

Her only exercise of subjective autonomy is in her speech. An unwilling student at Petruchio's "shrew-taming school," Kate is still speaking her mind, still utterly transparent. She articulates the way in which speaking is the only space afforded her subjective being:

Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak,
And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.
Your betters have endured me say my mind,
And if you cannot, best stop your ears.
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,
Or else my heart, concealing it, will break,
And rather than it shall I will be free,
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words. (4.3.73-80)

This claim for free speech is most revelatory of Katherine's interiority, even her personal philosophy. Katherine's emphasis is on her freedom of speech; she makes no claims here for her physical liberation, she asserts only that she will be free in words. This assertion affirms much of what we have seen of Katherine throughout the play. Even while she does what is objectionable to her (releasing Bianca, marrying Petruchio, leaving her reception), she nonetheless always lets the community know how she feels about these circumstances. Although she attempts to attain her will physically, she succeeds only in asserting it verbally. To this point in the play Katherine has been completely transparent and knowable. The "silent shrew" is only ever quiet when her words have been spent in vain and she is compelled to do that which is disagreeable to her.

Throughout the play, then, Katherine's subjectivity is accessible via speech. Her criticisms of Bianca suggest that she abhors hypocrisy and we can see that she is verbally demonstrative, striving to represent her true self to her community. While this behavior is admirable in a man it has proved to be Katherine's undoing. She is without adequate social protection from Baptista, and has taken to speaking on her own behalf in public. In accordance with this effort, she has embraced a very masculine epistemology seeking to know and be known by honest appearances and speech, as is clear from her estrangement

from Bianca. This enactment of masculine behavioral ideals unsurprisingly earns Katherine the “shrew” appellation, and her uncomfortable “stale” description as an obstacle to Bianca’s hand in marriage is a pointed result of her social ostracism. Bianca, on the other hand, demonstrates a canner understanding of social expectations. She mimics feminine behavior as demonstrated in the arts and performs the role of the “ideal ingénue.” She is obedient to her father, silent before suitors, and objectified by all. This objectification is in no way a hindrance to Bianca’s goals however. When bound and interrogated by Katherine, Bianca turns the tables on her sister and infuriates her by refusing to answer questions directly, by using a screen of maidenly chastity to demur more explicit responses, and by enacting the sun/moon reflection paradigm in such a way as to make it a weapon against Katherine, masculinizing her and repulsing her attempt to know Bianca. Bianca’s objectification, to the point that she is bound and beaten at her sister’s hands, is turned into a strategic power move. She maintains her subjectivity, her personal agency and identity, by using the objectification to screen her more ambitious and self-defining activities.

Given the social ideals of transparency, Bianca’s type of metadramatic subterfuge may seem an especially feminine technique. But the disguises donned by Lucentio and Hortensio (as well as Tranio and Vincentio) should suggest that duping the public is by no means the domain of the enigmatic ingénue. Rather, it is commonplace within their social *field*. Tranio is linked to the Inductions’s Sly insofar as their disguise grants them greater social class and its corresponding privileges. Juliet Dusinberre argues that Tranio subordinates Lucentio, “killing him” with his extraordinary success in language and communication.¹⁸ Interestingly though, instead of experiencing a “death,” Lucentio’s lowered social position liberates him to obtain his own desires while Tranio subverts his own subjectivity in order to satisfy the Paduan community’s expectations.

Just as Sly cannot get ale as a Lord (Ind.2.1-12), the public scrutiny of upper class persons seems to limit their subjective options. Social scrutiny exerts dramatic pressure for conformation to norms and ideals. In The Taming of the Shrew, this pressure is so powerful it requires subversion and performativity in order to maintain personal agency. Petruchio too uses this type of performance to obtain his personal goals, and this appears to be the gist of his “taming” methodology. He seems eager to persuade Katherine that she need only disguise her true self to be able to pursue her private interests. As Dusi Berre concludes, there is freedom in bondage (182). That bondage is the necessity of public performance, disguise, and deception yoked with private inscrutability. Although Katherine adheres to what she believes to be the *doxic* norm of rhetorical transparency, Petruchio’s scheme reveals this as a misapprehension. He better conforms to the Paduan sociality of disguise and deception by making speech as inscrutable as silence.

Petruchio begins his taming of Katherine by publicly constructing her identity in way heretofore unknown in Padua. In conversation with Baptista and other, Katherine’s *habitus* is verbally costumed in idealized garb.¹⁹ It is a start to the type of protective behavior a woman could theoretically expect from those responsible for and in authority over her. His true beliefs about Katherine are irrelevant. More to the point is that he portrays Katherine as a desirable woman to the Paduan men, and in so doing constructs himself as a loving, protective catch of a husband. While speech for Katherine and Bianca is always revelatory, Petruchio’s speech is of an entirely different nature. Petruchio is the only character in Shrew to speak soliloquies, which are generically supposed to afford us access to the character’s interiority, and accordingly the play’s auditors tend to feel as if they know Petruchio. His subjectivity appears accessible and well-motivated because he has spoken to us directly. The soliloquies themselves,

however, are remarkably impersonal. They do reveal tactics, but they do not ultimately tell us much about Petruchio's motivations, desires or character. His first soliloquy introduces his methodological approach to winning Katherine.

I'll attend her here
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with dew.
Say she be mute and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks
As though she bid me stay by her a week.
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns and when be married.
But here she comes, and now, Petruchio, speak. (2.1.168-181)

Petruchio anticipates Katherine's shrewish nature; he expects her to "rail," "frown," be mute," and "bid me pack." So he plots to intentionally misconstrue her words and meaning so that she is made charming and their marriage decided. Wayne A. Rebhorn describes Petruchio as a "rhetor": one who uses identity-shaping language to create an artificial or self-constructed identity.²⁰ Here Petruchio uses that talent to recreate Katherine. Undoubtedly, as many have criticized, Petruchio's refusal to listen to Katherine amounts to her objectification. Her desires, her will, even her very nature would be negated and transformed into Petruchio's vision of her. Nonetheless, Petruchio's soliloquy sets this up as a game, we might say a play, a performance with a role for himself and one for Katherine. The fact that Petruchio pre-scripts the encounter tells us something of his taming methodology – to cross and re-interpellate Katherine – but it does not ultimately reveal much about his own motivations or desires. In fact, the soliloquy only reveals that he is plotting a performance, not who he is as an actor or suitor. The anticipated intimate insight of a soliloquy is thus thwarted by a rehearsal of lines, rather than a revelation of identity. Like the play within a play, this speech plots a

performance and thus puts us at two removes from Petruchio's presumed interiority. Although it does reveal his goal (marriage) and his methodology, it also tells us that speech, like silence, can fail to represent. Petruchio traffics only in public perception, not in private revelation. He thus joins Bianca, Lucentio, Tranio and Hortensio in the *doxa* of social deception.

Given Petruchio's interest in recreating Katherine's public identity, it is utterly appropriate that his first words to her re-name her, "Good morrow, Kate, for that's your name, I hear" (2.1.182). He persists in the diminution of her name, despite her correction, and proceeds to reconstruct her identity idealistically as pretty and dainty. After much bantering, Katherine finally recognizes his speech for the performance that it is inquiring, "Where did you study all this goodly speech?" (2.1.256). In response, Petruchio (possibly physically subduing Katherine) speaks to her "plainly,"

Marry, so I mean, sweet Katherine, in thy Bed.
And therefore, setting all this chat aside,
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife, your dowry 'greed on,
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn,
For, by this light, whereby I see thy beauty—
Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well—
Thou must be married to no man but me.
Or I am he am born to tame you Kate,
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate,
Conformable as other household Kates.
Here comes your Father. Never make denial;
I must and will have Katherine to my wife. (2.1.259-272)

Speaking to Katherine in her own plain terms, Petruchio reveals his marital intentions. This "plain" speech does not tell us much about Petruchio, however. Is he marrying her for the money or her beauty, as he says, in order to prove his masculinity? Or perhaps some other, un-revealed reason? Petruchio's soliloquy's and monologues reveal nothing other than his intentions and his own wit.²¹ As to his rhetoric, however, Petruchio calls Katherine by her full name when he speaks directly to her, but uses the appellation Kate

when he is articulating the new identity he wishes to devolve upon her. Re-naming Katherine distinguishes a social identity from a private one. He offers to share his social play, gives her a role in his performance. Not surprisingly Katherine does not accept this part, perhaps because it seems to diminish her identity as well as her name.²²

Nonetheless, Petruchio's speech is actually another form of silence, and it suggests that there is another way of speaking available to Katherine: to tell tales, to perform the role of Kate who is the social ideal. And to use Kate as a prop or costume, behind which Katherine may be liberated.

Petruchio's outlandish wedding attire is another effort to teach Katherine the benefits of outward conformity. He establishes a link between speech and clothing—both are socially informative and subject to judgment, but neither are adequate epistemologies. Petruchio draws a distinction between what is exterior and what is interior, only now he has put on the socially unacceptable costume. Previously he performed the social ideal, presumably hoping to show Katherine the ease with which one might be accepted in society without necessarily compromising personal integrity. Yet she failed to absorb the performance metaphor, so he has switched roles, now. He is to be the “shrew” by making physically manifest the contrary behavior that has won Katherine ostracism. To the Paduan community he insists on the separation between his public appearance and his private self, “To me she's married, not unto my clothes,” he says (3.2.117). This costume, however, succeeds in mystifying his subjectivity.²³ Unlike Katherine, however, who was always explicit about her feelings and motivations, Petruchio is now an enigmatic character who assures the Paduans that he is still rational, but offers no satisfactory explanation for his behavior. The reversal ruse is successful. He out-shrews Katherine during the ceremony with his perverse attire and drunken behavior. Gremio calls him a devil and says that by comparison, Katherine is “a lamb, a

dove, a fool to him” (3.2.157). Petruchio’s efforts to transform public opinion about his wife are succeeding. His ridiculous costume and behavior, as well as his uncharitable insistence on a premature departure from the wedding feast, aligns Katherine with the community, marking him the social outcast. In other words, his socially unacceptable behavior offers Katherine a taste of social inclusion that warrants a comparison of his anti-social behavior and her own. Although the community dismisses them both, Katherine has experienced a moment of social solidarity she seems eager to recreate at Petruchio’s home. Her opposition settles now directly upon him, rather than the community at large.

Apart from the effects upon Katherine, Petruchio’s “performance” at the wedding seems directed as much to the Paduans as it does to her. Bourdieu speaks of thresholds, “where the antagonistic principles confront one another and the world is reversed” (228). The social world of The Taming of the Shrew presents just such a threshold in the wedding of Katherine to Petruchio. Bourdieu suggests that “the function of the rites that accompany...marriage is to disguise and thereby sanction the collision of two opposing principles” (234). Their personal opposition is enacted in the stichomythia of their first encounter, but Katherine’s shrewish *habitus* is prompted largely by the failures of the patriarchy to afford Katherine either social protection or independent liberty. Bourdieu would have us identify “the precise locus of the threshold, where the order of things turns upside down...” (233). The social reversal does not lie within the theatre of Sly’s transformation which never forgets it is a performance, but behind it within the Paduan (English Renaissance) patriarchy which does not recognize performativity and where women are problematically perceived as objects who can be known, controlled and traded. Bourdieu sees social rituals such as marriage ceremonies operating as false representations.

The whole truth of magic and collective belief is contained in this game of twofold objective truth, a double game played with truth, through which the group, the source of all objectivity, in a sense lies to itself, by producing a truth whose sole function and meaning are to deny a truth known and recognized by all, a lie that would deceive no one, were not everyone determined to deceive himself. (234)

Petruchio disrupts this ritual, calling out its deception in the language of performance and patriarchy. In addition to undermining the expectations of appearance and sober behavior during the ceremony, he says of Katherine at the feast, "I will be master of what is mine own. She is my goods, my chattels...my household stuff...my anything" (3.2.229-230). In articulating the patriarchal treatment of women as objects, he reveals the objectification the marriage rite sought to deny. His transparency in regards to the essential meaninglessness of fashion and ritual, as well as his verbal mockery of patriarchy mark him as the social shrew. Petruchio initiates a reversal between he and Katherine, but the message is available to the sociality as a whole.

An exchange between Grumio and Curtis offers some insight into Petruchio's shift from normative behavior to socially reprehensible behavior. Grumio promises a tale if Curtis will lend his ear. When proffered, Grumio proceeds to beat the ear. Curtis announces, "This 'tis to feel a tale, not to hear a tale" (4.1.60). Katherine too has failed to hear Petruchio's "tale" or to take her role in his play. Now she will "feel" the tale. She will experience, firsthand, the perverse effects of speaking social truth in a socially unacceptable manner. She will be, as the servant Peter says, killed "in her own humour" (4.1. 174). And it is to be a "murder" of Katherine's shrewish character, a social death, like Hero's in Much Ado About Nothing, contrived so that Kate, the woman who performs socially acceptable behavior in order to preserve her personal autonomy, might live.²⁴ Katherine's inability or unwillingness to learn, as Bianca does, through story or literary precedent requires that she learn through uncomfortable physical experience. As

Marjorie Garber has said about Sly, the new surroundings, unfamiliar people, and curious social treatment create an environment ripe for transformation. Katherine is not only in a new home, with new servants, but she is barely married, with a new master, uncertain as to her own place in Petruchio's world. It is the opportune moment, as Petruchio contrives it, to "tame" his shrewish wife. However, unlike Sly in his drunken stupor, excluded from the Lord and his men in the induction sharing what Garber calls a "private joke," Katherine is alert and witness to the transformation of her setting and circumstance.²⁵ Technically, she is in on the joke. Or, if she doesn't get the humor, she nonetheless watches its staging, and is even privy to its fundamentally performative nature. It is possible she hears Hortensio promise the tailor payment, Petruchio certainly tells her repeatedly what he is up to, and Hortensio himself, instructs her how to play her role. If Petruchio is engaging in pedagogy, he makes it very clear to Katherine that she is to be his student, however much she, like Bianca and Sly, is an unwilling pupil and performer.

Petruchio speaks again to the audience/reader in soliloquy explaining that he tames Katherine as one would tame a wild hawk: deprivation engendering dependence. While comparing Katherine to a hawk is surely no compliment, it does speak to the nature of the Paduan (and English Renaissance) society: women are dependent upon men for their physical needs such as clothes, food and shelter. These things were not rights to which women were legally entitled, although it was *doxically* expected that honorable men would provide for women in their care in this way. Baptista's indulgence of Katherine's shrewishness failed to express to Katherine her ultimate dependence upon him or upon social approbation. Her reputation in the community surely kept her from marrying and in consequence, endangered her own livelihood. Petruchio's methodology seems designed to reveal to Katherine both her dependence and the value of social inclusion. Indeed Katherine says, "But I, who never knew how to entreat / Nor never

needed that I should entreat / Am starved for meat..." (4.3.7-9). The "lesson" Petruchio teaches, though, goes beyond reminding Katherine of her social vulnerability.²⁶ Petruchio claims to temporarily deprive Katherine of basic necessities out of love. And it can be understood as a type of love, if we see that the temporary suffering will offer her long-term benefits in her marriage and community. This lesson comes, as Lucentio's to Bianca, by means of manipulating language and meaning. As Katherine says, "And that which spites me more than all these wants / He does it under name of perfect love" (4.3.11-12). Katherine finds this particularly challenging because as we've already noticed, she is intent on having her words reflect her actual meaning. She thinks it impossible that Petruchio's lesson could be for her own good, so she feels frustrated at his apparent hypocrisy. While Katherine asserts her right to speak freely and honestly, Petruchio responds in the tailor scene with a series of verbal miscues and intentional misunderstandings. Echoing the wedding scene, Petruchio again uses clothing as an instrument of pedagogy by misrepresenting the quality of the gown made for Katherine. When she complains, saying Petruchio wants to "make a puppet" of her. Petruchio intentionally misunderstands her to be referring to the tailor not himself. When the tailor clarifies Katherine's intended target, Petruchio heaps a tirade of insults upon the tailor. This reaction is interesting because Petruchio is not angry that Katherine has accused him of puppetry. His anger is directed to the tailor who has repeated her insult, thereby marring Katherine's own reputation. The tailor's crime is reporting behavior that reflects negatively on Katherine, and it is this utterance that incites Petruchio's temper. What follows is an extended, humorous exchange between Petruchio, Grumio and the tailor on the imprecision of language.

Tailor: ...Grumio gave order how it should be done.

Grumio: I gave him no order; I gave him the stuff.

Tailor: But how did you desire it should be made?

Grumio: Marry, sir, with needle and thread. (4.3.117-120)

Following so closely upon Katherine's assertion of the importance of her plain, freely uttered speech, this episode cannot but require her to recognize the possibility for misstatement and misunderstanding. Freedom to speak is one thing, but there is no guarantee that speech will be understood as intended. Language is not always a reliable communicator of meaning, nor is it necessary that it be so. There is social capital to be gained in politic dissembling.

Katherine's failure to grasp this idea is finally remedied by Petruchio and Hortensio both using the same plain, revelatory speech that Katherine herself uses. Petruchio says, "It shall be moon or star or what I list, / Or ere I journey to your father's house" (4.5.7-8). He is explicit here, that for their relationship to progress, she must acquiesce to his words, not her own ideas. Hortensio cements the lesson saying, "Say as he says or we shall never go" (4.5.11). Hortensio's meaning is perhaps a clarification of Petruchio's. He doesn't urge her to be persuaded that the sun is the moon, he urges her to simply agree with Petruchio in order to get what they all desire. Katherine needs to echo what Petruchio says, it doesn't matter whether or not it is truth. This is the type of non-revelatory speech, even hypocritical speech that enables social interaction. Conformable speech affords social agency and averts the symbolic violence of ostracism. It may be the first time Katherine has realized the benefit in speaking other than what she believes. She quickly tells Petruchio that whatever he says is truth for her. It is the moment of "taming." She speaks as if she is submissive to Petruchio, yet she has only been admonished to *speak* in accord with Petruchio, not to speak in accord with her beliefs, ideas or even reality. She has seen that agreeing with Petruchio offers her a social passport. And as he continues with the test, she joins in playfully, the tension in their relationship is noticeably relieved for both of them.²⁷

As Katherine conforms to Petruchio we lose access to her subjectivity. Now her speech, like Petruchio's, veils at least as much as it reveals and we must guess how much of what she says is true and how much is socially performed. In the play's concluding wager scene, Katherine is clearly as sensitive to insult as ever, but she awaits Petruchio's encouragement before avenging the insults of Hortensio's widow. Katherine sees that, in marked contrast to Baptista, Petruchio does support her efforts to defend herself publicly. But we cannot think Katherine tame if she aggressively defends herself when under attack. Her battle with the widow recalls her objection to Gremio's similar insults when first we met Katherine. However her hesitation in reacting, her waiting for Petruchio's approval, suggests that she is, at the very least, respectful of the authoritative dynamic in the marital relationship. She is letting Petruchio determine the social navigability of a situation, and awaiting his call before acting. She no longer needs for her "tongue to tell or her heart to break" now that she may be defended or act in her own defence. When Katherine says, "...our [women's] lances are but straws/Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare..." (5.2.173-4), she speaks of her own experience. Her straw lance was ineffective, transparent rhetoric. Insofar as Petruchio is her "...lord...life...keeper/...head...sovereign" (5.2.146-7), he carves out the space for her subjectivity within the sociality. That space, however, is dependent on her persuasive performance of the social *doxa*. Katherine, a voluble character, is still speaking at the conclusion of the play. She has not become the idealized silent woman. But she is no longer the transparent Katherine of the beginning of the play. Now she is Kate, her public identity, saying what must be said for social acceptance. She now uses speech as Bianca has used silence and Petruchio language: as a costume. Her thoughts remain her own: perhaps she believes her words, perhaps not. And thus, metadramatically, she gains autonomy over her subjectivity. What has been tamed is not Katherine, per se, but her tongue.²⁸

Furthermore, this silencing of the self does not necessarily require actual silence but it does obligate one to politic speech.

Within an epistemic analysis of social relations, Shrew suggests that privacy is desirable and that both speech and silence may be used to deceive or put on a front. There is something ultimately distasteful about absolute transparency in the play; a sense that human subjects are not meant to be bare before one another. Perhaps subjects lose their potency, their individuality and meaning when exposed to public scrutiny. Consequently, characters in this play camouflage or misrepresent their subjectivity in order to maneuver around a restrictive sociality. They create epistemic dilemmas, which in turn create a space behind, in which “real” identities may autonomously exercise agency. In The Taming of the Shrew, the philosophy of social performance is pointed up as a reality requiring not just a philosophic response, but pragmatic management. If performance is the pragmatist’s answer to philosophical skepticism, it is appropriate to use the theatre to make this point. While Puritan critics decried theatrical deception, The Taming of the Shrew acknowledges it as commonplace in human society and not at all extraordinary. Shrew deflates the Puritan argument but never deflates the drama of the Induction’s joke on Sly. Just as the rites that disguise the threshold of opposition are exposed in Petruchio’s abrupt departure from the wedding feast, so are rituals of theatrical representation dismantled and unmasked. The performance is uncontained by the theatre. The *field* of representation is extended to the audience suggesting that there can be no return to reality when reality itself is a performance. The self-silencing of the play, its failure to perform, failure to resolve the Sly storyline, reveal what the community is trying to forget: that transparency is impossible; that both silence and speech are deceptive; that there are no satisfying epistemologies. As the play’s auditors encounter the abbreviated play, their conscious must wrestle with their community’s

similarity to that of Padua: superficial, artificial, and oppressive in regards to both gender and class.

For all the Renaissance concern with transparency, personal subjectivity is not self-determined in a vacuum. It involves the imputation of historical and cultural models and ideals, as well as the cooperation and collaboration of the community. Only Petruchio and Bianca in The Taming of the Shrew seem to understand the communally embedded subject, and the curtailed liberties social interactions entail. To fulfill the community's expectations, one must necessarily repress, hide or dissemble those less-desirable qualities, desires, ambitions or idiosyncrasies that do not fit the social norm. In other words, one must intentionally fail to perform their subjectivity. Thus power is meted according to one's ability to either be silent, like Bianca, or to act the part in which the community has cast you, like Petruchio and eventually Katherine. Both of these strategies, like the representational *field* of theatre itself, create a space for subjectivity that does not correspond with one's fictional representation. But, in addition to posing real economic and social dangers to the community at large, the inherent deceptiveness of self-obscurity violates the ethical values of truth, transparency, and moral exemplarism. Thus the Paduan *doxa* (and the English patriarchy it mirrors) is implicitly criticized for requiring persons to don a *habitus* of deceptive speech and manipulative silence in order to achieve perfectly ordinary aims of marriage and freedom from public persecution.

