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THE RHETORIC OF SILENCE

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March, 1999

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Ph.D

The Rhetoric of Silence

Abstract

This study explores how we may read silence in dramatic works as a rhetorical strategy. Silence is usually equated with absence, oppression, or passivity. Speech is usually equated with presence, expression, and action. While silence can be imposed to prevent articulation, my study suggests that we re-read women's discourse, including their use of silence, as an empowering tool. By examining silence as strategic we allow for individual agency. Part One of the thesis demonstrates how the rhetoric of silence functions as a tool to communicate, persuade, and generate knowledge for women protagonists. The study of silence on the stage explores how choosing to employ a non-verbal form of communication challenges the logocentric tendency that privileges assertation and speech over silence. For this reason, Shakespeare's Cordelia serves as the paradigmatic silent rhetor. Cordelia demonstrates how silence, employed by choice, affirms authenticity. In Part Two, twentieth-century interpretations of female protagonists – Salomé, Antigone and Philomele – are examined to show how we may read them as strategic rhetors who employ silence in order to re-create themselves as agents.

La Rhétorique du silence

Résumé

Nous explorons comment interpréter le silence dans les oeuvres dramatiques en tant que stratégie de la rhétorique. Le silence s'associe généralement à l'absence, à l'oppression, ou à la passivité tandis que la parole s'associe à la présence, à l'expression, et à l'action. Alors qu'il est possible d'imposer le silence pour empêcher l'articulation, notre étude suggère une réinterprétation du discours féminin, y compris l'usage du silence comme outil de puissance. En examinant le silence comme stratégie, nous acceptons la capacité d'agir de l'individu. La première partie de cette dissertation examine comment la rhétorique du silence fonctionne pour les femmes protagonistes pour communiquer, pour persuader, et pour générer la connaissance. L'étude du silence sur la scène théâtrale examine comment le choix d'une forme de communication non-verbale va à l'encontre de la tendance logocentrique qui privilégie l'assertion et la parole sur le silence. Pour cette raison, Cordelia de Shakespeare sert de rhéteur muet paradigmatique. Cordelia incarne le choix du silence pour affirmer l'authenticité. Dans la deuxième partie, nous considérons des interprétations du vingtième siècle de quelques femmes protagonistes -- Salomé, Antigone et Philomele -- pour les comprendre en tant que rhéteurs stratégiques qui choisissent le silence pour s'imposer comme acteurs.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While I am indebted to many rhetoricians and dramatic theorists, this study would not have happened without the intellectual support and attention of Professor Leanore Lieblein. Her expertise and critical eye as a reader and her devotion as a teacher inspires me. I am honored to say that she is my mentor and friend. I am also grateful to my committee. Professor Harry Anderson's thoughtful probing challenged me to stretch and take intellectual risks. The countless hours of conversation about drama, theatre and life continue to be a delight. Professor Ann Beer's knowledge about rhetoric and women and her attention to detail have served me well. For their confidence and support I am indebted. My colleagues in the Humanities Department at Trinity College of Vermont kindly shared their interest and suggestions concerning women and silence. I am particularly grateful for Professor Vin Pelletier's support and help with translation, Bonnie Trombly's editing skills and the inexhaustible encouragement of my friend and roommate Professor Nancy Holland. Three years ago, Sister Jacqueline Marie suggested that I study rhetoric to see what it is I have to say about women and writing. For her unwavering support and the incredible opportunities she has offered me, I will always be grateful. My friends, Heather Walker, Patricia Tate, the late Lois Berman and the late Hugh Cronister have sustained and nurtured my spirit. Without my family this work would be meaningless. Jean and Robert Church are the best parents anyone could hope for. I thank my children Alis, Aram, Alexandra and John who have patiently allowed me to work in silence. This work is dedicated with love and admiration to my husband Berl Mendel who would not let me quit but always made it possible for me to continue.

INTRODUCTION

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant ---
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind ---

--- Emily Dickinson

When Emily Dickinson exhorts us to "tell all the truth" she expects that we will take the advice that Edgar gives at the end of *King Lear* [1] and "speak what we think not what we ought to say"(V.iii.298). Dickinson, however, understands the difficulty that people often experience when they attempt to tell what they think and not what is expected of them. She suggests that listeners are not always receptive to the truth and the successful speaker must often consider different rhetorical strategies in order to speak honestly.

This study of drama and language is concerned with women rhetors who seek truth and the best available means of persuasion even if that means is silence. *The Rhetoric of Silence* is a study of language that demonstrates how silence is a rhetoric, one that communicates, persuades, and generates understanding.

Silence has, indeed, suffered a poor reputation. It is often understood negatively as the absence of language, whereas speech is viewed as the

"characterizing signature of humanity"(Kane 13). This oppositional thinking privileges talk or speech as assertive, expressive, and active over silence, which is then viewed as passive and inexpressive. In this context voice equals power and the voiceless, who are generally associated with women, are considered docile, submissive, and subservient.