The self-silencing of women, either in speech or actual silence, is most effective if it is silence which reflects and conceals. Women's silence, as demonstrated between Lucentio and Bianca, reflects social and ethical ideals to the men who look (listen) upon them. In that reflection, men are given an opportunity to contemplate and modify themselves to be in accord with the ideal they perceive, to be worthy of the woman whose possession will elevate their social standing. For men, the woman they see in

silence is like them. She is a reflection of them. Meanwhile, reflecting women create space behind the mirror, so to speak, in which to be themselves. This resonates with the sun/moon metaphor where men are conspicuously public in the sun, while women are occluded in the nighttime sky. Though there is surely repression in that occlusion (women are afforded little opportunity to effect ethical reflection in other women), The Taming of the Shrew suggests that public scrutiny might be an even greater bondage to endure. For women's silence to be effective as a mirror, spotlighting men and concealing women, it must be accomplished unobtrusively. Unlike the silencing of revengers or tricksters which is concerned to register as silence in order to effect ethical transformation, women's silence might be read as "shrewish" dissent if it does not seamlessly blend into prevailing rhetorical paradigms. Scholars exemplify this tendency when reading Katherine's silences as shrewish, rather than defeated. The performative fractures of Bianca's silence likewise reveal her resistant strategies, and thus would serve her ends better if completely sealed. Shrewish Petruchio most thoroughly manages to enact a feminine self-silence (accomplished in speech), reflecting to Katherine how she is perceived and how she might be free. The gendered conflict that arises within the failure of patriarchal ideals feminizes Petruchio and masculinizes Katherine. Petruchio's interiority is never convincingly accessed, yet his facile verbosity means that he has never been understood as a self-silenced character. And that, it seems, would be the goal: to be seen as conformable publicly, while maintaining and protecting (at a remove) one's desires, motivations, and true subjectivity. Thus socially-sanctioned behaviors and speech-acts become the staging ground of a *doxically*-scripted performance that obfuscates both resistance and self-fulfillment. Feminine self-silencing is an epistemologically resistant strategy available to men and women that exercises a *habitus* while simultaneously disengaging from and thus critiquing the ethics of the *doxic field*. It

is strategic subjectivity exercised, as it were, behind enemy lines. But from outside the field of its activation, it reveals the ethical insufficiencies of the populace who are oppressing, evading, and dissembling.

Notes to Ch. 2 “My tongue will tell”: Of Silencing Selves

- ¹ Shakespeare, William, The Taming of the Shrew, Ed. by Robert B. Heilman (New York: Signet Classic, 1999). All citations are to this edition with line numbers noted parenthetically.
- ² For more on scholarly reactions to Katherine’s taming see John Bean, “Comic Structure and the Humanizing of Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*,” The Woman’s Part, Ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: Univ. of IL Press, 1980). The volume of discourse arguing for one answer or another to the Kate question inspired John Bean to coin specific terminology in order to identify the stance articulated by any given scholar/actor/etc: revisionist (reads Katherine’s speech ironically) or anti-revisionist (reads the speech straight). One should not think that reading the speech ironically “revises” historical readings. John Fletcher’s 1611 “The Woman’s Prize, or The Tamer Tamed” makes clear that revisionist readings are also traditional or conventional to the Renaissance period.
- ³ Holly A. Crocker, “*Affecting Resistance: Performing Passivity and Playing A-Part in The Taming of the Shrew*,” Shakespeare Quarterly 54:2 (2003): 142-59. This quotation is from p. 145. The dominance of idealized transparency in the Renaissance is touched on in Stephen Greenblatt’s Renaissance Self-Fashioning (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980) as well. Discussing Wyatt’s satires, Greenblatt says, “‘Mine Own John Pains’ bitterly assails that divorce between the tongue and the heart which is the constant lament of humanists throughout the sixteenth century”. For a thorough exploration of the Renaissance desire for transparency, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 1995). Maus writes, “...in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England the sense of discrepancy between ‘inward disposition’ and ‘outward appearance’ seems unusually urgent and consequential for a very large number of people, who occupy virtually every position on the ideological spectrum” (13).
- ⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice, Trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990): 67. Further references will be to this edition. See also, “The Economics of Linguistic Exchange,” Social Sciences Information, 16:6 (1977): 645-668.
- ⁵ Marjorie Garber, Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis (New Haven: Yale UP, 1974): 34. All further references will be to this edition with page number cited within the text. Garber takes transformation as an important theme in the play. I would argue that transformation is less at stake than conformation.
- ⁶ Frances E. Dolan, The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996): 24. All further references will be to this edition with page number cited within the text. Others who consider Katherine a “silent shrew” include Carol Rutter, “Kate, Bianca, Ruth, and Sarah: Playing the Woman’s Part in the *Taming of the Shrew*,” Shakespeare’s Sweet Thunder: Essays on Early

Comedies, Ed. by Michael J. Collins (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1997): 176-215; and David Daniell, "The Good Marriage of Katherine and Petruchio," The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002): 71-83.

- ⁷ Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker, "Kate Modern? The Taming of the Shrew and the Trouble with Obedience," Drama and Cultural Change: Turning Around Shakespeare, Ed. by Bauer and Zirker (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009): 49-63. In their interesting anti-revisionist analysis, Bauer and Zirker note the appellation of "shrew" to members of both genders who violate customary rhetorical and behavioral modes.
- ⁸ I am echoing Frances E. Dolan here, who writes, "In her first lines Katharine complains that men talk about her and that her father *lets* them" (19).
- ⁹ Bourdieu, see in Book I, Chapter 3 "Structures, habitus, practices," and Chapter 4 "Belief and the body" for contextual definitions and examples of *habitus*, *doxa* and *field*. Also relevant to this study is Chapter 7 "Symbolic Capital," and in Book II, Chapter 2 "Social uses of kinship," and Chapter 3, section 3 "Thresholds and passages." Although Bourdieu is studying herein a culture very different from Renaissance England, it is the manner and method in which he does so that informs my use of his work.
- ¹⁰ Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Ed. by Rivkin, Julie and Ryan, Michael. Literary Theory: An Anthology (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 693-702.
- ¹¹ Readings of Bianca vary more dramatically, in my opinion, than readings of Katherine, due in part, I think, to her silence early in the play and what many consider the "surprise" of her shrewishness in the concluding scene. Brian Morris, "Introduction" The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare, Ed. by Brian Morris (London: Arden, 1982) who writes that Bianca "assumes no disguise and achieves no development" (136). (Robert B. Heilman, in "The Taming Untamed, or, The Return of the Shrew," The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002): 45-70 argues that Bianca's transformation into a shrew is required for parallelism in the play. He says, "The earlier treatment of her [Bianca] hardly justifies her sudden transformation, immediately after marriage, into a cool, offhand, recalcitrant, even challenging wife. Like many another character in farce, she succumbs to the habits of the generic form. Yet some modern critics treat her as harshly as if from the start she were a particularly obnoxious female." On the other hand, Margaret Lael Mikesell's "'Love Wrought These Miracles' Marriage and Genre in the Taming of the Shrew," The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002): 106-29, reads the play as a variation of New Comedy. Consequently she sees Bianca as "spoiled and deceptive," a Shakespearian deviation from New Comedy strictures. G.R. Hibbard likewise argues that Bianca has realized that "deception is a woman's most effective weapon," quoted in Daniell p. 73. As will be demonstrated, I do not think the wager scene reveals a transformed Bianca, nor do I believe her "practicing" can

be interpreted as simple deception; though I do feel she disguises herself in silence.

- ¹² Elizabeth Gruber, *Insurgent Flesh: Epistemology and Violence in Othello and Mariam*,” Women’s Studies, 32:4 (2003): 393-411. Further references will be to this edition with page numbers cited within the text.
- ¹³ Natasha Korda discusses Katherine’s taming as an economics of commodity exchange concluding that the movement of objects controls the movement of subjects in “Household Kates: Domesticating Commodities in the *Taming of the Shrew*,” Much Ado About Nothing and The Taming of the Shrew: New Casebooks, Ed. by Marion Wynne-Davies (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 192-225.
- ¹⁴ Gruber, and Elizabeth Hanson, Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1998). Both Gruber and Hanson are concerned with the physical violence directed towards women (Gruber) and those accused of treason (Hanson) in the efforts to know their interiority and/or subjectivity.
- ¹⁵ Patricia Parker, “Construing Gender: Mastering Bianca in The Taming of the Shrew,” The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies, Ed. by Dympna Callaghan (New York: Palgrave, 2007): 193-209. In the only other study I have found that seriously analyzes Bianca, Parker also finds her demonstrating, in the tutorial scene, genuine intellectual self-awareness coupled with a canny willfulness.
- ¹⁶ Michel DeCerteau, “The Practice of Everyday Life.” Ed. by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Literary Theory: An Anthology (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 1247-57.
- ¹⁷ Christina Luckyj, ‘A Moving Rhetoricke,’: Gender and Silence in Early Modern England (Manchester: Manchester Univ Press, 2002): 90-91. Luckyj offers an excellent historical and theoretic overview of Renaissance ideas about silence.
- ¹⁸ Dusinberre, Juliet, “The Taming of the Shrew: Women, Acting, Power,” The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002) 168-85. All further references are to this edition with page numbers cited in text.
- ¹⁹ Dolan writes, “Petruccio proposes to contradict not only what Katharine herself says but also the ‘reports’ of her, the ways of describing her conduct practiced by the suitors” (19). Laurie E. Maguire adds, “Petruccio understands the psychological verity that to articulate something is halfway to creating it,” in “‘Household Kates’: Chez Petruccio, Percy and Plantagenet,” Gloriana’s Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance, Ed. by S.P. Cesarano and Marion Wynne-Davies (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992): 129-165. Further references will be to this edition with page numbers cited.
- ²⁰ Rebborn, Wayne A., “Petruccio’s ‘Rope Tricks’: *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric,” Modern Philology 92 (1995) 294-327.

- ²¹ Dolan again focuses on the fact that Katherine is silent while Petruchio has soliloquies saying of Petruchio's speeches, "he explains his motives and intentions" (26). I do not recognize a motive in the soliloquies, although his intentions are made explicit insofar as they reveal his strategy, not his marital aspirations. Jonathan Gil Harris, on the other hand, in his interpretation of The Shrew as a metatheatrical critique reads the soliloquies as a language of interiority, but an interiority of intention, not subjectivity. In describing his anticipated performance, Petruchio distances the audience/reader from his personal desires, "'Look not big, nor stamp, nor stare' Acting Up in The Taming of the Shrew and the Coventry Herod Plays," Comparative Drama, 34:4 (Winter 2000-1): 365-398.
- ²² For more on the significance of Petruchio's re-naming of Kate, see Maguire who points out that Petruchio initially insists on a name-identity link, only to complicate the issue in his pedagogical efforts.
- ²³ Lorna Hutson in The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England (New York: Routledge, 1994) writes that "Openness is [Petruchio's] disguise. He comes as himself to woo, make solid assurances, calls the banns, gathers the witnesses, and is seen before the priest, but only in order to make good in law his right to vanish from the sight of the community..." (219). This openness is part of what I argue makes Petruchio shrewish; he shares with Katherine the desire to be transparent in a sociality that disallows it. Amanda Bailey, Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). Esp. Ch. 3 "Livery and its Discontents in The Taming of the Shrew": p. 51-76. Bailey discusses male servants use of fashion to assert social prerogatives, often to undermine (and certainly at the expense of) their masters. Tracey Sedinger's article, "'If Sight and Shape be True': The Epistemology of Crossdressing on the London Stage," Shakespeare Quarterly 48:1 (Spring 1997): 63-79 offers an intriguing consideration of the "epistemological rupture" of crossdressing: crossdressing enacts a failed epistemology. Insofar as Petruchio has focused his taming methods on dressing in socially inappropriate ways, he too is linking clothing and the exterior with flawed epistemic efforts. See also Lena Cowen Orlin, "The Performance of Things in The Taming of the Shrew," The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002) 187-209.
- ²⁴ Barbara Hodgdon suggests that the play is about "seeming," that individual agency is in the self behind the performance, "Katherina Bound, Or Play(k)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life," The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002) 351-87. See also Harris, Dusinger, and Crocker, as well as Judith Butler's Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative (New York: Routledge, 1997) and Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1999).
- ²⁵ Garber, 34 and 32.
- ²⁶ Dolan cites Miriam Slater, writing that an unmarried woman in the Renaissance was a "perennial supplicant." "The Taming of the Shrew depicts a world in which

unmarried gentlewomen could not find paid work to support themselves and in which it was not acceptable or possible for such women to live on their own or with one another” (27-8). See also Orlin who explores the economic realities of Katherine’s submission.

²⁷ Others have drawn a similar conclusion. See Laurie E Maguire who writes, “She conforms to a social norm for the sake of appearance, while remaining free to be her own person in private” (135). Less positively, S. P. Cesarano, “Half a Dozen Dangerous Words,” Gloriana’s Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance, Ed. by S.P. Cesarano and Marion Wynne-Davies (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) 167-183 writes, “...women must accept that they will be controlled by men until they create their own rhetoric (fictions)” (181). Karen Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics and The Taming of the Shrew,” Much Ado About Nothing and The Taming of the Shrew: New Casebooks, Ed. by Marion Wynne-Davies (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 148-165 critiques Petruchio’s control over language, but does not consider the privacy afforded by social acquiescence (156).

²⁸ Lynda E. Boose, “Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman’s Unruly Member,” The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays, Ed. by Dana E. Aspinnall (New York: Routledge, 2002) 130-67 reads the scene as an effective silencing of the unruly feminine claiming there are no other spaces for Katherine to occupy (142) and that rather than allowing for interiority, Katherine’s final speech puts the power of language within Petruchio’s control and thus is a complete taming (or bridling) of Katherine’s tongue (151). Citing Luce Irigaray, Newman reads Katherine’s final speech mimetically. It is an italicized and newly emphasized articulation of cultural commonplaces made new precisely because it is spoken by a woman (159). In a reading more congruent to my own, Holly A. Crocker’s article is concerned to show that “...female submission must be a performance, because her autonomy derives from redirecting agency through the guise of passivity” (144).

CHAPTER 3

"YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW": SILENT SELVES, SECRET SELVES

The epistemological quandaries of the silent subject that we encounter in The Taming of the Shrew are fully enacted in the next two plays. But although silent villains and tricksters exploit uncertain epistemology, the effects on their subjectivities and socialities are most pronounced in ontological figurations. Wayne A. Rebhorn has documented the trickster as a rhetor, one who accomplishes his ends through energetic public speaking to the purpose of evincing a credible ethos.¹ With this rhetorically-ascertained ethos, he then dupes his community to accomplish personal goals whose motivations might best be termed Machiavellian. Voluble villains, however, are a bit unexpected given the secrecy required for any successful trick. Are trickster-villains rhetorically or silently manipulative? Or are these the same thing? Why and how does a trickster-villain self-silence? What are the subjective and ethical effects of self-silencing in these situations? These are the questions this chapter explores by examining the circumstances of villain-trickster self-silencing in William Shakespeare's Othello and Ben Jonson's Epicene, The Silent Woman. The effects, intentional and otherwise, of the uses of self-silencing by villains and tricksters are both disorienting and surprisingly pharmaceutical. This essay considers the subjectivities of two early modern trickster-villains from dual perspectives: their own and their community's. It finds these subjectivities as they are constituted in relation to speech and silence—an exploration that requires a survey of silence and dissimulation in the plays, considerations of Machiavellian and authoritative representations, and of course the effects of silence upon witnesses/listeners. In order to plot the ramifications of silence on the communities in these plays, I will be employing the mathematical ontology of Alain Badiou. His use of set theory allows me to analyze the relationships and functions of characters from outside

the linguistic relationships instantiated within the play. This perspective reveals the vital link between ethics and ontology at work in these Early Modern plays.²

Although tricksters may not be of precisely the same character as villains, I think we might consider their difference as one of degree, rather than type. Both deceive their community in service to their own desires, both sublimate the common good to personal pleasure, and both are undeterred by the potential for dangerous or fatal consequences—for themselves or others. Rebhorn offers precedent for my conflation of these character types in his seminal exploration of the trickster in Renaissance literature, when he casually includes, in a categorical series of Renaissance tricksters, Iago, who is a defining character of villainy in the dual senses of criminality and uncouth depravity. More to the point, however, I here combine these categories because they exercise a like methodology of self-silencing. The actions of the villain-trickster reveal a neglected, dangerous or unknown element within the sociality. Their self-silencing refers that element to the sociality, suggesting that it is an element shared amongst them. Self-silencing initiates an exchange between the trickster-villain and their community that distributes responsibility for the trick or deception upon them all. This is not to say that the victim or dupe caused their own suffering, but everyone is implicated insofar as everyone possesses an unrepresented, secret self that does or may give rise to equally reprehensible behaviors. The trickster-villain's silence shows how their community is "like" them, revealing personal and ethical failures and follies, and ultimately providing a chance for pre-emptive correction. The trickster-villain's claim of "likeness" does not derive from the authority of special knowledge or socially-constructed hierarchy, but within the ethos of identities in which trickster-villains traffic.

Othello struggles to understand that there may be a secret self. Initially, Othello is unable to conceive of a hidden heart of darkness in either himself or others. For

himself he claims a unified and transparent identity: “My parts, my title, and my perfect soul/Shall manifest me rightly” (1.2.30-1).³ And for others, as Iago comments, “The Moor is of a free and open nature/That thinks men honest that but seem to be so...” (1.3.390-1).⁴ It is this determined naiveté upon which Iago capitalizes in order to undo Othello. When Iago first “pour[s] the pestilence into his [Othello’s] ear” (2.3.356), he does so by intimating to Othello that he (Iago) possesses a thought that he will not share or make publicly known. He reveals this thought indirectly through insinuation. Othello asks (following Iago’s hint) whether Iago thinks Cassio is honest.

Iago:	Honest, my lord?
Othello:	Honest? Ay Honest?
Iago:	My lord, for aught I know.
Othello:	What dost thou think?
Iago:	Think, my lord?
Othello:	Think, my lord?
	By heaven, thou echoest me,
	As if there were some monster in thy thought
	Too hideous to be shown. Thou didst mean something.
	I heard thee say even now, thou lik’st not that,
	When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?
	And when I told thee he was of my counsel
	Of my whole course of wooing, thou cried’st ‘Indeed?’
	And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
	As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
	Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,
	Show me thy thought. (3.3.103-116)

Although Iago is effectively silent, only repeating Othello’s words, his entire presentation is intentionally replete with evasion. Not even Othello can fail to recognize Iago’s performance of subtext. Othello can, however, fail to interpret it. “Show me thy thought,” he commands. Were he a skilled reader of secrecy, he would know that Iago *is* showing him his thought. The gestural expressions on Iago’s face and the specifics of his evasive articulation are all about showing, about teaching Othello to read performance instead of trusting in words. But what Othello is really seeking here is for Iago’s “thought” to be expressed in language, Othello’s preferred method of communication.

For Othello, to be “shown” is to be told, to be informed with language. And indeed he will be persuaded that Desdemona is unfaithful when Iago tells him so.⁵ The infamous “ocular proof”, that tangible kerchief, is of course, epistemologically bankrupt, functioning as little more than the bow on the winding sheets of Desdemona’s deathbed.⁶ But before Othello can believe what Iago tells him, his relative innocence regarding dissemblance requires that Iago first teach him about hidden interiority.

If “manifest” Othello ever understood secrecy, Iago now needs to remind him why persons are performances, and how to read persons suggestively. In the sequence quoted above, Iago demonstrates dissimulation.⁷ Having secured Othello’s attention, he then explains the fact, as well as the merits, of secrecy.

Utter my thoughts? Why say they are vile and false,
As where’s that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so pure
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets and law days, and in sessions sit
With meditations lawful?...
Though I am perchance vicious in my guess
(As I confess it is my nature’s plague
To spy into abuses, and of my jealousy
Shape faults that are not), that your wisdom
From one that so imperfectly conceits
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts. (3.3.133-155)

Iago instructs Othello in the impossibility of purity, in the natural intermingling of worthy thoughts with unworthy, and the value of secrecy in hiding one’s base thoughts so as to retain one’s reputation and prevent others from being burdened with prejudicial suspicions. As Janet Adelman writes, “[Iago’s] seduction of Othello works by inscribing in Othello the sense of dangerous interior spaces—introducing him to the world of self-alienation.”⁸ Further, he accomplishes this education all while avoiding answering Othello’s question. Through his demonstration and introduction of these ideas of

dissemblance, Iago fertilizes Othello's mind to fruitfully receive the seeds of jealousy. Iago teaches Othello to find dissemblance in innocence, his method of pedagogy: silence and evasion. Well before he finally self-silences at the play's conclusion, Iago uses silence to reveal the secret self.

Though Othello renounces his life at the end of the play, he does not abjure his belief in language. Despite Iago's education in the art of dissimulation and performance, Othello, who wins both Desdemona's love and the Senate's admiration with his "witchcraft" of words, still yearns to control the use of language in creating his legacy. He entreats witnesses to, "Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak of one who loved not wisely, but too well...." (5.2.338-340). One might expect that the "pestilence" of words with which Iago corrupts Othello would be sufficient to dissuade him from trusting in their use; Iago has taught Othello that language can be used to dissemble. But eloquence is Othello's passport to Venetian society. Without speech, he is without power in the community.⁹ Thus he rejects Iago's anti-rhetorical curricula and remains, in the end, what he was in the beginning: a soldiering man of violence made eloquently visible in language.

Othello the play, however, remains much more ambivalent about the power of language than Othello the character. Othello's efforts to speak rightly of himself in both the beginning of the play and its conclusion are undermined by his failure to recognize his own linguistic duplicity. Just before dazzling the Senate, as he did Desdemona, with the tale of his latest conquest (Desdemona herself), he claims, "Rude am I in my speech,/And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace" (1.3.81-2). This professed insufficiency is, of course, utterly contradicted in the speech that follows, leading the Duke to suggest that his own daughter's love would be won by such story telling. Othello's "round, unvarnished tale" (1.3.90) in fact confirms Brabantio's suspicions that

Desdemona has been “enchanted,” (1.3.62) captured by the “spells” of a “mountebank” (1.3.61). Othello’s personal forthrightness is compromised here. Perhaps he does, in fact, understand the presentational nature of language, that it can hide the socially unacceptable “secret self.” Certainly this is affirmed in his effort to craft his own legacy by controlling the telling of his tale at the end of the play. Othello seems to believe that his presentation is his identity; that by saying what he is he creates what he is. The particulars of his suicide and his narration of it, suggests his desire to once again disguise his less desirable qualities, to unify his identity, by selecting which of his “divided duty” is more deserving. In choosing the Venetian soldier over the base murderer, he reveals his desire to be socially, civilly, redeemed. Although Othello’s “secret self” appears periodically throughout the play, there is a distinct lack of malice in his undermined self-presentation that suggests he is unaware of his own inconsistency, an ignorance Iago exploits in ensnaring Othello in his plot.

Iago wields language like a weapon furthering the play’s suspicions regarding the ethical nature of speech. Iago performs a subjectivity so persuasively forthright-seeming that he earns the designation of honest Iago. His rhetorical ethos is the source of his power over those with greater social, economical and political standing than he. In contrast to Othello, Iago claims to “work by wit, and not by witchcraft” (2.3.372) in moving persons to his will. The distinction is important in the play. “Witchcraft” is the term used repeatedly to describe Othello’s aesthetic eloquence, but Iago distinguishes rhetorical art from the witty use of language. Wit is connected with social understanding and cleverness, but not necessarily knowledge or wisdom. Iago articulates a binary between speech used artistically to secure sociality (as Othello demonstrates) and that used intellectually, to express one’s self plainly. This duality is clearly false, since Iago uses speech less elegantly but far more creatively than Othello. Articulating the

distinction, however, helps create Iago's ethos as honest or plain-spoken. In fact, Iago accomplishes his villainy almost entirely by using speech as a persuasively Machiavellian tool. Iago's wit becomes a type of violence waged against the civil community, misrepresenting reputations, identities, and innocent activities. With an initial exemplary listing of 1596, the OED's third definition of violence is a linguistic one: "Improper treatment or use of a word; wresting or perversion of meaning or application; unauthorized alteration of wording."¹⁰ Wayne E. Rebhorn cites Puttenham, who "speaks of the 'violence' of persuasion" (51). Iago's method of deception exercises this type of rhetorical violence. His manipulative use of language succeeds in creating an alternate reality based not in truth, but in the "wit" of the rhetor. For both Iago and Othello rhetoric enchants and moves people. But where Othello persuades to love, Iago persuades to murder. Othello's skill lies in elegant articulation, Iago's with ethos—the creation of an eminently trustworthy "character" who is secretly a villain. The opposition between Othello and Iago manifests the play's concern for the ethical power of speech.¹¹

Iago toys with his self-presentation throughout Othello, "And what's he then that says I *play* the villain,/When this advice is free I give, and honest..." (2.3.336-7, emphasis added). His identity as the trickster/villain is obvious enough to himself as this quotation reveals. No one else has accused him of villainy; on the contrary, his community thinks he is honest. He who says he plays the villain is Iago himself. He knows his manipulations are villainous, but does he assume this as an interiorized subjectivity, or does he really believe that villain is a role he "plays"? I would argue, and the quotation affirms, that Iago conforms to Rebhorn's conception of the trickster as one for whom "social roles and the identities provided by those roles have clearly become extraordinarily unstable and evanescent" (38). Rebhorn elaborates:

In general, for all of these characters, identity has become a project; it can never be a given, as it was for comic characters in the Middle Ages, even if it seems

their very birthright. Perhaps rather than speak of Renaissance tricksters as being outsiders and insiders, it might be better to speak of them all, no matter what position they hold in the social order, as confronting their own identity as something external, an alien object to be attained which, because of its essentially extrinsic character, can never be completely possessed and hence can never provide a deep and genuine sense of being to those who pursue it. Renaissance tricksters, like so many in their culture, are ontologically starved....” (39).

Iago demonstrates this notion of identity as extrinsic in his use of rhetoric both to create a credible personal ethos and to manipulate his community, exemplifying the Renaissance trickster as Rebhorn describes it. Rebhorn calls the trickster, the “emperor of men’s minds” (62), linking the trickster and the rhetor by means of their use of ethos and their “...concern with power, with moving the audience in order to control it....” (52). To create his honest persona and to mar the reputations of others, Iago must demonstrate a disregard for essential identity and cast everyone, himself included, as performers. “Her honor is an essence that’s not seen;/They have it very oft that have it not” (4.1.16-17). Iago’s explanation of Desdemona’s “seeming” epitomizes his efforts to turn every one into an actor.

Iago offers at least three motivating factors for his “trick.” He is frustrated that Cassio, instead of he, received the lieutenant position (1.1.6-30). He suspects that Othello “twixt my sheets/H’as done my office” with Emilia (1.3.377-8). And thirdly, partly for revenge, he too desires Desdemona (2.1.291-9). All three of these reasons are unpersuasive and problematic, but they reveal Iago’s frustration with his lack of authority, power, and dominion in various social spheres. He finds his desires frustrated by his lack of access to social power, and so he obtains the power of autonomous agency with rhetoric. Rebhorn’s important article claims the especially historical nature of the trickster’s use of rhetoric as a form of political power. In the Renaissance, he argues, rhetoric is “*in itself a paradigm of rule*” (52). The following highlights Rebhorn’s description of how rhetorical power operates as sovereignty.

Whereas for the ancient Romans the orator fought other orators in the forum and the senate in order to persuade a jury or his fellow senators, for Renaissance writers the orator primarily combats his *listeners* in order to bring them under the control of his will. Combat is not contest as it was in the Roman republic; it is conquest, conquest of the very persons one rules.... In the Renaissance...the rhetor was actually imagined as a real prince, just as rhetoric was seen as an art to be used by rulers, offered to them as a means to shape and control their subjects and ensure their thrones and titles.... Many go beyond it, however, in recognizing that rhetoric actually creates subjects in the first place.... If rhetoric means rule, to be subject to the power of speech means to be subject politically.

Considered as political discourse, then, Renaissance rhetoric accomplishes two things simultaneously: it constitutes rulers at the very moment that it constitutes the ruled; it creates at once both sovereigns and subjects. (57-59)

Iago resolves his frustration with his lack of authority by claiming sovereign power in his use of rhetoric, manipulating and controlling his community. As a trickster, he dons the costume of the ruler as well as the meaner garb of honest Iago. But the variety of roles the trickster must play to gain his authoritative ethos brings nihilating consequences.

Again, Rebhorn is helpful,

Metaphor, 'translatio' in all the Latin rhetorics of the period...means a 'bearing across or over'; it involves a necessary crossing of boundaries, a going beyond limits. Since the self the orator creates in and through his language is made of metaphors—indeed, is a metaphor—its creation is necessarily an imperial gesture, a quest beyond normal boundaries and an appropriation through language of that which lies outside. It means that in some sense, the self one creates is something alien, just as language is, and it must be seized or held or occupied if it is really to exist. Moreover, as was noted earlier, such a creation of identity in an act of linguistic imperialism is indistinguishable from the act of colonizing the Other, of subjecting one's audience to one's will. Therefore, every time the orator uses a metaphor—and it would be hard to think of a time when he would not be doing so—his act must be read as a double *translatio imperii*: a crossing of boundaries in order to occupy the alien terrain of the Other which is simultaneously a crossing in order to appropriate the equally alien terrain which becomes the self. Without such a crossing, the orator, who is both a conqueror and a ruler, must necessarily remain empty, unconstituted, deficient in being. His act of conquest through persuasion thus ironically uncovers his weakness, his ontological hunger, his dependence on the Other for his very identity. (59)

Iago is the consummate trickster in these terms. Though his identity is forged to meet his manipulative need, his conquest of the fellow subject constitute him as a sovereign whose authority is highly conditional. It is borrowed, so to speak, from the Other whom he is

subjecting as he crosses thresholds of identity. Thus even the existence of his own subjectivity is relationally dependent. His reliance upon rhetoric for autonomy and power is paradoxically a weakness: he becomes a sovereign subject without a subjectivity.

As I noted, Iago's motivations are unclear. We see him using rhetorical power but to what end? His articulated reasons are notoriously insincere or insubstantial. Iago primarily performs his rhetorical magic in an effort to reduce or discredit one (and all) of his community. Iago undertakes this destructive endeavor as if his own life depended on its success. But it is clear to no one *why* his nihilism impels him to persuade others of the authenticity of his performance. Psychoanalytic scholars Adelman and David Pollard see depraved darkness within Iago, a sadomasochism.¹² Stephen Greenblatt writes however,

But 'I am not what I am' goes beyond social feigning: not only does Iago mask himself in society as the honest ancient, but in private he tries out a bewildering succession of brief narratives that critics have attempted, with notorious results, to translate into motives. These inner narratives—shared, that is, only with the audience—continually promise to disclose what lies behind the public deception, to illuminate what Iago calls the 'native act and figure' of his heart, and continually fail to do so; or rather they reveal that his heart is precisely a series of acts and figures, each referring to something else, something just out of our grasp. 'I am not what I am' suggests that this elusiveness is permanent, that even self-interest, whose transcendental guarantee is the divine 'I am what I am,' is a mask. Iago's constant recourse to narrative then is both the affirmation of absolute self-interest and the affirmation of absolute vacancy; the oscillation between the two incompatible positions suggest in Iago the principle of narrativity itself, cut off from original motive and final disclosure. The only termination possible in his case is not revelation but silence.¹³

Iago actions may be depraved but his self-presentation lacks a definible subjectivity, depraved or otherwise. His un-dissembled existence points to absence, to void. It seems to me that if Iago is sado-masochistic, it is because he is aware of the void within; his self-negation initiates nihilation.

Alain Badiou's use of mathematical set theory to describe ontology and the subject, in his opus Being and Event, is generally sympathetic to an analysis of self-

silencing because he finds language restrictive, unable to adequately or accurately apprehend philosophy.¹⁴ He uses the matheme in an effort to liberate philosophy from the limitations of language. In his theory, Badiou argues that there is no subjectivity except as it arises, “operates,” within an event of community or multiplicity. “Ontology is a situation,” (27) he writes, by which he means that Being manifests within specific historical circumstances in order to testify to an invariant truth (which nonetheless is processed variably). Being is not an entity existing in any articulate way prior to the event and it always exists in relation to the multiplicity. In fact, being *is* multiple appearing at the instantiation of an event. The suggestion here is that subjects are deeply enmeshed in an ethical relation at the moment they come into being. The grounding of this web is the void—the not-being from which all being arises; all being contains the void as a subset. The gap between not-being and being is “unsayable,” and thus ontology exceeds language, just as ethics precedes subjectivity. All who experience a situation belong to that event as the multiplicity of it; individuals are, at this point, merely elements of a set in relation to the event. Individual subjectivity appears (and now it is as if it had always been) when one multiple of the multiplicity presents the truth of the evental site within a particular domain of life, e.g. love or politics. In formulating his argument, Badiou refutes “the ontologies of presence—for presence is the exact contrary of presentation” (27). His theory is particularly useful, then, in considering the Renaissance trickster whose identity is rhetorical presentation. The trickster’s “weakness, his ontological hunger,” (as Rebhorn wrote) requires that he usurp his identity and personal agency from the subjective ground of the Other. Badiou’s subject and Rebhorn’s trickster then are similar insofar as identity is presentational, ontologically bankrupt, and yet circulating as potentialities amidst various “multiples.” Badiou’s

philosophy, therefore, offers a provocative aid in interpreting the subjective and social significance of the self-silencing of Rebhorn's trickster.

Badiou authorizes a retrospective application of his own (and other) philosophies when he points out the difficulty in discerning the veridicality of a given situation. Any particular circumstance or event (including literary/theatrical/artistic ones) will continue to elicit subjects and truths that may reflect present or historical/cultural realities. Artistry often far outpaces the understanding and articulation of philosophers; Badiou singles out nineteenth century Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, for example, as a writer whose work exceeds contemporary philosophy's dialect. The effort however, the process of analysis, is, for Badiou, part of what constitutes the event as an Event and the subject as a Subject. Although the complexities of Badiou's theories of ontology and ethics render a systematic cogitation alongside Renaissance thinkers tantalizing, for the purposes of this essay a relatively brief consideration of the silences of Iago (and Dauphine) in Badiouian terms will have to suffice. This effort provides an expanded theoretical understanding of the relationship of Rebhorn's Early Modern rhetor-trickster to his representation and identification in silence.

A valuable part of Badiou's application of set theory to philosophy is in the context of accounting for the multiplicity, the various persons involved in an ontological situation. Not all will become fully subjectivized within Badiou's rigorous standards, but their various categorizations offer a schema of belonging upon which to map and therefore access and analyze relationships. This is helpful when we try to ascertain how one's (Iago's) actions affect his sociality as well as his constitution within it. Within a specific metastructure (the State, for example) a particular, localized situation ontologizes a set of multiples, a multiplicity. Belonging to that power-set mobilizes a relational

dynamic of membership and inclusion that corresponds to presentation and representation in the metastructure. Badiou describes belonging as follows:

Once counted as one in a situation, a multiple finds itself *presented* therein. If it is also counted as one by the metastructure, or state of the situation, then it is appropriate to say that it is *represented*. This means that it belongs to the situation (presentation), and that it is equally included in the situation (representation). It is a term-part. Inversely, the theorem of the point of excess indicates that there are included (represented) multiples which are not presented (which do not belong). These multiples are parts and not terms. Finally, there are presented terms which are not represented, because they do not constitute a part of the situation, but solely one of its immediate terms.

I will call *normal* a term which is both presented and represented. I will call *excrecence* a term which is represented but not presented. Finally, I will term *singular* a term which is presented but not represented. (99).

For our purposes here, I want to distinguish especially the aspect of *presentation* that “finds itself,” from recognition imposed by the power-set that is *representation*. This tracks more loosely into a paradigm where *presentation* entails subjectivity and interiority, while *representation* is identity as perceived, nominated, by one’s sociality. One may have an identity without a subjectivity and vice versa. By rights, Iago ought to be a *normal* term in the situation of Othello. But his “I am not what I am” (1.1.62), his negation, the not-ness of his being, deftly articulates the absence of presence that is characteristic of an excrecence. Iago is not present, but he is represented by Honest Iago. This personal absence corresponds with his frustrations about his lack of authority in the Venetian/Cyprian community. Iago’s self-negation illustrates Badiou’s description of the absence, the void, of subjectivity apart from an ontological situation. The ontological absence Badiou posits explains and grounds the subjective absence to which Rebhorn refers and Iago articulates an experience of both.

Apart from establishing a credible ethos, Iago’s other exercise of the rhetor’s sovereign power is to construct roles for the others who belong to his situation: Unfaithful Desdemona, Cuckolding Cassio, Jealous Othello. Badiou notes the way in which language’s dominion in metaphysics is grounded in its constructible quality. The

“sovereignty of language” folds being within it, such that we cannot readily conceive of metaphysics or multiples apart from language and its constructability (301). Nor does this “ontological nominalism” (the “spontaneous” epistemology) make space for the point of excess—that critical gap between the void and the multiple, presentation and representation—resulting in a “poverty of knowledge” (314). Furthermore, constructivism “reduces the function of excess to nothing” (314). Iago’s embrace of constructivism is curious, then, for the spectacular nihilism it enacts. Rhetorical construction effectively obliterates social space for the *excess*, the excess who does not belong within the power-set of Othello, that Iago claims to be. Of course, Iago’s “I am not what I am” is intended simply to acknowledge that he represents fidelity to Othello while simultaneously conspiring against him. But the specific articulation Iago chooses here suggests that not only is his subjectivity falsely represented, but that he himself is not present. As the sovereign rhetorician whose manipulative efforts give rise to the crucial “event,” he has excepted himself from the community or power-set.

But if Iago is not present, and his subjectivity is not represented (because it is a false representation), then Iago is more accurately introducing a fourth category of membership in Badiou’s pattern. Giorgio Agamben comments:

What becomes of the exception in this [Badiou’s] scheme? At first glance, one might think that it falls into the third case, that the exception, in other words, embodies a kind of membership without inclusion. And this is certainly Badiou’s position. But what defines the character of the sovereign claim is precisely that it applies to the exception in no longer applying to it, that it includes what is outside itself. The sovereign exception is thus the figure in which singularity is represented as such, which is to say, insofar as it is unrepresentable. What cannot be included in any way is included in the form of the exception. In Badiou’s scheme, the exception introduces a fourth figure, a threshold of indistinction between excess (representation without presentation) and singularity (presentation without representation), something like a paradoxical inclusion of membership itself. *The exception is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a member and cannot be a member of the whole in which it is always already included.* What emerges in this limit figure is the radical crisis of every possibility of clearly distinguishing between

membership and inclusion, between what is outside and what is inside between exception and rule.

Badiou's thought is, from this perspective, a rigorous thought of the exception. His central category of the event corresponds to the structure of the exception. Badiou defines the event as an element of a situation such that its membership in the situation is undecidable from the perspective of the situation. To the State, the event thus necessarily appears as an excrescence. According to Badiou, the relation between membership and inclusion is also marked by a fundamental lack of correspondence, such that inclusion always exceeds membership, its reducing all its parts to unity.¹⁵

Iago's fluctuating membership in his set mark him as exceptional. He chooses not to, tries not to, unify with his community by obtaining power over them, subjecting them in the apparent absence of ordinary access to agency. His intent, unlike Hieronimo in the next chapter, is not to restore ethical norms within his sociality, but to pursue his own purposes with rhetorically-authorized power. The undecidability of Iago's belonging within his sociality reaches its ultimate crisis in the conclusion of the play when his destructive actions are revealed and the other multiples of his power-set consider for themselves whether and how he belongs to them.

The axiomatic assertion of Badiou's mathematical ontology is that being is plural, not singular. Being is multiple. "For the multiple to be presented, is it not necessary that it be inscribed in the very law itself that the one *is not*?" (28). Subjectivity does not operate apart from sociality. This collectivity of being aligns Badiou with Levinas's understanding of ontology as ethics.¹⁶ Both theorists find the subject in operation within social ethicality; apart from sociality, the subject is accessible only as either the void or the gap, a concept lacking extension or articulation. For Badiou, as each multiple participates in a situational event, they process it for truth. Badiou believes in ever-present absolute truth, but thinks that an event is required to draw attention to it. Also, different multiples will process that truth differently. He posits four domains for the enacting of truth procedures: love, art, politics and science (340). Different subjects may, then, process the same truth in different ways. This processing is what

distinguishes them as subjects, and maps both their “belonging” to the power-set, and their fidelity to the event. Therefore we look at the actions and reactions of witnesses to the culminating event in Othello in order to understand the play’s manifestations and understandings of subjectivities, representation, ontologies, and ethics.

An event, in Badiou’s architecture, is that which initiates a rupture within the set – typically, an effect of the set recognizing the presence of a singularity (a presence that is not represented). “I will term *evental site* an entirely abnormal multiple; that is, a multiple such that none of its elements are presented in the situation. The site itself, is presented, but beneath it nothing from which it is composed is presented. As such, the site is not a part of the situation. I will also say of such a multiple that it is *on the edge of the void, or foundational...*” (175). Iago serves as the locus of the event in Othello. His believes his self-negation has nullified his presence, that he is an excrescence – represented but not present. But the false construction of his representation obliterates his membership via representation. He should actually be, then, a singularity (present but not represented) but for his own argument that he is *not being*, not present, void. As circumstances come to light in the conclusion of the play, Iago’s residence in the state of exception precipitate that rupture within the multiplicity that causes an event. The community realizes that there is among them a malignant presence who has been unrepresented. Othello suspects a devil lurking amongst them. His habit of transparency urges that he “manifest” that hidden devil, and he looks first to Iago, “I look down towards his feet—but that’s a fable. If that thou be’st a devil, I cannot kill thee” (5.2.282). Given his thwarted attempt to murder Iago, this proclamation of Othello’s confirms Iago’s truly villainous nature—he cannot kill Iago, therefore Iago is a devil. But Iago does sustain wounds, perhaps he retains some humanity; so Othello again presses him for articulated information, “Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil/Why

he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?" (5.2.297-8). Iago's response is to self-silence: "Demand me nothing. What you know, you know. From this time forth I never will speak word" (5.2.299-300). At last, Iago lives up to his reputation for honesty: he does not speak again. The effects of self-silencing on Iago's membership/inclusion in the community, and the community's construction of truth disclose the ontological, subjective, and representational postures circulating within the play.

Iago's self-silencing violates the ethical reciprocity of both speech and social engagement. He abdicates speech, the source of his power, and submits to the relational mapping ordained by his social group that motivated his rebellion in the first place. The rhetorical violence of his self-silencing rebuffs an accounting for this situation and resolves that obligation upon the others within his power-set. Where Hieronimo will seek to establish "likeness" with the King of Spain and thus to affect an empathetic recognition of the value of human life, we might think the murderous Iago would posit that he is essentially different from his community. However, Iago's attempt to reverse or at least share accountability in fact recommends the "likeness" of his set to himself. His silence calls them to consider his ethicality as linked to their own. How are they alike? "You know what you know," is certainly a refusal to provide a justifying motive, but it also suggests that his listeners are as culpable as he. What is it that they know?

To construct a circumstantial grasp of Iago's machinations, the company hears testimony from Emilia, Othello, Cassio, and from Roderigo via letter. But what they know—how this compilation constitutes knowledge and what the event means requires a more complicated effort that is both personal (subjective) in its proceedings and revelatory in its ontological testament. The Venetian nobleman Lodovico responds "What, not to pray?" (5.2.301) suggesting a religious perspective that leads him to assume Iago would want to repent. Desdemona's apparent kinsman, another Venetian

noble, Gratiano says, “Torments will ope your lips,” (5.2.302) reflecting a political and judicial orientation to the matter. Cassio is true to form in adhering to an aesthetic sociality of refined graces: “Most heathenish and most gross!” (5.2.309.) And for Othello, the truth of this event is perceived in terms of love. He loved both Desdemona and Iago well, but neither wisely. These responses correspond nearly identically with the four domains of Badiou’s truth procedures: love, art, politics, and science (which subsumes religion for the atheist Badiou). Each of these multiples is subjectified as they construct truth from the circumstance. But as it should be for the titular character, the subjectivity of Othello is more substantively realized.

What Othello knows, what he thinks he knows, is, has always been, himself. Iago’s devilish rhetoric has summoned Othello’s own demon, an entity Othello clearly had believed nonexistent or perhaps long ago vanquished. In his obsessive determination to be transparent, Othello now articulates his subjectivity as divided—there is the manifest descendent of “men of royal siege” (1.2.21) that he believed he was, and the jealous, murderous secret self of which he was (perhaps willfully) unaware. Now, what Othello knows is that he is both a warrior for and an enemy of the Venetian state.

“...in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th’ throat the circumcisèd dog
And smote him—thus. [He stabs himself.] (5.2.347-350)

Although Lodovico had decided to hold Othello prisoner until his “fault be known/To the Venetian State” (5.2.332-3), Othello’s governing impulse to belong to the Venetian set is exposed in this, his urgent self-revelation. Badiou’s criteria for both membership and inclusion in a given multiplicity are authenticated in Othello’s palpable presence and his efforts at perspicuous representation. The guilt Othello experiences combined with the deferral to decide upon his identification or rejection in the multiplicity prove

unendurable to Othello. Though it is in fact Iago's manipulations that threaten Cyprian and Venetian society, Othello's naïve collusion with Iago has revealed to Othello that he, like Iago, has a secret self: he is an unrepresented murderer. Thus he sees himself as an excrescence that violates the ethical norm of the Venetian power-set. His narrated suicide enacts this excrescential identity: eliminating his presence but representing in a tale his inclusion in the event.

And what of Iago? The villainous identity with which he trifles throughout the play finally claims Rebhorn's ontologically hungry trickster. Although he may believe identity is an adopted role, or even self- or socially-fashioned, the revelation of his actions and their consequences resolve his identity upon him. Eight times he is called a villain after being exposed, as well as coxcomb, caitiff, viper, slave, and devil. If he thought this was only a role, it is now his only role, assigned to him by the truth procedures of his power-set. The community hereby acknowledges Iago as one of their own, a normal member: he presents and represents the villain. Iago's own processing of the truth is more complicated, however. As the locus of the evental site he is uniquely positioned to blur the decidability of the event—thus fulfilling Badiou's definition of the event as “an element of a situation such that its membership in the situation is undecidable from the perspective of the situation” (HS25). Iago does not articulately reject the witnesses' nominal construction of the event and his subjectivity. The accomplished rhetorician does, however, relinquish language, the medium of the set's constitutive truth proceedings. “...I never will speak word” (5.2.300). The set's assessment of the event is hereby indicted for its linguistic reliance; they have failed to understand the epistemological crisis unearthed in the event. Rhetorizing created this destructive circumstance; it cannot be used to redeem it. In other words, language is contaminated; it cannot provide knowledge sufficient to ascertain truth. This has been

Iago's "message" all along. Iago's subjectivity, moreover, cannot genuinely be nominatively, constructively assigned, but rather operates as he demonstrates fidelity to the truth of the event. Iago exposed can no longer falsify his representation and outwardly submits to the State's nomination. He becomes, once again, an excrescence. Iago *represents* the villain in this situation; whether he *is* the villain is for his own presaging.

But there is a presentiment, in his self-silencing, that Iago does subjectify himself as the villain. As the community looks for an explanation for his behavior, he says, "you know what you know" (5.2.299), suggesting that the witnesses self-knowledge ought to expose something about Iago's malevolent behavior. Because one is not and the multiplicity is, Iago implicates the entire power-set in his villainy. They know what they know about themselves, and as they encounter Iago, face-to-face, what they should see is "likeness." If they want to know him, they need to know themselves. If they know themselves, they know him. Iago's silence suggests that everyone—he, Othello, every term that belongs to the set—possesses an interior of absence. His silent self, ideographically, presents the secret self, the originary void, existent within each multiple. Katharine Eisaman Maus writes that in courtship, "Desdemona imaginatively leaps the gap between self-knowledge and the normally more limited and conditional knowledge of another" (125). This epistemological gap corresponds to the ontological gap—we cannot hope to know, because there is in everyone an unknown, an absence, a missing piece that propels the multiple from the void into being. Iago reinforces the notion of multiple "likeness," that we can know another, but what we know is that they, like us, have an unfathomable emptiness within. Iago, in his specular self-silencing, gestures to the nature of being in its multiplicity, highlighting its subset of the void. Badiou notes that "it is in being foreclosed from presentation that being as such is constrained to be

sayable...” (27). When he self-silences, Iago’s presentation is foreclosed and he is conceived only as his representation. But when he refuses to speak his own subjectivity, his rejection of speech reopens his ability to present, extends being beyond the limits of language. And what he presents is his belonging to the event, his membership, his likeness to the other multiples in the situation. He demonstrates, “...that the ontological situation [is] the presentation of presentation” (27). His silence reclaims for himself the sovereign power to testify to the truth of the event as he perceives it: that the event originated with the failure of the community to recognize its own members and distribute subjective authority amongst them. Iago’s fidelity to the truth of the event manifests, he becomes a subject, when he presents presentation. Iago is a “normal,” “like” member of his community, then. He presents himself as a fellow multiple arising from void, and he is represented to the state as a villain. His silence asserts an ontology of shared being that invites his set to consider in what way(s) they are “like” Iago—even if that likeness is centered around the void that grounds every multiple.¹⁷

Lodovico is granted final say on the matter of Othello. He initially gestures to the several corpses as an instructive, possibly repentance-inducing, vision for Iago, but implicitly includes the theatrical audience as well. “Look on the tragic loading of this bed. This is thy work.” (5.2.359-360). What Iago may see are others who belong to his multiplicity, those to whom he is like and to whom he belongs, despite their exclusionary treatment of him. Their death signifies his own in the sense of his eventual punishment for their murders, but also simply in their shared mortality. Furthermore, Lodovico indirectly commands the theatrical audience to observe the sight of the bed as well. They (we) are momentarily aligned with Iago. The silent corpses implicate everyone for the possession of a secret heart of homicide. The no-longer representing corpses now present the void—ontological and ethical—in everyone’s being. Before this implication can be

fully assimilated, however, Lodovico hurriedly closes the bed curtains, “The object poisons sight;/Let it be hid” (5.2.360-1). In what way is the spectre of mortality summoned and the memberships’ shared responsibility therein a poison? Distasteful certainly, but the only way in which a vision of death is poisonous is if it eats away at the speculators, our own, lives. Lodovico’s reversal regarding the recuperative value of contemplating mortality seems to occur at the same time the vision begins to indict him of “likeness,” revealing his unwillingness to examine himself for complicity in the situation. Not that he is guilty of committing murder, of course, but that as a member of humanity, more specifically, as one who belongs to the “set” of the play, he too has death within, even foundationally in his being. He, like Emilia, Desdemona, Othello and Iago, is of the void, he is mortal, and he, too, is guilty of failing to represent this ontological reality. Curtailing sight of the loaded bed, however, seeks to deny the importance or even the reality of the occurrence. His attempt to enclose, to pull secrecy like a veil, around the site of an ontological and ethical rupture imitates the representative failure of articulation. Michael Neill has said, “...this ending, as its stern gestures of erasure demonstrate, has everything to do with what cannot be uttered and must not be seen” (Unproper, 384). Unutterable, perhaps, but certainly revelatory in its silence. The unspeakable void of ontology is evident in Iago’s homicidal impulse and the ponderables attending the unnecessary demise of Desdemona, Emilia and Othello. In closing the curtains, Lodovico turns away from and attempts to seal off a site of knowledge and the regenerative opportunity it affords.¹⁸

Akin to self-silencing, the performative effect of curtailed sight draws attention to the secret self however. As Lodovico denies the theatrical audience that same prescriptive visual opportunity, he conversely invites awareness of hidden-ness, of something unspoken, un-considered, un-represented.¹⁹ Since what has been veiled is our

own likeness, our self-reflection is interrupted and we can ponder only upon the fact of the failure to present. Lodovico's effort to abbreviate the power of performance inadvertently succeeds in revealing the voided nature of ontology. Like Iago's self-silencing, the ambiguated access is a disclosure of the gap between being and its representation. Thus the two curtains, the bed curtains and the theoretical theatrical curtains create an eerily absent effect of two mirrors facing one another. Reflection is repeated and infinite, but what is reflected? Only an infinite regression of reflection. The fact that being is multiple; that all arise from and contain the void; that identity is conferred socially; that subjectivity appears in a rupture, an event; that what affects one of the set, reverberates amongst the entire set. These infinite reflections, the gap between the void and the subject, constitute the state of exception that is accessible only as it fails to present. Self-silencing is a way to present the failure to present, thus it is an ontological and ethical challenge to witnesses. The ethicality, the unicity of being, is unavoidable, but silence articulates its imperative. The rhetorical villain-trickster exercises power in speech, but it is power that is subjectively annihilating. For the community, however, Iago's silence, in acknowledging the subset of void in all being, points to the fact of multiplicity. It is a call to likeness, to ethical relation, that the play extends into the audience by prematurely closing the curtains of its own performance.¹⁸

It is impossible to speak of the void at the center of being in Early Modern theatre without acknowledging Ben Jonson. Thomas M. Greene's influential essay, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," finds in Jonson's writing a search for an ordered authority at the center of circulating politics, religion, world culture and community.²⁰ Although, "almost everything Jonson wrote attempts in one way or another to complete the broken circle, or expose the ugliness of its incompleteness," (325), Greene notes Jonson's own ambiguity, his often energetic delight in avoiding the centered self, "...the infinite,

exhilarating, and vicious freedom to alter the self at will once the ideal of moral constancy has been abandoned. If you do not choose to be, then, by an irresistible logic, you choose to change...” (337). Given the present essay’s focus on self-silencing, Jonson’s centering ontology is perhaps best considered in light of his Epicene, or The Silent Woman. In this play, Dauphine Eugenie—Jonson’s most silent trickster—undertakes to swindle his inheritance out of his crotchety uncle Morose who wishes to deny it him. Dauphine tricks his uncle into marrying a woman, Epicene, whom Dauphine has taught and paid to embody Morose’s most desired quality: she is silent. Immediately following the marriage ceremony Epicene begins to speak, loudly and often, and Morose desperately seeks a way to annul the union. Dauphine assures Morose that he (Dauphine) can release him from matrimony in exchange for his rightful inheritance. Morose agrees, and Dauphine reveals that Epicene is actually a boy disguised as a woman. Morose is legally liberated from marital obligation because of “*error personae*.”²¹ But Morose is not the only one who has been deceived by Dauphine’s trick. The whole community of wits, fops, collegiates, and even Dauphine’s fellow tricksters perceived Epicene’s sex erroneously. Furthermore, the theatrical audience too is unaware of Epicene’s disguise until the conclusion.

Although Epicene is ostensibly about social and gendered silence, it does not actually demonstrate a marked philosophical interest in these silence. Silence is linked, rather, with secrecy and identity.²² The play is peppered with the usual cast of Jonsonian comedies who energetically rhetorize, self-create, and metamorph. The play’s caustic humor lies in the fact that these creations are utterly artificial, they lack centeredness and fail to truly belong to the person. Beauty is acquisition: women all wear cosmetics and are consequently parsed and “owned” by the local chemists, wigmakers, and tailors (4.2.95). Learned men have a collection of “titles” in their libraries, but no

comprehension of the contents of those titles, even going so far as to confuse the names of these compositions with those of their authors' (2.3). Even Morose who articulates the idea that silence is centering ("...I should always collect and contain my mind, not suffering it to flow loosely" [5.3.46-7]), nonetheless seeks others' silence so that his voice alone may fill the absence. Completely failing, in other words, to collect and contain his own thoughts. The failure of appearances, education, and ideas to belong to those who use or profess them is underscored by the obsessively narcissistic efforts individuals put to claiming them. In company with these protean self-claimers, Dauphine's comparatively silent self-possession is notable, and he does not seem to fit with the rest of the play's community.²³ Initially he reads as a sympathetic trickster, seeking only what should rightfully belong to him were it not for his misanthropic uncle. Testifying to his integrity, his friends Truewit and Clerimont are genuinely eager to help him to his inheritance, and quick to defend him against the ill-opinion of the collegiates, wits, and fops (4.4.189). The revelation at the end of the play, however, stimulates a reassessment of Dauphine's seeming difference from his community.

"How now, gentlemen, do you look at me?" Dauphine inquires (5.4.218). The tone of triumph here is curious; he has humbled the very friends he now addresses. They have urged his success, schemed on his behalf, and counted him a defensible "eagle" among men (4.4.189). He has repayed their loyalty by duping them right along with the fops. How should they see him now? "...you have lurched [cheated] your friends..." says Truewit (5.4.221). Although Truewit remains relatively amiable, the confidence into which Dauphine had seemingly taken he and Clerimont is eroded.²⁴ Dauphine is revealed as a cheat. Clerimont's direct response to Dauphine's query is to state, "A boy." Dauphine takes this to mean that Clerimont is clarifying Epicene's sex, but perhaps Clerimont is actually answering Dauphine's question: he now looks upon Dauphine as a

boy. A reading made credible given that the first scene of the play reveals Clerimont playing with his “ingle at home” (1.1.24) and receiving a lecture from Truewit about “what should a man do” (1.1.31). Clearly the behavior of boys and men is an important one for Clerimont. Maybe he now looks upon Dauphine as a boy, someone to be trifled with, unequal to men, not entirely worthy of respect.²⁵ Neither Truewit nor Clerimont speak again to Dauphine in the brief remainder of the play.

In fact, everyone except Truewit (and Dauphine himself) is silenced by the magnitude of the deception. Dauphine’s silence is not of a moment. It is now revealed to be the ever-present undergirding of the entire plot. Accomplishing his trick in silence, Dauphine creates a new background against which the actions of the community can now be reviewed. This new background or landscape is a type of parallax view inaugurated with Epicene’s revelation. In other words, the social effects of Dauphine’s self-silencing are not experienced until it is revealed that Dauphine has been self-silencing. Behaviors, conversations, circumstances of the situation all must be re-evaluated in light of this new information that transforms all that came before. Truewit assumes the task of articulating how the community has received its comeuppance in light of the trick. The reality of Epicene’s sex gives the lie to the community’s imaginative constructions of or pretenses to knowledge. Thus Daw and La Foole are uncovered as liars and slanderers since they pretended to have “known” Epicene sexually. Epicene “vindicat[es] [the] fames” (5.4.241) of the collegiate women whose societal rites she has been initiated in, outperforming their cosmetic artifice and epitomizing their gender confusion. The fellow tricksters have been out-tricked; their confidence in their own superior understanding and witty use of rhetoric is discredited. It is silence which prevails in this world. Morose’s lesson is twofold. First, and prosaically misogynistic: if he wants a silent wife, he’d best marry a man.

Secondly, the best way to enjoy silence is to be silent. Dauphine triumphs not because he verbosely insisted on his way like Morose, but because he schemed in silence.

But these “lessons” were never part of Dauphine’s goal. They are an inevitable effect of his silence that signifies. Encounters with self-silencing predictably result in self-evaluation and ethical affirmations. The community of Epicene is revealed—to itself—as dishonest, unnatural, de-centered, and deluded. Their ignorant and unaware scrambling for an extrinsic identity is now revealed to themselves as artificial and fool-making. J. A. Jackson, arguing that the point of the play is to highlight the way in which people make meaning from self, not truth, articulates a similar effect of the staged silence,

‘Meaning’ for all of the characters becomes most concrete when language itself has been muted. Daw and La Foole are stricken, for once, silent. Clerimont can only manage to utter “a boy” (5.4.189) and only Truewit (we should expect no less) can muster any kind of response, perhaps out of both admiration and ego. Perhaps the momentary lapse of speech stages most perfectly the critical position of the play all along. Each individual is shown explicitly the role he or she has always been tempted to appropriate all along: filling in every gap of meaning with his or her self. The muted language on stage at the end of the play creates a potential moment of non-appropriation for the audience. The silence thrusts the audience member back onto him- or herself. The muted language makes explicit once and for all the always-present gap of meaning and reveals to the audience this space “outside” of themselves that they have always occupied.²⁶

Dauphine’s silencing of himself in orchestrating the trick, renders mute his dupes as well, providing a set- and audience-wide comeuppance that serves as a type of personal and ethical tonic to restore the community to its senses (one hopes).

And what of Dauphine? He is certainly far less sympathetic now he has made fools of everyone. But hasn’t he also revealed his own misanthropic greed in doing so? He tricks his uncle out of Morose’s own money, and though he may have a customary claim to it, it is certainly not Dauphine’s by obligation. He intends to use this money to purchase a knighthood—claiming thereby an identity that is not intrinsically his own. Furthermore, he flagrantly deceives those who helped him to achieve his personal ends.

Too, we remember now his reputation as a card shark, swindling funds from his fellow gamers. The deceitful plotter his silence concealed is now made manifest, and it is not appealing. Dauphine now looks like a more ruthless, even sinister, version of the self-important Morose. His hoax does not succeed in granting him superior moral qualities. On the contrary, they reveal his absolute belonging to his uncentered community, even exceeding them in his efforts to purchase an identity. His identity is as Rebhorn describes the trickster's, a "project," something to be acquired extrinsically. But he so inexpertly understands the importance of the veneer of sociability, the dependence upon one's representation to secure social acceptance that motivates all the characters' anxious performativity, that he undermines his reputation with the depth and unsavoriness of his deception. He becomes, in the eyes of his community, not a knightly man of integrity, but a boy, a cheat, a misanthrope, a swindler, a trickster. The ambiguity he mercenarily utilized with Epicene transfers to Dauphine himself as the engineer of the trick. In fact, the diffusion and variability of his identity, combined with his lack of self-awareness, succeed in absenting himself from membership in the event he has initiated.

Though Dauphine tricks everyone, he clearly wants to be accepted and respected among them as a man of wit and knowledge, certainly, but also as a man of wealth and nobility possessing distinguished acquaintance. His aspirations coincide suspiciously with those of his sociality, inscribing him as a member of his set. His traffic in ambiguity, however, renders him a suspicious and unknowable entity. His identity is fragmented, unnameable, unrepresentable. "How now...do you look at me?" Identity is conceived by Dauphine only as a representation, conferred by others, exterior, lacking interiority. Thus it seems he is no longer a member of the set, present without representation, he is an excrescence. Ironically, though, Dauphine's speaking obscures his presentation as well. As soon as he speaks, his interior absence is revealed. Since his

speech strives only to obtain a constructivist presentation, what it actually presents is non-being. In Badiou's schema, it is the foreclosure of presentation that presents being, "the presentation of presentation" (27) that Iago achieved in self-silencing. Dauphine does not present himself in silence any longer, nor does his speech present. In his utter lacks of self-awareness, Dauphine presents no ontological being and he carries no representation. Dauphine's speech, then, succeeds in vanishing his presence. Without a center, without authorization, without the failed representation that reveals being, he is subsumed by the ontological void. Although Dauphine is often silent and secretive, he has neither a silent, nor a secret self; he has no self. The notoriously conservative Jonson thus demonstrates the risks of being uncentered, of acquiring identity extrinsically, and of living without the silent containment of one's thoughts (fidelity to the truth, or he might say, personal integrity) that instantiates presence. Dauphine has vanished, as his community was in danger of until his trick exposed their risk. In their newly silent state, the rest of the multiplicity are present, ontologically exposed and ethically chastised, but present with an opportunity to learn from their errors. They may, by acknowledging their secret selves, construct an authentic silent self who substantiates and centers the circulating self.

And what of Epicene? Epicene remains before the witnesses, a multi-gendered emblem of a silent being who points to the gap of existence. Epicene is present. Furthermore, Epicene represents to the community their belongingness via shared folly and shared culpability. He reveals to them their being as a multiplicity. Epicene is a "normal" member of the multiplicity, perhaps the only normal member, with an authorizing center of ontological real-ness manifested in his self-silencing.²⁷ And it is with the figure of Epicene that Jonson extends his play beyond the footlights. Unlike Shakespeare, Jonson has not invited the audience to ponder with him the void and the gap

by closing the performance's curtain. With an audacity of purpose, Jonson points into the audience singling out each member as his dupe. We were all, presumably, fooled by Dauphine's *Epicene*. The play's trick is to unite the spectator with the members of the event in such a way that all are equally implicated as fops, wits, collegiate, and tricksters. And like the play's characters, we must reflect upon our own pretensions to being informed. Jonson's accusation is voiced by Badiou,

Nominalism reigns, I stated, in our world: it is its spontaneous philosophy. The universal valorization of 'competence', even inside the political sphere, is its basest product: all it comes down to is guaranteeing the competence of he who is capable of naming realities such as they are. But what is at stake here is a lazy nominalism, for our times do not even have the time for authentic knowledge. The exaltation of competence is rather the desire—in order to do without truth—to glorify knowledge without knowing" (310).

The audience, like the characters, are humbled for their eagerness to speak, to name, to use language to confer the appearance of knowledge without actually possessing knowledge, to appropriate—beauty, learning, social priority—what they cannot own. Jonson's silence about Dauphine's trick, then, provides the parallax view and the impetus to review our own artificial constructions of identity and subjectivity. Jonson's self-awareness in his use of both speech and silence posits him within the excepted state of sovereignty. His secret self is presented. In Badiou's schema, Jonson himself becomes the eventual meta-site, the element whose membership is indeterminate from within the situation.²⁸

The architecture of Badiou's mathematical ontology withstands the application of these plays to its schematic. A testament, I think, to the complexity of the plays' engagement with primary and enduring philosophical speculations. Indeed the plays strain Badiou's ontological edifice by summoning the ethicality latent (though certainly not absent) in his relational map. This suggests to me a greater sense of social obligation in effect during the Renaissance, a substantive link between being and ethicality that

precedes epistemology. The emphasis in Othello on proof, and the concern to be informed and knowledgeable in Epicene reveal epistemological anxiety. It is a commonplace, really, for the early modern to be concerned to know, how to know, and what to know.²⁹ Less frequently noted, however, is the disorienting surprise of the unethical friend. The struggle to categorize the villain-trickster reflects a cultural assumption about belonging and morality. Those who belong to shared situations ought, it seems, to be alike. Iago wants to be like others, so he turns them into what he is; Dauphine counts no deception too great if it secures him the finances to acquire social likeness. Even where there is deviation from normative behaviors, observers continue to see likeness. Ethical ontology is deeply embedded within the biology of these plays, although the course of time has, apparently, obscured its function. The matheme mode of analysis enables us to access the plays from outside their own discursivity, such that we can recognize strains of thought that may propel the play without being overtly referenced within it. The subset of the void, for example, undergirds the reading of Iago's "I am not what I am," and Dauphine's inauthentic subjectivity. Notions of representations without presence are common in deconstructive work, but Badiou's theory allows for us to analyze the representation as well as the absent presence, and to do so without the fatalism of meaninglessness. Instead of marginal meanings or the meanings of margins, we are able to discuss integral meanings that arise at the margins of articulation, as Judith Butler has suggested.³⁰ Since my focus here is self-silencing, it is helpful to look at the plays utilizing a structure that moves both inside and outside language, much as self-silencing itself weaves in and around rhetoric. So what can we say, now, about self-silencing and the villain-trickster?

Iago certainly exemplifies Rebhorn's rhetorizing trickster who seizes sovereign power in his use of language to create a credible ethos and command his community.

Unlike revengers who find sovereign power in circulation, the villain-trickster creates his own authority. Like most self-creation, however, it is ultimately bankrupt, lacking an ontological center. Rebhorn acknowledges this weakness, but it is up to the playwrights to demonstrate what happens to the uncentered rhetor and the power he has manufactured. Iago easily relinquishes his authority when he is caught out, substituting for it the intrinsic authority of silence. In the state of exception, where silence signifies, Iago is able to affirm his being and unify with his community as the exemplar of their ethical failures. His personal goals of advancement are forfeit, but they were always suspect anyway. It seems that what Iago most wanted is for everyone to recognize their likeness to him, that they too have a void within. He wants them to empathize with his lack of center, lack of meaning. Iago's nihilism is transferred to his sociality and beyond to the theatrical audience who also seek for an explanation of his motive within themselves. To consider why Iago did what he did is to consider social inequities and the secret sins they engender within each of us; it is to recognize that there is a void, an ethical and ontological absence in everyone. However Iago may have intended this information to affect his sociality, Lodovico receives it as instructive. Until, that is, he has to apply it to himself, at which point he tries to silence it by shutting out its vision. His use of silence, however, is oppressive, and has the oppositional effect of drawing attention to the ultimate meaning of Iago's event.

Dauphine is a trickster who works in silence. He is not the animated rhetorician of Rebhorn's analysis, but a secretive emissary from the void. Like Rebhorn's trickster, however, he is ontologically starved, a condition only fully revealed at the conclusion of the play. In fact all the qualities of the trickster apply to Dauphine, except for his lack of rhetorizing. But Dauphine is silent in a community of urgent self-creators. All the characters are tricksters in this play, they all seek to construct an extrinsic social identity,

but few have any self-awareness. At the end of the play when Dauphine's reticence is exposed as strategic self-silencing, everyone except Dauphine re-evaluates their social maneuvering. Dauphine's trick affords each an opportunity to reconceive of themselves in a more intrinsic, subjectifying way. This imperative is extended even to the audience in Jonson's audacious self-silencing, which keeps Epicene's secret even from spectators/readers. Only Dauphine himself fails to receive subjective benefit from his self-silence. Though he receives the pecuniary goals he sought, it is at the expense of his social standing and personal subjectivity. He recedes from the play, an image of false constructivity, pointing again to the gap of being, the void, which lurks in all beings.

In both plays it is amply evident that self-silencing is an important mode of influence within a sociality. Whether rhetoric or silence is used to obscure the secret self, the presentation of self-silencing always elicits a personal, ethical evaluation on the part of witnesses. Because villains and tricksters use of self-silence is nihilistic, it evokes a pharmaceutical response from their social group and the play's audiences as well. Although the communities within the plays, and the plays' auditors are like the villain-trickster insofar as they too possess an ethical absence, no one wants to be either the villain or the dupe. So witnesses must in some way transform their secret selves into authentic silent selves. They must conscientiously reform their way of being in the world. Paradoxically, the failure-to-present that self-silencing signifies is a compelling presentation of the multiple, social ontology and subsequent ethicality of humanity.

Notes to Ch. 3 “You Know What You Know”: Silent Selves, Secret Selves

- ¹ Wayne A. Rebhorn, “‘The Emperour of Mens Minds’: The Renaissance Trickster as Homo Rhetoricus,” Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene, Ed. by David Quint, Margaret W. Ferguson, G. W. Pigman III, and Wayne A. Rebhorn (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992): 31-65. W. H. Auden’s The Dyer’s Hand and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1962) also discusses the Renaissance trickster in the context of rhetoric.
- ² Scholars have rightly focused on issues of epistemology in these two plays. In the face of metaphysical uncertainty, however, constructions of being and social morality assume a pressing urgency that the present essay hopes to underscore. The following works engage in related efforts: John Bronbeck-Tedesco, “Morality, Ethics and the Failure of Love in Shakespeare’s Othello,” Othello: New Critical Essays, Ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Routledge, 2002): 255-270. Stanley Cavell, “Epistemology and Tragedy: A Reading of Othello,” Modern Critical Interpretations: William Shakespeare’s Othello, Ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987). Elizabeth Gruber, “Insurgent Flesh: Epistemology and Violence in Othello and Mariam,” Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal 32:4 (June 2003): 393-410. Matthew R. Martin, Between Theatre and Philosophy: Skepticism in the Major City Comedies of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), especially Chapter, 3, “Epicoene and Knowing by Tradition,” 58-77. Katharine Eisaman Maus, Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See especially Ch. 4, Proof and Consequences: Othello and the Crime of Intention, 104-127, and Ch. 5, Prosecution and Sexual Secrecy: Jonson and Shakespeare, 128-181. Further citations will be to this edition with page numbers noted in the text. Bryan Reynolds and Joseph Fitzpatrick, “Venetian Ideology or Transversal Power?: Iago’s Motives and the Means by which Othello Falls,” Othello: New Critical Essays, Ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Routledge, 2002): 203-219.
- ³ William Shakespeare, Othello, Ed. by Alvin Kernan (New York: Signet, 1998). All further citations will be to this edition by act, scene and line number.
- ⁴ For more on the character and characterization of Othello, see Thomas Moisan, “Relating Things to the State: ‘The State’ and the Subject of Othello,” Othello: New Critical Essays, Ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Routledge, 2002): 189-202. In his analysis of uses of the term “the State,” Moisan notes that Othello conflates his civil self with “the State.” He comments further on Othello’s rhetorical talents. Also David Lucking, “‘To Tell My Story’: Narrating Identity in Shakespeare,” The Upstart Crow 27 (2007-2008): 52-66, who writes of Othello’s self-conception “...the story-making faculty constitutes a distinct mode of knowing in itself, a way of grasping and making sense of the flux of experience that is different from any other kind of understanding...” (63). See Gruber for a provocative analysis of Desdemona’s murder.

- ⁵ Reynolds/Fitzpatrick, Maus, Cavell and Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), all note that Othello's belief in Iago is based upon rhetorical persuasion, not evidential proof.
- ⁶ For more on the berry-sewn kerchief, see Patricia Parker, "Othello and Hamlet: Dilation, Spying, and the 'Secret Place' of Woman," *Representations* 44 (Autumn 1993): 60-95 who considers its status as an epistemological emblem. Also Dympna Callaghan's provocative look at the cultural meaning of linens in Othello: "Looking Well to Linens: Women and Cultural Production in Othello and Shakespeare's England," Marxist Shakespeares, Ed. by Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (New York: Routledge, 2001): 53-81.
- ⁷ Jon Snyder's recent book fruitfully analyzes historical (not philosophical) distinctions between simulation and dissimulation in Early Modern Europe. Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
- ⁸ Janet Adelman "Iago's Alter Ego: Race as Projection in Othello," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48:2 (Summer, 1997): 125-144, quotation from p. 128. Adelman's analysis is a psychoanalytic reading of Iago.
- ⁹ For more on Othello and the Venetian power-set, see Camille Wells Slight, "Slaves and Subjects in Othello," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48:4 (Winter 1997): 377-390, who writes that Iago manipulates Othello through the values he shares with Venetians for "social order and epistemological clarity" (386). See also Moisan; Julia Reinhard Lupton, Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), who articulates the warrant for and implications of reading Othello as a converted Muslim; and Lynne Magnusson who considers rhetorical power structures in Venice, "'Voice Potential': Language and Symbolic Capital in Othello," Shakespeare and Language, Ed. by Catherine M.S. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004): 213-225.
- ¹⁰ "violence, n", *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press. 13 September 2011.
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223638?rskey=TyAiY4&result=1>>.
- ¹¹ Magnusson uses Bourdieu's economic model of linguistic exchange to analyze power paradigms of speech in the play. She notes that Iago's knack for the "constructing of a favorable context" (223) in which to practice rhetorical persuasion. Richard Mallette, "Blasphemous Preacher: Iago and the Reformation," Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England, Ed. by Dennis Taylor and David Beauregard (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003): 382-414, offers an interesting comparison of Iago's speech to Reformation homilies, "piercing the ear" with infernal counsel. See also Slight and Reynolds.
- ¹² Adelman, and David Pollard, "Iago's Wound," Othello, New Perspectives, Ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Kent Cartwright (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1991): 89-96. See also Reynolds; Ben Saunders, "Iago's Clyster:

Purgation, Analogy, and the Civilizing Process,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55:2 (Summer 2004): 148-176; and Hugh Grady, “Iago and the Dialectic of Enlightenment: Reason, Will and Desire in Othello,” *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts* 37:4 (Fall 1995): 537-551 who uses Adorno and Horkheimer’s instrumental reason to parse Iago’s behavior as destructive, but not constructive (in contrast to Dollimore), identifying his actions as “purposeless purposiveness.”

- ¹³ Stephen Greenblatt, “The Improvisation of Power,” Modern Critical Interpretations: Othello Ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987): 37-59, quotation from p. 41.
- ¹⁴ Alain Badiou, Being and Event (London: Continuum, 2005). All further citations will be to this edition with page numbers noted in text.
- ¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995): 25.
- ¹⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, Otherwise than Being, Or Beyond Essence, Trans. By Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2009). For a simpler overview of theories developed in this book, see Levinas, Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo, Trans. By Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985). For others considering ethics and Othello (to varying degrees), see Bronbeck-Tedesco, Grady, Pollard, and Cavell.
- ¹⁷ The social or communal consequences of Iago’s actions have received significant critical attention, though none quite focused on the “likeness” effect wrought by self-silencing. Bronbeck-Tedesco writes, “The core of his [Iago’s] villainy is ontological. He rubs out the line between what seems to be and what is, and does so with something as trivial and incidental as a handkerchief” (267). Reynolds/Fitzpatrick are perhaps most articulate here, “Put in transversal terms, empathy enables people to venture beyond their own conceptual and emotional boundaries, to think and feel as other do or might, and thus expand or transcend their own “subjective territories.... Transversal movements occur when one entertains alternative perspectives and breaches the parameters of their subjectification.... The ease with which Iago accesses transversal territory enables him to enter freely into the subjective territories of others where he can readily comprehend their sensibilities and idiosyncrasies. He then uses this information to force them into transversal movements across the emotional and conceptual spaces of alternative ideologies.” (207). Slight’s feels the play is concerned with “social fragmentation and individual isolation” (378), and that Iago exposes vagaries that arise when serving oneself is conflated with serving one’s community. Cavell begins his study of Othello thusly, “That the integrity of my (human, finite) existence may depend on the fact and on the idea of another being’s existence, and on the possibility of proving that existence—an existence conceived from my very dependence and incompleteness, hence conceived as perfect, and conceived as producing me ‘in some sense, in [its] own image’ (9). See also Heather James “Dido’s Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52:3 (Autumn 2001): 360-382, and Michael Neill, “His Master’s Ass’: Slavery, Service, and Subordination in Othello,” *Shakespeare and*

the Mediterranean, Ed. by Tom Clayton, Susan Brock, Vincente Fores, Jill Levenson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004): 215-229, who explores the ideas of slavery, service, bondage, etc in what would, for the Renaissance, be predominately Christian usages. Important here is the embeddedness of relational sociality. See also Gruber, Lupton, Moisan, and Michael Neill, "Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery and the Hideous in Othello," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40:4 (Winter 1989): 383-412. Further references to this article are to this edition with page numbers cited.

¹⁸ Othello is notoriously involving and affecting for audiences. Neill (Unproper) writes "Othello persistently goads its audience into speculation about what is happening behind the scenes" (396). See also Hugh Macrae Richmond, "The Audience's Role in Othello," Othello: New Critical Essays, Ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Routledge, 2002): 89-100. Pollard writes, "Othello thereby becomes the focusing instrument for complex and collusive "communal" aggression. The only possible justification for experiencing such a work is whatever clarifying catharsis it might momentarily effectuate. The likelihood [sic] is, however, that the clarification we attain will induce something like self-loathing—as with Baudelaire and (one fancies) Shakespeare himself" (95-6). Moisan says Lodovico's abrupt denial, "provides a vehicle by means of which Othello appears to tame the narrative it has staged, devising strategies of domestication, familiarization, and ultimately recuperation while calling attention to the ways in which that narrative ultimately eludes control" (199). See also, Parker.

¹⁹ Neill (Unproper) is helpful here, too: "What makes the tragedy of Othello so shocking and painful is that it engages its audience in a conspiracy to lay naked the scene of forbidden desire, only to confirm that the penalty for such exposure is death and oblivion; in so doing, the play takes us into territory we recognize but would rather not see...The object that "poisons sight" is nothing less than a mirror for the obscene desires and fears that Othello arouses in its audiences—monsters that the play at once invents and naturalizes, declaring them unproper, even as it implies that they were always "naturally" there" (412).

²⁰ Thomas M. Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 10:2 (Spring 1970): 325-348. In his Marxist analysis of Jacobean Literature as political critique, Jonathan Dollimore, Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of a Shakespeare and his Contemporaries, 2nd ed. (New York: Harvester, 1989), 3-50, also deals with un/centeredness.

²¹ Ben Jonson, "Epicene, or The Silent Woman" English Renaissance Drama, Ed. by David Bevington (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2002): 775-860. This quotation is from 5.4.205. All further citations will be to this edition with act, scene and line numbers. Despite my delight in the silently signifying "o" included in traditional spelling of "Epicoene," I adhere to this edition's choice to omit it.

²² Writers dealing with matters of silence/eloquence and secrecy in Epicene include Huston D. Hallahan, "Silence, eloquence, and Chatter in Jonson's Epicoene," *Huntington Library Quarterly: A Journal for the History and Interpretation of English and American Civilization* 40 (1977): 117-127. Hallahan argues that

both eloquence and silence are commendable characteristics, but it is chatter that is impotent. Douglas Lanier, "Masculine Silence: 'Epicoene' and Jonsonian Stylistics," *College Literature*, 21:2 (June 1994):1-18 writes "Jonsonian masculine discourse so fetishizes self-presence that it aspires to a condition of silence" (7). Charles R. Lyons, "Silent Women and Shrews: Eroticism and Convention in Epicoene and Measure for Measure," *Comparative Drama* 23: 2 (1989 Summer): 123-40 argues that Epicoene's silence is a failed representation of the sexual allure of feminine silence. Reuben Sanchez, "'Things like truths, well feigned'": Mimesis and Secrecy in Jonson's Epicoene," *Comparative Drama* 40:3 (2006 Fall): 313-336. Sanchez observes, "The play is not about 'truth' per se, but about the rhetorical devices by which truth is kept a secret..." (322). "Truewit and Morose represent different ways in which language and imagination fail to convey like truth. Dauphine's use of language and imagination succeeds, ironically, precisely because he does not make much use of language and because he is able to keep a secret" (328). See also Snyder on dissimulation and silence.

²³ For other takes on the community of *Epicoene*, see Sanchez, as well as Martin. Karen Newman, "City Talk: Women and Commodification in Jonson's Epicoene," *ELH* 56:3 (Autumn 1989): 503-518 considers Marx, the New Exchange, women and commerce in Epicoene. Marjorie Swann's, "Refashioning Society in Ben Jonson's Epicoene," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*; 38:2 Tudor and Stuart Drama (Spring, 1998): 297-315 reading finds Jonson eliminating women from the hereditary system but inadvertently reassigning them social valence as consumers. She also considers commodity culture in connection with Jonson himself and "ownership" of art.

²⁴ Philip Mirabelli advances a controversial claim in, "Silence, Wit, and Wisdom in The Silent Woman," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 29:2 Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring 1989): 309-336, where he lauds True-wit as a "true wit" who exemplifies the morality of one who uses silence eloquently via secrecy to bring about good, moral ends.

²⁵ Mark Albert Johnston, "Prosthetic Absence in Ben Jonson's Epicoene, The Alchemist, and Bartholomew Fair," *English Literary Renaissance* 37:3 (2007): 401-428, argues that bearded "men" signaled masculinity and clean-shaven "boys" meant economic and social inferiority to patriarchy.

²⁶ J. A. Jackson, "'On forfeit of your selves, think nothing true': Self-Deception in Ben Jonson's Epicoene," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 10:1 (May 2004): 21-28, quotation from p. 28. Likewise, George A. E. Parfitt, "Ethics and Christianity in Ben Jonson," *New Perspectives on Ben Jonson*, Ed. by James Hirsch (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1997): 77-88, writes that Jonson "...seems to have seen ethics, rather than metaphysics as the potential means of salvation for the individual and society" (81). It is part of my contention, however, that the gap in meaning is metaphysical, and that Jonson demonstrates it cannot be filled with self, hence the frantic fumbling for an identity.

²⁷ For gendered and metatheatrical readings of Epicoene's character see Rackin, and Jean E. Howard, "Crossdressing, The Theatre and Gender Struggle in Early Modern

England,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39:4 (Winter 1988): 418-440, who writes “...the man playing Epicoene usurps woman’s person and place to act out degrading masculine construction of her” (430). Johnston does not read the hermaphrodite as subversive although, citing Marjorie Garber, he places him within a state of exception. Lyons is intriguing: within the homosocial universe of *Epicoene*, the “trick” is that men can master women’s behavior. Silence is performed merely as an erotic lure. *Epicoene*’s silence is a failed representation of the sexual allure of feminine silence.

²⁸ For more on the effects of the play on its audience, see Jackson, Maus, Rackin, and Martin who writes, “...Jonson himself takes a metaepistemological stance toward his audience’s knowledge by depending on the conventionality of the audience’s perception of theatrical space to hide from them for five acts what they knew all along—that *Epicoene* is a boy” (77).

²⁹ Indeed, epistemological readings abound for these plays. Self-silencing is one among several reasons to consider knowledge acquisition in these plays. For other approaches read the aforementioned Rackin, Martin, Slights, Parker, Cavell, and Gruber

³⁰ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso 2004) 151, writes, “If the humanities has a future as cultural criticism, and cultural criticism has a task at the present moment, it is no doubt to return us to the human where we do not expect to find it, in its frailty and at the limits of its capacity to make sense. We would have to interrogate the emergence and vanishing of the human at the limits of what we can know, what we can hear, what we can see, what we can sense

CHAPTER 4

"THE THING INVIOLOTE": SENSING SELVES

Why does Hieronimo bite out his own tongue at the climax of Thomas Kyd's revenge play, The Spanish Tragedy? His claim to be concealing a "thing inviolate" with his autoglossotomy has confounded critics for generations, most of whom do not even attempt to understand its meaning.¹ Yet the scene stands as the defining moment of this seminal revenge tragedy, and thus warrants intelligibility. This essay seeks to extract meaning from the self-silencing through an analysis of social relations in the play and their legal and linguistic composition. In analyzing the play's engagement with community, speech, and agency, I am utilizing the social analytics of Emmanuel Levinas, as well as engaging the play in a "contest for meaning" with a sermon of Henry Smith's that is contemporaneous with the play.² As these sites for discourse converge, we see that the apparent quiescence of self-silencing belies an urgent desire for ethical activism. Furthermore, effectuating this call to ethical reform requires personal proximity and is accomplished via the performance of non-performance. These elements align this essay with Early Modern scholarship on justice, authority, representation, sociality and subjectivity. I hope to slice through this rather vast landscape, with specificity and depth sufficient to make a compelling case for the autoglossotomy to serve as a call to empathy. While I will not presume to have definitively resolved Hieronimo's self-silencing enigma, this analysis will offer a perspective that makes sense both within the context of the play and in subsequent instances of staged self-silencings. I expect as well to deepen our understanding of the importance of silence as a subjective and ethical power strategy.

Although a few critics have considered the varieties of Early Modern silence and its philosophic significance, self-silencing has primarily been considered in connection with Stoic self-governance which is not particularly applicable to Hieronimo, or other

avengers for that matter (most of whom are as loquacious about the injustices they attempt to rectify as they are unrestrained in exacting vengeance).³ If self-silencing is to be conceived in a Stoic fashion, it must be in the sense of constancy that Geoffrey Miles emphasizes in his book, Shakespeare and the Constant Romans.⁴ But in what way is Hieronimo “constant” in biting out his tongue? The revenger typically has good reasons for carrying out vigilante justice, and is forthright in explaining how his actions are “justifiable.” So why the habitual move to silence? Hieronimo says, “Urge no more words, I have no more to say” (4.4.152), and Hamlet says, “The rest is silence” (5.2.299).⁵ But these silences are peculiar because they come after a great deal of explicating and philosophical speechifying, and so beg the question of what and why are these revengers silencing? The silence may foreshadow the avengers impending demise or social ostracism but this is more than the silence of death else Hieronimo would not claim to be preserving in his silence an “inviolable thing.” But what is that “inviolable thing?” To begin answering this question, a closer look at the dynamics of revenge and revenger in The Spanish Tragedy is in order.

Hieronimo’s role as the “Knight Marshal” of Spain is pivotal to understanding his character’s conflicts and choices. Scholars have typically understood Hieronimo as an advocate, representing petitioners to the King’s justice.⁶ While this is not inaccurate, it fails to recognize either the broad scope of the Marshal’s work, nor the representative direction of his advocacy work. According to John Cowell (1554-1611), who in 1607 published “The interpreter: or Booke containing the signification of words wherein is set forth the true meaning of all, or the most part of such words and termes, as are mentioned in the lawe writers, or statutes of this victorious and renowned kingdome, requiring any exposition or interpretation,” the responsibilities of the Marshalsea were several-fold.⁷ The English Knight Marshal (under Elizabeth, Sir George Carey and Sir

Thomas Gerrard) is charged with governing and maintaining the civil order on behalf of the crown in the jurisdiction of the monarch's residence and court. To fulfill this capacity the marshal serves as policer, justicer and jailor, especially responsible for securing the monarch's bodily protection. These efforts are readily attested in Sir Francis Bacon's documentation of Gerrard's aid in subduing the Essex rebellion, as well as Elizabeth's own proclamation instructing Carey to restrict access to either her or the verge by plague-carrying sailors of Sir Francis Drake's navy.⁸ Though it is true that the marshal brings petitions to the sovereign, and administers justice on the sovereign's behalf, these actions are not completed as an advocate for the people, but in representation of the monarchy. The distinction I am delineating here between representing the sovereign rather than the subject is further emphasized in the knight marshal's expanded duties. He is to serve as harbinger for the monarch, preceding her so as to organize rank, coordinate ceremonies, and provision bed, board and entertainment for guests of the monarchy, as well as for the monarch herself during royal appearances, progresses or visits.⁹ These more hospitable and relational aspects of the Marshalsea have been, to my knowledge, universally neglected in scholarship on The Spanish Tragedy, to the detriment of our understanding of the play's interest in community. We see, herein, that the Knight Marshal's is not simply concerned with justice for commoners, but is more specifically interested in navigating the complex social relations of persons in regard to the monarchy, especially as they regard access and proximity to the sovereign.

At the start of the play, in fact, it is within these social aspects of the Marshalsea that we see Hieronimo working. Hieronimo, it seems, has been offering valued and trustworthy service to his King. The silent masque he presents before the King of Spain and the Ambassador of Portugal is a diplomatic triumph, subduing the enmity of the victor and saving face for the disgraced, paving the way for reconciliation and unity

between the countries.¹⁰ “Spain is Portugal/And Portugal is Spain,” (1.4.132-33) delights the King of Spain luxuriating in the union of the recently warring countries. The particulars of the masque are worth attending, however. The conceit with which Hieronimo achieves reconciliation is the performance of the subjection of both countries. In the masque, both countries are conquered by England; they are made alike, so one cannot sulk nor the other exult in their newly accorded peace. Hieronimo, following the King’s lead, makes each country akin to the other, mirrors, so that ethical and compassionate relations may be sustained through the leveling of hierarchy. Hieronimo’s masque promotes civility by evoking empathetic emulation. While this masque is certainly a precursor to the murderous masque of the play’s conclusion, it may also be seen—in its lack of dialogue or narration and consequent need for explication—to foreshadow the performance of silencing that Hieronimo stages on his own person, a performance that also seeks to unify the community after civil unrest. Furthermore, his diplomacy confirms Hieronimo’s character as a savvy, wise, and good-intentioned diplomat of the household. It is, then, particularly conflicting for him when his son is brutally murdered by the King’s nephew, Lorenzo. As a father, he wants revenge. As the admirable Knight Marshal, he is responsible for securing justice, but he recognizes the conflict of interest. His effort to engage the King’s support is blocked by Lorenzo, although Hieronimo’s official post as Knight Marshal is retained. The quandary, paradigmatic for revengers, is acute: Hieronimo needs access to the King to secure justice; but his authority does not supercede that of the murderer and thus access to the king, and therefore justice, is repulsed. The father cannot be satisfied in the loss of his son; the Knight Marshal can neither represent nor serve his king. The question is not only one of justice, then, but one of social rank and relation, of authority and agency.

Hieronimo claims that he is denied access to divine justice as well, and yet it is not at all clear that the heavens of The Spanish Tragedy are as silent before his pleas as he claims. There are a few circumstances to note here. First is the imperative for revenge and justice. In this revenge play, as in many, revenge and justice are synonymous, or nearly so, for those who have been wronged. Hieronimo's wife, Isabella, says, "The heavens are just; murder cannot be hid; / Time is the author both of truth and right, / and time will bring this treachery to light" (2.5.57-59). I think this might be characterized as a commonplace generalization that nonetheless needs to be emphasized: murder is ethically wrong in this play and murderers need to be held accountable. This ethical worldview is confirmed when Hieronimo, crying to the heavens for justice in the specific form of a clue to the identity of Horatio's murderer immediately receives a *deus ex machina* letter (falling, seemingly, from the heavens) composed by Bel-Imperia correctly naming Lorenzo and Balthazar as the murderers (3.2.24). When he seeks confirmation, again from the "countermured walls" of heaven, he receives Pedringano's letter of confession. It is impossible for this misdeed to go unchecked; the very universe of The Spanish Tragedy will not permit it. If Hieronimo does not know whom to blame, he will be informed. So that we are not confused by obfuscated ethics, I feel it is worth emphasizing the way in which Horatio's murder is presented as a legitimate social violation in both a legal and a moral sense.

Another point to highlight here is the conflation of revelation and revenge in which both Hieronimo and his wife, Isabella, engage. In the lines quoted above, Isabella is comforted that the crime will come to "light." Hieronimo asks the "sacred heavens," "If this incomparable murder thus/Of mine—but now no more—my son/Shall unrevealed and unrevenged pass,/How should we term your dealings to be just/If you unjustly deal

with those that in your justice trust?" (3.2.7-11). "Unrevealed" and "unrevenged" are linked such as to be nearly synonymous here and again with Hieronimo's later prayer:

O sacred heavens, may it come to pass
That such a monstrous and detested deed,
So closely smothered and so long concealed,
Shall thus by this be venged or revealed? (3.7.45-48).

The joining of the ideas of revelation and revenge suggest a further moral imperative to honesty, an assumption that the dishonesty and dissembling of the murderers is an additional and complicating ethical failing. Much as Deborah Shuger argued that governmental censorship revealed a social expectation of truth, rather than a desire to conceal dissent, so The Spanish Tragedy, or at least Hieronimo and his wife, likewise seems to expect civil (and civilized) transparency.¹¹ This conflation of truth and justice, may motivate the theatrically-minded Hieronimo to take his revenge on the stage, where, presumably, all is revealed, even accomplished anew, in the light of public performance. Certainly, it establishes that for Hieronimo, truth is social; it needs to be revealed and shared.

Perhaps these points about homicide and honesty are self-evident, but I linger on them in order to remember that revenge tragedies are not simply concerned with personal satisfaction or legal/political failures, but also with restoring social morality. Social morality may be sought for personal satisfaction but is also foundational to legal or political issues, and thus it is engendered in the web of sociality where subjects interact. The scrupulous and diplomatic Hieronimo is in a quandary: he needs the truth to be revealed, he needs retribution, but he cannot get these things in the ordinary legal way because the criminals have greater authority than he. To the perception of the ingenuous Hieronimo, the very fact of Lorenzo's criminality naturally undermines and voids his authority, and an ethical lapse within the royal family threatens the well-being of the entire state. Yet the intricacies of the social and legal system to which Hieronimo is so

attuned, do not accommodate this circumstance. Thus, personally and professionally, Hieronimo is obliged to seek out provisional authority with which to restore the Spanish sociality to its ethical norm.

In the same year that Kyd's play was published, a sermon of Henry Smith's (1560-1592?) was also printed entitled "Satan's Compassing the Earth."¹² Smith's epigraph is Job 1:7-8, a surprisingly mundane scene of heavenly governance, that is nonetheless disconcerting in its implications. The Lord has summoned his children to appear before him and Satan arrives among them. God inquires from where he comes, and Satan answers, "From compassing (sic) the earth to and fro, and from walking in it."¹³ Smith's exegesis is entirely concerned with Satan's occupation of the earth. He advises readers that just as "It is some vantage unto us to heare that the Spaniards are comming before they come," so should we be warned that Satan is lurking so "that wee may bee in a readines against him." (Smith 482). Smith elaborates upon the ways in which Satan may be said to "compass the earth," but does not delve into the more peculiar aspects of his epigraph, nor its enigmatic aftermath. After Satan delivers his nonchalant alibi of a walkabout, God directs his attention to the "blameless" Job. Satan accuses Job of being good only because God has made life easy for him with health, wealth, family and reputation. So God permits Satan to take everything away from Job, except his life, as a test of Job's faith, which Satan proceeds to do. The remainder of the book depicts Job's struggle to understand God's purpose in his suffering (since he was not privy to the heavenly conference) and to maintain belief in God's justice and benevolence despite the terrible degradation he experiences. Smith tangles with the knotty theological ramifications of this divine council only with the surprising (and entirely undeveloped, though iterated) suggestion that it is as if Satan approaches God "...to get a commission

that God would make him knight Marshal over the world, to slay and kill as many as he hated..." (486).

There is no reason to believe Smith had seen Kyd's play with its murderous Knight Marshal, Hieronimo. On the contrary, Smith, a moderate Puritan, cautions his readers against theatrical performance, so presumably he did not attend them himself. But the construction of the Knight Marshal's office as that of a murderer, rather than a peacekeeper and protector, is provocative enough to suspect that perhaps Smith was familiar with the outlines of Kyd's tale, which was an exceptionally popular and frequently staged play. The ubiquitous Thomas Nashe does stand as one tenuous link between the popular lecturer of St. Clement Danes and the literary/theatrical world. Coining Smith's oft-repeated sobriquet, Nashe writes upon Smith's death, "...Silver-tongue'd Smith, whose well tun'd stile hath made thy death the general teares of the Muses...."¹⁴ Other than Nashe's admiration for Smith's style, however, the precise nature of their acquaintance is unknown. It is possible, though, to grant Smith a theoretical familiarity with Kyd via Nashe, who taunted Kyd for his Senecan translations. Nashe's personal intimacy with the household of Knight Marshal Sir George Carey is also suggestive.¹⁵ Smith, however, does not need Nashe to be connected with the Queen's household. His stepmother was Margaret Cecil, sister to Lord Burghley, and the powerful Lord Treasurer may be styled a patron of Smith's, having intervened on his behalf during anti-Puritan contentions (Jenkins 10-21). Smith's popularity and general esteem is uncontested. "By 1610 Smith's printed sermons had gone through eighty-five or more editions and his fame as a powerful preacher survived him for several decades" (Jenkins 59). In any case, Smith's sermon invites a propitiously homologous reading of the play because of a coincidence of thematic parallels not limited to, but certainly beginning with, the startling presence of a homicidal court official.

Why should Smith's configure Satan as a Knight Marshal whose authority to kill derives from his "king." There are, to my knowledge, no pertinent topical circumstances of marshals murdering rampantly and serially at Elizabeth's behest. Throughout the sermon, however, Satan is compared to Spain – both are threats to the English, deceptively seeking to subdue or destroy. "...if God make you see your countrie naked, your temples desolate, your cities ruined, your houses spoiled, you will say the Spaniards have been here: so when you see your minds corrupted, your hearts hardened, your willes perverted...you may say the devil hath beene here" (Smith 488). Of course, The Spanish Tragedy is set in Spain, making Hieronimo the Spanish Knight Marshal: he is doubly indicted.¹⁶ Interestingly, both the Spaniards (as Smith conceives them) and Satan are identified in the sermon, not in themselves, but by reading evidence of their presence; for Smith, they signify silently. Kevin Dunn has argued that Hieronimo as a representative is also a sign only, that his primary problem is the lack of an authentic subjectivity available for those who legally represent.¹⁷ In another parallel, Satan is described like a Judas, "because he kisseth when he betrayeth, as though he would not betray" (Smith 490). Both Lorenzo, the villain of Kyd's play, and Hieronimo are guilty of similarly demonstrating affection to those whom they plot to ruin. Hieronimo's performance of affection toward Lorenzo is so convincing it precipitates his wife's suicide. Satan's "compassing" especially resonates in the play as Hieronimo locks (encompasses) the King and his retinue in the theatre for his vengeance-taking. Prior to committing his murders, he says, "The ugly fiends do sally forth of hell,/And frame my steps to unfrequented paths/And fear my hearts with fierce inflamed thoughts" (3.2.16-18). Here, Hieronimo claims explicitly that he is directed to roam and plot murder by devils. As he "compasses" the earth, even his cries for justice encircle heaven,

The blustering winds, conspiring with my words,
At my lament have moved the leafless trees,

Disrobed the meadows of their flowered green,
Made mountains marsh with spring tides of my tears,
And broken through the brazen gates of hell.
Yet still tormented is my tortured soul
With broken sighs and restless passions,
That winged, mount and hovering in the air,
Beat at the windows of the brightest heavens,
Soliciting for justice and revenge.
But they are placed in those empyreal heights
Where, countermured with walls of diamond,
I find the place impregnable, and they
Resist my woes, and give my words no way. (3.7.5-18)

Hieronimo's "ceaseless complaints" (3.7.4) are likened to traveling winds that have altered the earth (disrobed the meadows) and assaulted heaven. Although Hieronimo echoes Job's anxious solicitation of God for justice, he compares to Smith's Satan – Spanish, murderous, deceptive, and "compassing" the earth. In fact, this dual personification proves useful for many revengers. Though they suffer wrong at the hands of authority, they also, like Satan, exercise an assumed authority in "kil[ling] as many as he hate[s]."

A curious figuring, Satan "commissioned" by God. Satan, who slays whomever he hates, as the enforcer for and harbinger of God; it reinforces the notion of sovereign omnipotence even as it undermines the notion of sovereign benevolence. It reveals a power that cascades from God and is exercised on his behalf by Satan: the sorrows that beset Job are "authorized" by God. Smith fails to articulate a response to this theological quandary, but surely recognizes the subversive potential of his configuration. By implication, or even imputation, the King authorizes the crimes of his people. Authority is not bivouacked in the King's body, it is not held in stasis until the sovereign requires its use, but is in perpetual circulation amongst the King and those in whom he vests power. Responsibility for the actions of his agents, ultimately belong to the King. Though there is little to suggest, in the Knight Marshal's responsibilities, that injudicious killing and slaying is customary, Smith assigns Satan the role of Knight Marshal, a role supposedly representative of the King's justice. Satan, in other words, exercises his

sovereign's authority. The Spanish Tragedy's Knight Marshal Hieronimo is also granted the authority of his King to administer justice in the court's dominions. Where Satan is an "accuser" in the divine court, the Knight Marshal's duties as both police and magistrate register him as both accuser and advocate. The natural conflict in these roles is underscored with Hieronimo's personal conflict of interest. Could Hieronimo, like Satan, extend his own, sovereignly-appointed authority to slaying and killing?

I introduce Smith's sermon in order to illustrate the ways in which Hieronimo's dilemma is complicated by competing ideologies of obligation. Hieronimo himself is one minute praying for (and receiving) information about the murderer's identity, the next he claims, as quoted above, that his steps are guided by hell's fiends. The religious command of Romans 12:19 to forego vengeance collides with the Senecan hero who redresses crime at any personal cost. Hieronimo wavers from one to the other within a handful of lines (3.13.2-20). But for this Knight Marshal, these ordinary constructions of justice-seeking are entangled with those of his profession. We might, following Bradin Cormack's lead, conceive of Hieronimo's dilemma in terms of jurisdiction. Cormack writes,

...jurisdiction identifies authority as power produced under the administrative recognition of the geographical or conceptual limits that exactly order it as authority. Jurisdiction amounts to the delimitation of a sphere—spatial (state, city, or manor; domestic, maritime, or foreign), temporal (proximate or immemorial past; regular or market days), or generic (matters spiritual or temporal; promise or debt)—that is the precondition for the judicial as such, for the very capacity of the law to come into effect.¹⁸

The Knight Marshal's *generic* sphere of authority confusingly includes minor legal petitions such as debts and leases (3.13.59-65), capital offenses such as murder (3.6), as well as matters of civility such as the entertainment of ambassadors (1.4). The Elizabethan legal system itself is hereby problematized for assigning this absurdly broad jurisdiction, as well as for necessitating the discordant roles it required the Knight

Marshal to play in adjudicating it. Jailor and magistrate? Guardian of the monarch's person and director of entertainment?¹⁹ As Cormack's book reveals, England's legal system had plenty of opportunity for revision in its development. Hieronimo is nearly paralyzed with inaction while he considers how to proceed from within this muddle of familial, social, religious, cultural and legal obligations.

The Spanish Tragedy almost obsessively places characters and actions in ambiguous positions between warring claims of identity, loyalty, and obligation. Don Andrea of the Induction is neither a lover nor a warrior, and so cannot find peace in the afterlife until his tale is resolved.²⁰ The credit for Prince Balthazar's capture belongs fully to neither Horatio nor Lorenzo. The pursuant peace is only conditional. Balthazar remains in the Spanish court as neither free man nor prisoner, "Meanwhile live thou, though not in liberty, yet free from bearing any servile yoke" (1.2.147-8). The viceroy of Portugal, Alexandro, Pedringano, Bel-Imperia and of course Hieronimo are all denied access to the persons who can effect their physical or emotional liberation. The play positions characters in impossibly difficult moral situations all but abandoned by behavioral precedents. The characters must proceed with neither law nor custom to guide them. The Spanish Tragedy demonstrates the way in which civil *nomos* is created by individual subjects' reactions to these competing ethical claims. Whether they rest their confidence in civil servants, family, the monarchy, or divine justice every character grapples with social morality, enacting behaviors that either defy or reify paradigms of communal relations. The play is keen to investigate the subjective and social experience of those negotiating with forms of authority. Not surprisingly, these issues manifest in the play via the problematization of speech, hearing and personal access.

Language in this play is often figured as deceptive and ineffective, and at least twice is portrayed as a cause of death.²¹ Balthazar laments the ineffectual love letters he

sends to Bel-Imperia, “My words are rude and work her no delight. The lines I send her are but harsh and ill, Such as do drop from Pan and Marsyas’ quill” (2.1.14-16). Marsyas lost a verse contest with Apollo and was subsequently flayed alive (note, p. 22). When Bel-Imperia attempts to paint a sylvan picture of an assignation with Horatio, she curiously, forebodingly, refers to Philomela, the Ovidian link between speech and violence. Furthermore, Bel-Imperia figures the nightingale singing only with a thorn to her breast. Love relationships in the play are not secured with speech. On the contrary, speech belies its purported goal bringing division and death to the would-be lovers. Somehow, speaking of love destroys the very subject of which it speaks, as well as the subject who speaks.

The subplot also demonstrates problems with speech, but this time with an emphasis on hearing. The Viceroy of Portugal is deceived by the false words of Villupo eager to get rid of a rival. The Viceroy refuses to listen to Alexandro’s protestations of innocence, and then, when Alexandro is vindicated, the Viceroy refuses to hear Alexandro’s plea for leniency toward Villupo. Likewise, Hieronimo pleads for justice to the King of Spain, “Justice, oh Justice! Oh my son, my son,/My son whom naught can ransom or redeem” (3.12.65-6). But the King’s response is to urge others to “restrain [Hieronimo’s] fury” (3.12.80) and to defer hearing the matter. This anticipates the King’s later failure to hear Hieronimo when he explains what prompted his vengeance. Hieronimo himself neglects his advocate work and chews up the petitions of those in his charge. In The Spanish Tragedy, speech is divisive; hearing is compromised. Unable or unwilling to listen, the civil community in this play is non-functional.

Henry Smith’s sermon on Satan’s Compassing the Earth both begins and ends with an admonition to listen:

Take heed how you heare, for that which I am to speake unto you of the devil, the devil would not have you heare: and therefore as hee is here called a Compasser,

so hee will compass your eyes with shewes, and your eares with soundes, and your sences with sleepe, and your thoughtes with fansies, and all to hinder you from hearing while the articles are against him, and after I have spoken, hee will compasse you againe with business, and cares, and pleasures, and quarrels, to make you forget that which you have heard, as hee hath made you forgetter that which he have heard before, or else to contemne it, as though you might doe well without it: as hee hath compassed the which doe walke in the streetes while the voice of god soundeth in the Churches as they passes by: therefore before everie Sermon yee had need to remember Christes lesson, *Take heed how you heare.* (1)

Smith argues that persons are vulnerable to Satan when allowing life to “compass” them with “showes,” “soundes,” “sleepe,” and “fansies” such that they are not attentive to life. The King of Spain’s failure to listen manifests Smith’s “compassed” with “business, and cares,” and links him with the divinity who resists Hieronimo’s “ceaseless ‘plaints.’” If false and deceptive speech undermines subjective authority in the play, the unique and apposite trait of sovereignty is the deferral of listening or failure to hear.

The sovereign’s silence is not, however, always a form of negligence or absence. Revenge figures sovereign silence as powerful. The gate of horn (as opposed to that of ivory) is said to offer dreams of truth in the silence of the night.²² In a related scene, Don Andrea complains (for the third time) about witnessing his antagonist’s seemingly successful machinations, until Revenge assures him, “...although he (Revenge) sleep awhile; For in unquiet, quietness is feigned, And slumb’ring is a common worldly wile” (3.15.23-5). Twice, then, in connection with Revenge, silence is imagined to be rife with the action of thinking: first dreaming, then scheming. C.L. Barber, too, has noticed the surprising sense of effectuality that Revenge depicts in stillness and sleep. He describes Revenge as a type of chorus, who in turn describes the “dramatic movement” of the play, “The accomplishment of the plot is a reversal...which comes about by the growth...of a motive...even though it may go underground” (145). Sovereign silence, even the “sleepe” that Smith cautions against, is not, then, necessarily impotence; it may be a type of subjective or ethical acting. When Lorenzo urges the King to dismiss Hieronimo from

his position. The King refuses out of compassion, “We shall increase his melancholy so. ‘Tis best we see further in it first...” (3.12.99-100). Although he postpones attending to Hieronimo’s cry for justice, his silence arises out of ethical concern for Hieronimo’s distracted state. There are two senses of authority’s silence then: the failure/deferral of hearing and the active silence of ethical consideration. It is not clear that these are actuated in mutual exclusion. The silences of The Spanish Tragedy have a mixture of motivations, but it is an enjoyment of sovereign power to resist articulation. Just as Job discovers in the indexed text of Smith’s sermon, the subjective mode of the sovereign is silence that signifies. To “take heed of how we hear,” however, we find that this silent signification reflects inter-relationally: revealing the monarch’s ethical sensitivity and prompting an ethical reaction (good or ill) from the listener as they grapple with the non-performance of the monarch.

Catherine Belsey in her study on The Subject of Tragedy argues that the diachronic man of 15th century morality plays has no agency; the subjects of history are God and the Devil. Moving into later plays, Belsey notes the unclear authority with which Hieronimo exacts his revenge. “...uncertain whether he speaks in the name – the discourse – of heaven or hell, or neither, Hieronimo finally bites out his own tongue, repudiating the right which defines the subject, the right of speech itself.”²³ As we have seen, though, Hieronimo has discovered that speech is an ineffectual emissary of his agency. He needs another authorizing agent or means. Hieronimo’s situation evokes the theological suggestion of Henry Smith’s sermon: that the devil is empowered by God, that his power is actually God’s power. That God would “commission” Satan to wantonly destroy God’s own handiwork is hardly thinkable, commissioning is far different from simply “permitting” Satan to harm as traditional readings of the book of Job suggest. And yet Smith’s choice of the word “commission” points to the crucible of

Christian claims about God's goodness and power. The "problem of evil," as it is termed, is simply the question that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then why is there evil and suffering. The orthodox response is that suffering was not part of God's original creation ("...it was very good" [Genesis 1:31]), but death (spiritual and physical) was introduced with the fall of man. When humankind chose to enjoy fruit from the tree of good and evil, it chose to learn about God's benevolence (the good) through suffering (the evil). As persons endure various hardships, they seek meaning, encounter God, and through recognition of his Being come to understand through ethical relation, their own being and social obligation. Suffering calls humans back to a right relation with God. The horrors that undo Job, to use Smith's exemplar, are not consequences of his own personal sin; there is not a one-to-one correlation of sin and suffering. God's purposes in Job's suffering are to prove Satan a false accuser and a liar, but Job does not know this. Although he does not deny his belief in God, he does say inappropriate things about God as he wrestles with his seemingly unjust treatment. At the conclusion of the book, God finally speaks to Job, face to face. Job has required, "Shewe me, wherefore thou contendest with me" (Job 10:2); God does not offer a direct articulate response. Instead, God directs him to look upon the "shewe" of creation. With the performance of the created world, God illuminates to Job that he perceives their relationship wrongly. In the face of Job's relative ignorance and impotence compared to God's own omniscience and omnipotence, Job is humbled. "Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice but I will proceed no further" (Job 39:37). Job cried for justice (twice), then self-silences. For Job, this silence is born out of a recognition of their right relation: God's power exceeds his own, and yet, Job's own power is also an extension of God's power. His agency originates with his creator. His fate and his response to it, therefore reflect his creator

who designates Job's role and significance in life. So that he is not one "who darkeneth the counsel by wordes without knowledge," Job is silent (Job 38:2). His silence solicits his community to make meaning out of his situation as they recognize the nature of being as socially contingent; recognize that we are always in relation to others and thus there is always ethical obligation at the core of agency, sovereign or subject. God is responsible for Job, Job is responsible to God; their agency is shared.

Henry Smith's depiction of Satan as a commissioned Knight Marshal positions him as an extension, a representative, of the sovereign will. As Smith concludes his sermon, he iterates this idea: the devil comes to God, "not to be reformed of his evill, but to have a pasport to doe more evill" (Smith 6). A passport—precisely what the underworld cannot find for Don Andrea—a license or authorization to move, exercise agency. A passport is the "safe conduct" guarantee for the enacting of one's role in the world.²⁴ Hieronimo keenly desires revenge but feels his "ceaseless plaints" have availed him nothing. Nor has he found one to hear his lament, "Where shall I run to breathe abroad my woes..." (3.7.1). There is no Knight Marshal to whom Hieronimo may present his action. The social breakdown of the community is complete. Hieronimo is isolated: Isabella is suicidal; Pedringano is dead; Bel-Imperia is confined; and Lorenzo prevents his access to the King. Everyone seems senseless to Hieronimo's suffering, though, indeed, "everyone" is intimately concerned with Horatio's murder in their own self-involved way. Hieronimo tries, when denied access to the King, to relinquish his position so that he may freely assume the anti-civil role of revenger,

I'll make a pickax of my poniard,
And here surrender up my marshalship;
For I'll go marshal up the fiends in hell
To be avenged on you all for this. (3.12.75-9)

The King, however, chooses to retain Hieronimo as his Knight Marshal, despite his curious outburst. Hieronimo decides to become the Senecan avenger anyway. His

passport to “slay and kil as many as he hate[s],” lies in his sovereignly-assigned role of Knight Marshal. Hieronimo’s execution of vengeance then, may be seen by him as an extension of his civil responsibility. The inordinately broad and confused jurisdictional obligations offer a type of warrant for this very personal execution of his duties.

Hieronimo’s authority derives from the King, and it is in service to the King that he relieves the court of the criminal element. Belsey’s diachronic man of the 15th century gives way not necessarily to the humanist man rebounding from the angel on one shoulder to the devil on the other, but to the subject that encompasses both. The subject of history is not God and Satan, but God manifested through a variety of commissioned agents including Satan, Job, the King, of course, and Hieronimo, agent for the King. Though the King calls him a traitor after he murders the conspirators, Knight Marshal Hieronimo, like Smith’s slaying Satan, may be perceived as fulfilling his sovereignly-assigned duties with a Stoic-like constancy.

Actually conducting his legal duties, however, proves challenging for Hieronimo, who in a fit, shreds the petitioners actions at no small cost to their cause. The equity of his previous efforts is undermined by his new “secret” identity as a revenger. Although the written petitions of Hieronimo’s subjects fail to move him, Old Bazulto’s silent performance of sorrow does move Hieronimo to empathy, engaging his response, if only to commiserate. Hieronimo now recalls his earlier success in using the power of performance to secure empathy. As Katharine Eisaman Maus notes,

The force of empathy seems to propel the confrontation into the register of the aesthetic: the Old Man is Hieronimo’s ‘portrait.’ ...mimetic representation heightens rather than diminishes real-life pertinence.... In the last act, in a fable that turns out to be true, Hieronimo attempts to enforce upon the rulers of Spain and Portugal the acknowledgment of likeness that had overcome him....²⁵

Hieronimo can use his role of Knight Marshal to stage his vengeance in such a way that it too will elicit the empathy he desires, and restore the monarchy to the ethical norm it

enjoyed at the start of the play. The way to accomplish his vengeance and reconcile the fractured Spanish community is to reenact the earlier diplomatic success of the silent masque. Hieronimo hopes to make others feel as he does, to effect a performance that elicits empathy, fellow-feeling.²⁶ He finds power and agency in silent (or incomprehensible) shows that obtain relational understanding in witnesses. But of course, to enact vengeance theatrically is also to employ another of Smith's tricks of Satan: "shewes" that create "fancies." Though his actions are homicidal, his use of theatre to accomplish them suggests that he has not relinquished hope of effecting ethical reform. The civil anomie of this sociality is symptomized not only in the unjust murder of Horatio, but also in the divisions speech cause, complicated by an inability to listen or empathize. Hieronimo's effort to achieve justice, then, incorporates not only the legal concern to see murderers penalized, but also the social concern to enable right social relations. The use of silent performance to accomplish these aims is apt. The masque demonstrates Ciceronian constancy of public performance; it affirms the sovereign mandate for social justice; and it enacts a restorative empathy amongst observers. Or at least it is supposed to.

In the climactic scene Hieronimo stages a masque of murders for the King of Spain and the Viceroy of Portugal that imprecisely mirrors the events that led to his son, Horatio's, murder, ostensibly selected for performance because of its similar circumstances. Hieronimo directs the actors to speak the play each in a different language, embodying the divisive nature of speech in the Spanish community. As the executor of discordant language, Hieronimo plays a divine role, sundering the linguistic community, remanding the villains to a confusion of speech that mirrors their actual linguistic relations. As he remarks in anticipation of the masque, "Now shall I see the fall of Babylon, / Wrought by the heavens in this confusion" (4.1.195-6). The Babelian

implication that these villains usurped divine prerogative in inflicting Horatio's untimely demise is compounded in Hieronimo's assumption of divine privilege in orchestrating their destruction. As explicator of the play, as well, Hieronimo seemingly assumes authorial privilege that links him to a godly author of all things. Upon the vengeful completion, however, and the deaths of the conspirators, Hieronimo says "...I at last revenged thoroughly,/Upon whose souls may heavens be yet avenged/With greater far than these afflictions" (4.4.173-5). Hieronimo identifies his vengeance with an earthly justice, leaving the villains' souls to a divine justice. Thus he here rejects the notion that his role is that of a divine instrument and punctuates his exemplification of Henry Smith's Satan, his Knight Marshal who with "shewes" can "slay and kill as many as he hated." But there is reason to believe in the actions that follow that, just as Smith's sermon suggests, Hieronimo, satanic Knight Marshal, does indeed complete a divine commission.

As Hieronimo wreaks his vengeance in accord with information that is seemingly heaven-sent, he explains his "justice" with reference to his murdered son whose dead body he hangs on the scaffold as demonstrable stage property. He urges the Viceroy to sympathize with his loss, as Maus explains,

Ranging the corpse of his socially inferior son alongside the bodies of the heirs apparent, Hieronimo stages and voices a radically leveling sentiment: that one dead child is very like another, that paternal love feels essentially the same for noble and commoner, that his suffering is worth as much as the suffering of princes. (68)

Leveling certainly is part of Hieronimo's ethical pedagogy, it may be even more subversive than Maus suggests. In the masque that mirrors the real situation of Horatio's demise, Hieronimo plays "Lorenzo's part" and assigns Lorenzo his son's part so that he might more easily murder Lorenzo on stage. In the representation, then, Hieronimo murders his own son. This is a leveling of a more divine sort—connecting Hieronimo

with Abraham who representatively sacrificed his son as a type of God who in turn sacrifices Jesus, the demonstrable representation of divine justice. There is here a circularity of sacrifice and representation that allows each father to assume a sovereign role in a cycle of ethical procurement. I do not propose that this Christian parallel is either intentional or even overt. I find rather, like Barber says of another scene, that "...the mode of expression or embodiment seems likely to have been shaped by religious prototypes..." (Barber 152). The significant point is Hieronimo's extension of sovereign, even divine, authority. As Satan works from God's commission in Smith's configuration, Hieronimo may also. And this, of course, is the compelling question of revenge tragedies – are revengers instruments of divine justice?

The murderous re-enactment of his son's brutal murder secures Hieronimo something that has been denied him since the death of his son: access to the King. More specifically, access to the King's ear, an audience with the King. As he discovered in the encounter with Bazulto, words are not as effective in securing attention as the empathy produced in an experience of "likeness." The "likeness" that Hieronimo solicits from Castile or the Viceroy of Portugal by murdering their sons cannot be duplicated with the King of Spain—he is childless. And Maus has pointed out that Hieronimo's message about social leveling is not received by the King who accuses Hieronimo of treason.²⁷ Hieronimo's justice fails to achieve his empathy goal. In what way can Hieronimo initiate a sense of "likeness" in the King, the preeminent arbiter of justice in the community? I propose it is in mirroring to the King, precisely what the King presents to him: silence. A review of the critical scene is helpful. After the masque, Hieronimo provides a lengthy explanation of his vengeful motivation, claims to have no more to say, and rushes to hang himself. He is prevented as his audience only just begins to understand that the onstage violence was real. The King demands

Hieronimo speak, and Hieronimo again, this time more concisely, explains of Lorenzo and Balthazar's murder of Horatio. In response, the King asks, mysteriously, "Why speakest thou not?" (4.4.179). Now the King might be asking why Hieronimo is not speaking at that very instant in time or the King might be wondering with this query why Hieronimo didn't tell him this tale earlier. Obviously, Hieronimo has spoken, has been speaking, has hardly stopped speaking, so it seems the question must be the latter allowing Hieronimo the opportunity to explain how access to the King was rebuffed. But Hieronimo answers as if the question is the former – a query about a hardly-lapsed pause in speech. "What lesser liberty can kings afford/than harmless silence? Then afford it me./Sufficeth I may not, nor I will not, tell thee" (4.4.180-3). Curious. What will he not tell? Hasn't he explained everything already? The King vows to torture Hieronimo, and Hieronimo says, "Thou mayest torment me...But never shalt thou force me to reveal/the thing which I have vowed inviolate..." (4.4.186-9). What vow? When did he vow something to be inviolate? This scene, so perplexing to critics, affords now several possible interpretations.

Why do you not speak? Because it would reveal something I have vowed not to violate. To understand what Hieronimo might consider "inviolate," it helps to think of what his vengeance has revealed to be righteous: his constancy in performing the role of arbiter of civility, the authority he has encompassed, or the procuring of empathy. Which of these things could be violated in speech? Only empathy, which throughout the play arises only in silent proximal performance as exemplified in the earlier masque and the encounter with Bazulto. That which Hieronimo cannot speak is the ethical imperative. As a sense or feeling it can only be conveyed, person-to-person, through an empathetic connection, a recognition of the fellow human. As the King persists in questioning Hieronimo, his demands for a just explanation echo Job's similar demands of God. The

King becomes the petitioner in this reversal. Like Job he wants to know why he and his kingdom suffers, but this demand for information is likewise granted only proximal performance in response. Hieronimo's assumption of divine prerogative, exercised like Satan's God-given commission, depicts a subjective exchange in the social edifice: the King petitions; Hieronimo silences.

Then Hieronimo bites out his tongue. There are no stage directions indicating the spectacular disposition of the "bitten forth" tongue. Evidently, Hieronimo is not swallowing, gagging or choking on it. Does he hold it in his hand? Does he wave it aloft in a taunt? Is it lying impotent and vulnerable upon the floor? Whatever the staging, the dismembered tongue emblemizes the play's cogitations on ineffective speech. There is no substantive agency in speech. Speech may reveal a potential subjectivity or articulate ideals of sociality, but it does not secure liberty, or ethicality, or even fully reveal subjectivity. Speech cannot accomplish Hieronimo's, and by extension neither the community's nor (obversely) the sovereign's revision of social morality. But the spectacle of sovereign silence in the face of manifest suffering initiates an experience of relational ethics that although it cannot be articulated, can be felt. As Carla Mazzio says of Hamlet, Hieronimo tries to "express the horrors of inexpressibility" (213). Mazzio too is concerned to demonstrate,

how theatrical incarnations of the inarticulate—while indexing rifts in the production of shared meanings in the various spheres of religion, humanism, law, vernacularism, historiography, and print culture—worked to expose and evoke forms of thought and feeling otherwise obscured by the relegation of the inarticulate to the domain of the senseless."²⁸

For the King, enduring Hieronimo's silence should feel like a reversal, a parallax view of what it must be like to be a petitioner to a silent sovereign. This mirroring effect is emphasized when Hieronimo, in a speech-act attempts to exchange his pain with the King's sovereignty.

Hieronimo's determination to secure vengeance through theater reveals his concern to engage his audience in feeling likeness. Performance and proximity (face-to-face) are critical for ending apathy and exciting empathy. At the height of his grief for Horatio, Hieronimo seeks access to Bel-Imperia, hoping to confirm the contents of her accusatory letter. Lorenzo impedes this counsel, and Hieronimo comments in an aside, "My grief no heart, my thoughts no tongue can tell" (3.2.67). In context, it reads as another "ceaseless 'plaint.'" Either Hieronimo's heart is not sufficient to contain his grief, his tongue unable to speak his grieving thoughts, or as a comment on his barred access to Bel-Imperia, there is no other heart or tongue in which to confide his thoughts and grievances. These figures for the impotence of speech and the loneliness of grief are resurrected however, immediately preceding Hieronimo's autoglossotomy. He says to the King, "Pleased with their deaths and eased with their revenge,/First take my tongue and afterwards my heart" (4.4.191-2). Hieronimo is not so much relinquishing subjectivity here, as trying to pass his subjectivity to another. By giving the King his tongue and heart, he metonymically gives the King his thoughts and feelings of grief. As Hieronimo assumes the King's role, he transfers his part to the King, reinforcing the suggestion that Hieronimo and the King are alike. The gesture seems designed to elicit empathy, to create the subjective "likeness" upon which ethical concern depends. His autoglossotomy is not so much a revocation of communicative endeavors as a rhetorical flourish highlighting the mutual "experience of embodiment, a 'common human lot'" (Maus 69). Hieronimo, in his face-to-face silence, represents sovereign authority to the King. Like the active silence of sovereignty, Hieronimo's mimicry of sovereign silence is "quiet in unquietness" as it works to restore ethicality.²⁹

A 1602 addition to these lines inserts ahead of "take my tongue," the phrase, "Now to express the rupture of my part." Mazzi reads this as the "rupture of my

part[s],” (sic) (110) expressing Hieronimo’s “surrender to (and complicity with) a world of fragments and self-alienation” (111). She contrasts this “surrender” with Stoic philosopher Zeno’s autoglossotomy which she writes, “was universally interpreted as heroic” (111). Although I certainly agree that Hieronimo’s autoglossotomy indicts “discursive systems” that are “impotent” and “fractured,” (110) I do not find it necessary to change “part” to a plural form. It reads, in its singular form, as a relinquishing of his role, his part, his performance first in the sociality and then in the theatre of vengeance. He gives the King first his tongue so that the King may cry for justice (which he does). Then he gives the King his heart so that the King may feel the pain Hieronimo feels at Horatio’s murder. In this reading, Hieronimo’s autoglossotomy is aligned with Zeno’s which, in Mazzio’s own conception, “functions to dramatize a solidarity of spirit that contrasts with the fragmenting and fragmentable material world” (111). In other words, what does Hieronimo surrender here? Is he giving up his resistance and reform, or is he giving away the pain of violent loss in an effort to secure ethical reform. Echoing, as it does, the scene of barred access to Bel-Imperia, it seems plain that Hieronimo is at last sharing his grieving self with the king. The manner in which he does so is designed to bypass the divisiveness of language, and enact a fellow feeling through mimesis. This empathetic exchange can only be accomplished because Hieronimo has taken on, “compassed,” the King’s silence, rendering them alike. And when the exchange is complete, Hieronimo commits suicide.

Reckoning with the silent presence of being elicits a definitive reaction. Giorgio Agamben articulates how Heidegger perceives of that moment of sociality,

...in the disclosure of Dasein [being], the call (*Anruf*) of a Voice of conscience appears, and imposes a more originary comprehension (*ursprunglicher Fassen*) of this very disclosure...presented as an “existential foundation” that constitutes the Being as disclosure. The voice that calls is not, however, a vocal offering...but is a pure “giving-to-be-understood” (*zu-verstehen-geben*):

But how are we to determine what is said (*das Geredete*) in this kind of discourse? What does the conscious call to him to whom it appeals? Taken strictly, nothing.... The call dispenses with any kind of utterance. It does not put itself into words at all; yet it does not remain obscure and indefinite. *Conscious discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent.* In this way it not only loses none of its perceptibility, but forces the Dasein which has been appealed to and summoned, into its own silence."³⁰

The interaction Heidegger describes here is akin to what is accomplished in theatrical self-silencings. The unexpected silence of an individual issues a call to the conscious. Witnesses must examine their own conscious, must realize again the socially bound nature of their existence and its attendant imperative to right relation. The Voice "attunes us (*stimmt*) to the terror of the abyss" (LD 60) writes Heidegger. Listeners of the Voice, witnesses to self-silencing, encounter a realized subject in a singular moment, a subject who calls to them with Voice, but not language. This encounter creates a sort of mirror that elicits recognition of the social embeddedness of being. Lacanian theory would have this mirrored moment function to subjectify via difference and opposition: the Other is not me. But Heidegger, Agamben and especially Levinas suggest that the mirror effect, especially in silence, reveals an essential sameness among humanity: the Other is like me.³¹ And although that sameness functions only at a pre-lingual level, it nonetheless instigates ethical anxiety. The performance of being thus takes on an experiential quality. The silence is an enigmatic aporia to be endured. Without language its content is unspecific, mysterious. And yet it is a moment redolent with meaning insofar as meaning is affirmed, as is Being and ethical obligation.

The crucible for ethical effectiveness in self-silencing lies in performance. To marshal and convey the varied meanings of silence, to elicit recognition of likeness, to provoke listeners of the silence to empathy and ethical contemplation, silence must be demonstrated. There must in fact be an audience, or at least a witness/listener to whom the silence is addressed. Judith Butler's relevant essay on mourning and violence,

“Precarious Life” offers a helpful analysis of Levinasian philosophy that highlights the experience of the ethical in “face-to-face” encounters.³² Please permit an extended quotation:

The Levinasian notion of the “face” has caused critical consternation for a long time. It seems to be that the “face” of what he calls the “Other” makes an ethical demand upon me, and yet we do not know which demand it makes. The “face” of the other cannot be read for a secret meaning, and the imperative it delivers is not immediately translatable into a prescription that might be linguistically formulated and followed.

Levinas writes:

The approach to the face is the most basic mode of responsibility.... The face is not in front of me (*en face de moi*), but above me; it is the other before death, looking through and exposing death. Secondly, the face is the other who asks me not to let him die alone, as if to do so were to become an accomplice in his death. Thus the face says to me: you shall not kill. In the relation to the face I am exposed as a usurper of the place of the other....

The face is what one cannot kill, or at least it is that whose meaning consists in saying, ‘thou shalt not kill.’ Murder, it is true, is a banal fact: one can kill the Other: the ethical exigency is not an ontological necessity....

So the face, strictly speaking, does not speak, but what the face means is nevertheless conveyed by the commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ It conveys this commandment without precisely speaking it. It would seem that we can use this biblical command to understand something of the face’s meaning, but something is missing here, since the “face” does not speak in the sense that the mouth does; the face is neither reducible to the mouth nor, indeed, to anything the mouth has to utter. Someone or something else speaks when the face is likened to a certain kind of speech; it is a speech that does not come from a mouth or, if it does, has no ultimate origin or meaning there. (131-133).

The “face” reveals the humanity of the Other. The presentation of the “face,” a “figure for what cannot be named, an utterance that is not, strictly speaking, linguistic” (131) provokes in witnesses, according to Levinas, the precise ethical recognition found in self-silencing. In fact, we might see that self-silencing and “face-to-face” are two ways of discussing the same effect since Levinas goes on to link the “face-to-face” encounter with “the situation of discourse” (138).

First, the “face” conveys its meaning apart from words. Butler writes, “The face, if we are to put words to its meaning, will be that for which no words really work; the

face seems to be a kind of sound, the sound of language evacuating its sense, the sonorous substratum of vocalization that precedes and limits the delivery of any semantic sense” (134). Like Heidegger’s “Voice,” Levinas’s “face” is a language-less call. Communication is dependent not on articulation, but on a spectacle of silence. Secondly, as Butler carefully demonstrates, the “face” functions only insofar as it reveals a failure of representation.

The cry that is represented through the figure of the face is one that confounds the senses and produces a clearly improper comparison: that cannot be right, for the face is not a sound. And yet, the face can stand for the sound precisely because it is not the sound. In this sense, the figure underscores the incommensurability of the face with whatever it represents. Strictly speaking, then, the face does not represent anything, in the sense that it fails to capture and deliver that to which it refers.

For Levinas, then, the human is not represented by the face. Rather, the human is indirectly affirmed in that very disjunction that makes representation impossible, and this disjunction is conveyed in the impossible representation. For representation to convey the human, then, representation must not only fail, but it must *show* its failure. (PL 144)

And isn’t this exactly what Hieronimo’s autoglossotomy accomplishes? Doesn’t Hieronimo’s tongue show the failure of language to affirm likeness or evince ethical empathy or behavior? Hieronimo explains his violence, but this does not move the King or the Viceroy to ethical contemplation. His performance of failed representation, his self-silencing, however, succeeds in humanizing, making more than an image, what is presented. Butler explains the paradox:

When we consider the ordinary ways that we think about humanization and dehumanization, we find the assumption that those who gain representation, especially self-representation, have a better chance of being humanized...Levinas has made clear that the face is not exclusively a human face, and yet it is a condition for humanization. On the other hand, there is the use of the face, within the media, in order to effect a dehumanization. It would seem that personification does not always humanize.” (141)

Performing failed representation, as in self-silencing, succeeds in touching man’s ethical impulse in a way that ordinary representation does not.³³ Presenting the “face,” then, or performing self-silencing is an effectual method of asserting one’s human-ness in a

manner that circumnavigates, even flouts dominating modes of representation. It is eminently suited then for use as a tactic of resistance and reform against dominant power paradigms. It exercises the power both to undermine reigning hegemonies, and to inspire the creation of alternate systems that more broadly accommodate the unrepresented.

So does Hieronimo's self-silencing in fact have the proposed effect on witnesses? After the bodies are removed, the King's curious, concluding, remark is, "I am the next, the nearest, last of all." To what does he refer? Death? Certainly there is no reason he is the nearest person to death, and certainly he will not be the last. Does he mean in relation to his bloodline or the throne? He is apparently the last of his bloodline, but how could he be the "next" or "nearest"? And he cannot be the next, nearest, or last to rise to the throne, because he already possesses it and it will surely pass to another eventually. The line reads contemplatively, like a personal reflection about the events. These terms of proximity and temporality—next, nearest, last—suggest that perhaps he has been affected by the circumstances and recognizes their immediacy to his own being. Perhaps his conscious has been summoned. He is the next, the nearest, and the last to receive Hieronimo's lesson of empathy. It touches him more closely than any other, because it is his own power reverberating in Hieronimo's actions. But the vagueness of the King's words, their aimless signification, attenuates any meaningful ethical application. All the king can express is that he feels polysemously that the events touch him. There is no indication that he sees himself in Hieronimo nor any sign that he sees anything other than an ethical failure here. There is no systemic resolution forthcoming. It is as if the King experience Levinas' unending constraint of responsibility for the other; he is subjectified, but without understanding or commitment. For all Hieronimo's desire to enjoy the sympathy of his sociality, he cannot do so if he commits the very crime of which he complains. One cannot simultaneously be the murderer and the victim. Certainly the

King is moved by events, and perhaps he feels some empathy or responsibility, but it is generalized and unspecific. What reforms are warranted? Hieronimo's self-silencing initiated the proximal ethical anxiety in the King that it ought, but his own compromised authorial role deprived the feeling of a meaningful referent.

The play further dispels any notions of social compassion that may arise from the pathos of Hieronimo's circumstance with the Revenge frame. The last lines of the play are given to Revenge and Don Andrea, who spend them plotting horrific eternal punishments for several of the characters. In other words, Hieronimo's performance of vengeance witnessed fails to induce in Andrea any fellow-feeling or sympathetic leanings. On the contrary, he is as vengeful as ever. The play's audience, however, likely experiences a different reaction. The casual cruelty of Andrea's everlasting dispensations, combined with the too-tidy resolution of the subplot, cause us throughout the play to engage most closely with the abused Hieronimo. Andrea's delight in doling out further punishments does not erase for us the genuine pathos Hieronimo's tale elicits; conversely Andrea puts us off hearing more of the already extensive bloodshed. And unlike the King, we have had privileged access to, and emotionally participated in, once-noble Hieronimo's pitiable suffering. Hieronimo's self-silencing could not elicit ethical reform within his play, but it does reach beyond the stage and into the audience to affect us with an empathetic fellow-feeling, propelled by the failure of the play to demonstrate compassion.³⁵

Henry Smith wraps up his sermon expressing a concern that auditors will, upon their departure, resume the "bad exercises" from which they came, "...some unto the Tavernes, and some unto the Alehouses, and some unto Stages, and some unto Brothels...." (493). He fears lest some "hath learned nothing, but goeth empty away" (493). While this may be a legitimately concern preachers, Smith might have learned

from his Bible that those who depart the much-maligned theatre are unlikely to go away empty. During Job's encounter with God, Job is directed to look upon God's creation. He does so, and repents saying, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the eare, but now mine eye seeth thee. Therefore I abhorre myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Hearing words has not provided a genuine experience of God to Job. It is in proximity, in the theatrical encounter, that Job is moved to experience the other in an ethical relation. And yet, in a way, this experience too is a failed representation. Job by no means apprehends all there is to apprehend of God. He is not granted a beatific vision, but is directed only to look upon creation. Job, like Kyd's audience, experiences empathy when he *fails* to truly perceive the Other. Job recognizes that his likeness to God is limited. Except insofar as he is embodied (dust) and mortal (ashes), Job re-aligns his agency with that of God. For Hieronimo, for Thomas Kyd, for playgoers, the issue of authority is not so simply resolved. Stephen Greenblatt has suggested that Machiavelli's "Discourses" "treats religion as if its primary function were not salvation but the achievement of civic discipline, as if its primary justification were not truth but expediency."³⁶ Likewise, for Kyd, who purportedly was tortured until he informed on Marlowe's unorthodox theology, religious and civil life are inextricably bound. As the imperatives of one overlap the other a tangle of authorization and obligation of a legal, cultural, social, familial, sovereign and personal nature indenture man to choose an action from within a cumbrous disarray of responsibilities and precedents.³⁷ Faced with overwhelmingly complex social imperatives, one can only hope to receive compassion from our sociality when we inevitably fail to perform adequately.

Although revengers notoriously outdo the crime they are avenging, our compassion for them centers upon their driving need to reveal injustice. Their eagerness to redress crime attests to their sensitivity to the delicate balance of social relations.

Their desire to redeem their sociality from villainy is legible as personal heroism, confronting as they do malevolent powers within the community. The Spanish Tragedy is a play about personal and legal justice, about jurisdictional authority and obligation, and about ethics and the *nomos* of civil life. Is it a play about silence? Inasmuch as the presiding moment of the play is Hieronimo's lingual sparagmos—then yes, this is a play about the power of silence. I hope to have offered here a reading that, if nothing else, takes seriously the meaning of Hieronimo's theatrical dismemberment and its claim to inviolability. This self-silencing and its empathetic aim reverberates, not only throughout the play, but in much of Early Modern literature. It is not only revengers who use silence to engage their community in moral deliberations. Nor is it necessary that this be a conscious effort on the part of the revengers for it to be effective. Villains and tricksters also resort to silence, and though the purpose of their silence is self-serving, it too proves socially revelatory. Women's silence is eager not to signify, except in revealing the oppression at work in their silencing. And theatrical silences that fail to resolve the tale, or shock or horrify the audience, elicit an empathetic feeling that is the first step toward ethical action. At the threshold of language, silence which signifies holds court. It is not *difference* which creates subjectivity in these Renaissance plays, but similarity: a *likeness* that is found in kinetic non-performance.

Notes to Ch. 4 “The Thing Inviolate”: Sensing Selves

¹ Nearly all writers address Hieronimo’s autoglossotomy, but few deal with his claim to preserving a “thing inviolate.” Prominent scholars of The Spanish Tragedy who do not consider what is “inviolate” include Katharine Eisaman Maus, Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and C.L. Barber, Creating Elizabethan Tragedy: The Theater of Marlowe and Kyd, Ed. Richard P. Wheeler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Catherine Belsey, The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama (London: Methuen, 1985) evades the issue with “...what is impenetrable, unknown, unknowable is the explanation which lies beyond the narrative” (77). Carla Mazziio, The Inarticulate Renaissance: Language Trouble in an Age of Eloquence (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), says only that “Hieronimo believes that he bites off his tongue to protect a secret, but the secret is that there is no secret” (110). This type of deflation is characteristic of most scholarship on the play. All further references to these authors will be to these texts by page numbers.

² The felicitous phrase “contests for meaning” may be found in Belsey, p. 6.

³ There are, of course, a number of ways in which scholars might explore silence. For those considering Early Modern silences in a usefully general sense, see Mazziio, Christina Luckyj, “A moving Rhetoricke”: Gender and Silence in Early Modern England (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002); Mary E. Hazard, Elizabethan Silent Language (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Philip C. McGuire’s Speechless Dialect: Shakespeare’s Open Silences, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). For self-silencing as Stoicism see Luckyj, Mazziio, “Staging the Vernacular: Language and Nation in Thomas Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy,” Studies in English Literature 38:2 (1998); and Eugene D. Hill, “Senecan and Virgilian Perspectives in The Spanish Tragedy,” Renaissance Historicism: Selections from English Literary Renaissance, Eds. Arthur F. Kinney and Dan S. Collins (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987) 108-130. On the Renaissance and Stoicism, see also, Geoffrey Miles, Shakespeare and the Constant Romans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) and Margaret Graver, Stoicism and Emotion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Also of interest is Margaret De Grazia, “Shakespeare’s View of Language: An Historical Perspective,” Shakespeare Quarterly, 29:3 (Summer 1978): 374-388.

⁴ Miles. For more on Renaissance self-regulation and its originating theories see Graver, Gail Kern Paster, The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993) and Francis Barker, The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection (London: Methuen, 1984). All further references to these authors will be to these texts by page numbers.

⁵ Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, English Renaissance Drama, Ed. David Bevington (New York: Norton, 2002) 3-73. All further citations are to this edition of the text. And, William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,

Ed. Sylvan Barnett (New York: Signet Classic, 1998). All further citations are to this edition of the text.

⁶ Textual note 5 on p. 9 of the Norton edition of Kyd's play describes the Knight Marshal's position as "...a military officer and magistrate belonging to the royal household and acting for the Crown." For scholars emphasizing only Hieronimo's advocate duties as Knight Marshal see Mazzio, Barber, Kevin Dunn, "Action, Passion, Motion": The Gestural Politics of Counsel in The Spanish Tragedy, *Renaissance Drama* 31 (2002), 27-60. Frank Ardolino, "The Hangman's Noose and the Empty Box: Kyd's use of Dramatic and Mythological Sources in The Spanish Tragedy (3.4-7)." *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977) 339. See also Molly Smith, The Theater and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in The Spanish Tragedy, *SEL* 32 (1992) 217-232. Again, I am unaware of any who consider the expanded duties of the Knight Marshal as described by Cowell in the following note.

⁷ John Cowell, *The interpreter: or Booke containing the signification of vwords wherein is set forth the true meaning of all, or the most part of such words and termes, as are mentioned in the lawe vvriters, or statutes of this victorious and renowned kingdome, requiring any exposition or interpretation...*(Cambridge, 1607) Text Creation Partnership digital edition. Early English Books Online. Web. 16 June 2011
http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/search/full_rec?SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&ACTION=SINGLE&ID=99844611&ECCO=N&FILE=../session/1321997442_27627&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&SUBSET=1&ENTRIES=1&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=default>. On approximately pg. 173 is the entry "mareshall (mariscallus)" which lists the variety of duties I've discussed here as well as in Note 9 below.

⁸ Francis Bacon (1561-1626), *A declaration of the practises & treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex and his complices, against her Maiestie and her kingdoms and of the proceedings as well at the arraignments & conuictions of the said late Earle, and his adherents, as after: together with the very confessions and other parts of the evidences themselues, word for word taken out of the originals.* (London, 1601) Text Creation Partnership digital edition. Early English Books Online. Web. 16 June 2011 <
http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836190>.
AND
England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), *By the Queenes commaundement forasmuch as it is found by good prooffe, that many persons which haue serued of late on the seas, in the iourney towardes Spayne and Portingall, in comming from Plimmouth, and other portes ... haue fallen sicke by the way, and diuers died as infected with the plague ...* (London, 1589) Text Creation Partnership digital edition. Early English Books Online. Web. 16 June 2011
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:33150888>

⁹ Cowell, and see also "marshal of the king's house" Def. 1 and 2, Webster's Revised

Unabridged Dictionary (1913) 14 June 2011 <www.dictionary.die.net> which also lists the more complete duties I've described. For convenience, here is an excerpt of that entry:

1. Originally, an officer who had the care of horses; a groom. [Obs.]
2. An officer of high rank, charged with the arrangement of ceremonies, the conduct of operations, or the like; as, specifically:
 - (a) One who goes before a prince to declare his coming and provide entertainment; a harbinger; a pursuivant.
 - (b) One who regulates rank and order at a feast or any other assembly, directs the order of procession, and the like.
 - (c) The chief officer of arms, whose duty it was, in ancient times, to regulate combats in the lists.

The office of Knight Marshal was dissolved in 1840.

¹⁰ Dunn sees the dumb show reflecting Hieronimo's desire for personal sovereignty. For another class reading of the dumb show, see James R. Siemon, "Sporting Kyd," *English Literary Renaissance* 24 (1994): 553-82. In this article Siemon also argues that Hieronimo's dismemberment turns silence against class dominance, a reading sympathetically related to my own.

¹¹ Deborah Shuger "Civility and Censorship in Early Modern England," Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation, Ed. Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute Publications and Exhibitions Program, 1995), 89-110. Shuger's analysis demonstrates that rather than suppressing political polemics or monarchical disparagement, Early Modern censorship was far more concerned with inhibiting and correcting the slander and libel of its citizenry. See also Dunn, "'Action, Passion, Motion,'" addresses expectations of honesty in his discussion of the councilor and the "counselor's ethic of bodily transparency" (36).

¹² Henry Smith (1550-1592?), "Satan's Compassing the Earth," The Sermons of Master Henry Smith Gathered Into One Volume. Printed According to his Corrected Copies in His Lifetime. Whereunto is Added, God's Arrow Against Atheists. (1607) (Early English Books Online Editions: ProQuest) Facsimile Reproduction. All further references are to this edition. This sermon was published individually in (London, [Imprint - Thomas Scarlet] 1592). I am using modern orthography, but have preserved original spelling.

¹³ The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition, Intro. By Lloyd E. Berry (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1969). 2nd Printing, 2007. All further references are to this edition. I am using modern orthography but have preserved original spelling here too.

¹⁴ R. B. Jenkins, Henry Smith: England's Silver-Tongued Preacher (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983): 14. See also John L. Lievsay, "Silver-Tongued Smith, Paragon of Elizabethan Preachers," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 11:1 (November 1947): 13-36.

¹⁵ Arthur Freeman, Thomas Kyd: Facts and Problems (London: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1967): 65-69. For more on Nashe and his social sphere including the Knight

Marshal (and Governor of the Isle of Wight) George Carey, see C. G. Harlow, "Nashe's Visit to the Isle of Wight and His Publications of 1592-4," *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* 14:55 (August 1963): 225-242; and E.D. Mackerness, "Thomas Nashe and William Cotton," *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* 25:100 (October 1949): 342-346.

¹⁶Both Eugene D. Hill, "Senecan and Virgilian Perspectives in The Spanish Tragedy" and Frank Ardolino, Thomas Kyd's Mystery Play: Myth and Ritual in the Spanish Tragedy (New York: Peter Lang, 1985) read the play as containing a pro-English, anti-continental sentiment.

¹⁷But of course Dunn is reading Hieronimo here as a representative of the people, not the monarch. Building upon the class politics of C.L. Barber's analysis, Dunn's understanding of Hieronimo, though based on fascinating iconography of silence, nonetheless reads silence as "mere self-cancellation" (37). He grounds the meaning of the autoglossotomy in a schizophrenia of the repressed councilor who must negate his own interests in order to serve those of the body politic. This differs from my reading of Hieronimo and revengers in general who would in fact *align* their interests with those of the body politic.

¹⁸Bradlin Cormack, A Power to Do Justice: Jurisdiction, English Literature and the Rise of Common Law, 1509-1625 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 3.

¹⁹These duties were sometimes carried out by under-marshals serving under a Chief Marshal. Nonetheless, within the play there is only one Knight Marshal whom we see busy at several different types of work.

²⁰See Hill, "Senecan and Virgilian Perspective in The Spanish Tragedy," for an extended discussion of intertextuality in the play, and especially in regard to Don Andrea.

²¹The following scholars deal with the problematics of communication in The Spanish Tragedy: Peter Sacks argues that language cannot accomplish justice, "Where Words Prevail Not: Grief, Revenge, and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare," *English Literary History* 49 (1982): 576-601. James R. Siemon's formalist analysis finds a Bakhtinian, dialogic *sprezzatura* in Kyd's linguistic usage, "Dialogical Formalism: Word, Object, and Action in The Spanish Tragedy," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England: An Annual Gathering of Research, Criticism and Reviews* 5 (1991):87-115. Robert Barrie's article suggests that failed communication subversively reveals a disordered cosmos that delighted viewers, "'Unknown Languages' and Subversive Play in The Spanish Tragedy," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 21 (1995): 63-80. Kay Stockholder believes Hieronimo silences himself because what he would say undermines his own assumptions about authority, "'Yet can he write': Reading the Silences in The Spanish Tragedy," *American-Imago: A Psychoanalytic Journal for Culture, Science, and the Arts* 47 (Summer 1990): 93-124.

²²The Spanish Tragedy, Note 3, p. 11.

²³Belsey, 19, 75.

- ²⁴ See Hill for a discussion of Don Andrea's need for a passport in the underworld.
- ²⁵ Maus, 68. Maus sees Hieronimo as a Machiavel and also reads the play within the context of the problematics of social class, concluding that it presents a "disquieting" portrait of a benevolent deity.
- ²⁶ Maus notes the empathetic effort of Hieronimo here, but perceives it as a progressive violation of social status quo. She writes, "...Hieronimo's [theatricality] obliterates, in a sumptuously bloody catastrophe, the ideological gap between royal and subjected flesh. Kyd apparently recognizes that such drama of fellow feeling, although it may seem to rely upon a communal impulse, hardly conduces to the maintenance of social stability.... (69).
- ²⁷ Maus, 69-70. The King calls Hieronimo a traitor at 4.4.184.
- ²⁸ Mazzio, 180. Like Mazzio, I am interested in the communal effect of inarticulacy, but where she believes that Hieronimo "thwarts community," I see him trying to redeem it in his self-silencing. In her book, The Inarticulate Renaissance, Mazzio studies abbreviated or interrupted utterances and finds that the inarticulate convey knowledge in other forms, such as feeling (see Ch. 5 on Hamlet). Although she is concerned with the sense of touch, my own application of Levinas's notion of proximity and sight also suggests that knowledge is generated through senses as well as in linguistic forms.
- ²⁹ For alternate interpretations of the autoglossotomy and suicide, see Maus, Belsey, Barber, Mazzio, as well as James R. Siemon who, in a consideration of social class, argues that Hieronimo's dismemberment and suicide "by his choice of 'when, where, how' ...turns silence itself against the dominance of birth" (582). Although Dunn writes of Hieronimo's "sense that the counselor's suffering is a representation of the suffering body politic," he nonetheless concludes that Hieronimo "silences himself because his speech has been all too efficacious" (50). Obviously this is contrary to my own conclusion that Hieronimo's speech has been altogether ineffective in provoking ethical consideration. Only his self-silencing, his failed representation, reveals "the suffering body politic."
- ³⁰ Giorgio Agamben, Language and Death: The Place of Negativity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 58. In this book, Agamben reviews classical philosophy to articulate an approach to the "gap" between being and language.
- ³¹ See Agamben, and for more on theories of proximity and face-to-face in Levinas, see Emmanuel Levinas, Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo, Trans. Richard A Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985) and Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence, Trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1981, recent printing 2009).
- ³² Judith Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence (New York: Verso 2004) 151. In this book, Butler discusses how we can articulate a viable political community in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. She suggests

that we must look at the margins of articulation to find humanity. All further references are to this edition.

³³ For an interesting analysis of representational failures and the Renaissance, see Oliver Arnold, The Third Citizen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

³⁴ There are widely variant emotional reactions to the play's conclusion. Robert Barrie hears triumphant laughter at the carnivalesque inversion of the foolish nobles unable to understand the plain language with which Hieronimo explains to the King what has happened. Lukas Erne cites critics of modern productions who have been moved to a memorable "sympathy and pity" (32).

³⁵ Interestingly, Frank Ardolino, "The Induction of Sly: The Influence of The Spanish Tragedy on The Two Shrews," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 31:2 (Winter 2005): 165-87 argues that the "open ending" of The Taming of the Shrew, which allows the audience to apply the lesson of the play to their own lives was inspired by the similar effects in the conclusion of The Spanish Tragedy.

³⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): 24.

³⁷ Freeman, 26-32