Constance Coiner attends to such silences in "'No One's Private Ground': A Bakhtinian Reading of Tillie Olsen's *Tell Me a Riddle*." Her essay applies Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia and concludes that the gaps, absences, and silences invite the reader to participate in the creation of meaning. The collection of stories in *Tell Me a Riddle* presents a wide range of individual, marginalized voices competing for our attention. "Unless readers/listeners make connections among a variety of voices, many of which are foreign to their own, the potential for genuine democracy latent within the cacaphony of heteroglossia is lost" (72). Coiner suggests that Olsen requires us to hear the oppressed voices, "and to make and articulate connections among them, connections the separate characters may not be able to see, or may only partially see. With such actions we become collaborators with Olsen in the democratizing enterprise of amplifying dominated and marginalized voices" (91).

My intent in this study is to listen to the silent and absent voices of women protagonists and explore the potential of silence as a site of feminist resistance to the loss of self-hood. *The Rhetoric of Silence* is a feminist study, for it suggests an alternative way to read the oppressive representation of women as passive and

incapable of independent thought and action. My task lies in three connected fields:

1. Developing a model of rhetoric that allows for women's creative expression and celebrates the woman as rhetor by re-examining and re-formulating concepts of classical rhetoric;

2. Exposing the mechanisms of cultural and patriarchal silencing by re-reading canonical texts by male writers as well as contemporary plays written by both men and women;

3. Deconstructing notions of women, who are traditionally read as inarticulate and silenced, as passive receptors of male authority.

While I understand the importance of rediscovering forgotten, overlooked texts by women in the past and of fostering new work by women, I suggest that a re-reading of traditional texts written by men offers an opportunity to understand the negative effects theatrical representation of women has on the audience. Jill Dolan's study *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* informs my discussion of the audience and the active role it plays in the theatre. She argues that theatrical representation, which normally addresses the male spectator as an active subject, tends to objectify women's roles as performers, spectators, and characters in its treatment of them as passive and invisible. An examination of male-authored texts and the protagonists they have created for an "ideal" (male) spectator prepares the groundwork for future discussions of silent rhetoric and contemporary protagonists created by women. Shakespeare's Cordelia, as a

paradigmatic silent rhetor, opens the discussion and serves as a model for the reading of subsequent silent rhetors in twentieth-century drama.

As a female spectator, I note Judith Fetterley's concept of the "resisting reader." She suggests that analysing a text, in this case a play, by reading against the grain of stereotypes and resisting the manipulation of both the performance text and the cultural text is an important step toward the unravelling of patriarchal authority. This study concurs with those feminist critics who argue that what has been assumed to be "universal" is in fact an essentially male construct of the female experience and imagination. Mainstream male and many female critics respond to plays from a perspective that is based on the male model. I suggest we re-read this male model and reconsider the cultural perception of women as second-class citizens by demanding that centuries of assumptions that have remained unchallenged be questioned and re-defined. In this way we can effect social change.

Richard Lanham's study, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance*, which appeared at the time of an intense renewal of interest in rhetorical studies, suggests that every person[2] possesses a central self or an irreducible identity. Diametrically opposed to this central self, which Lanham names *homo seriosus*, is a social self or *homo rhetoricus*. Rhetorical man does not discover reality but rather manipulates it; he is an actor and "his sense of identity, his self, depends on the reassurance of daily histrionic reenactment" (14). Rhetorical man conceives of reality as fundamentally dramatic and he is a role player. Lanham explains how we cannot be freed from rhetoric and that the

central self is, indeed, dependent upon the social self: "The human self exists inasmuch as it continues to debate with itself. The struggle between the social and central self is a – literally – self-generating, self-protective device" (8).

Both feminists and poststructuralists have recently debated theories of an 'irreducible identity.' In a discussion about gender and identity Elin Diamond, for example, points out that the political value of deconstruction lies in its interrogation of identity. She explains that,

> Deconstruction posits the disturbance of the signifier within the linguistic sign; the seemingly stable word is inhabited by a signifier that bears the trace of another signifier and another, so that contained within the meaning of any given word is a trace of the word it is not. Thus deconstruction wrecks havoc on identity, with its connotations of wholeness and coherence; if an identity is always different from itself it can no longer *be* an identity. (*Mimesis* 48)

In other words, if identity is shifting and unstable, it cannot exist as essential and irreducible. Diamond also quotes Freud who explains how drives and desires that constitute human sexuality fail to produce a stable identity (48). Lanham's idea of an "irreducible identity" is fictive and presumptive. Rather, identity is always in the process of construction and reconstruction. It is a fluid and continual interchange between the individual, the historical, and the cultural.

Teresa de Lauretis also argues that identity is "multiple, shifting and often self-contradictory" (*Feminist Studies* 4). This is especially salient for women who struggle with notions of identity and who are forced to play multiple roles. Who they want to be, for example, is often in direct conflict with how the rest of the world identifies them. As de Lauretis notes, identity changes every day as the woman somehow maneuvers through her own life experiences, the ever-changing society in which she lives, and her own personal sense of self. Woman's identity is neither a generic, nongendered being – a "universal" – nor an oppositional "feminine" subject defined by silence, negativity, nurturance, or any other allegedly "feminine" quality (*Alice* 161).

Carla Kaplan points out that identity is constructed out of a "dialogic – contestatory – process, a critical practice..."(30). Every rhetorical situation holds transformational potential – to alter another's point of view, to effect personal change, and to create new identities. The rhetor must believe as Kaplan says, "that identity is mutable, constructed, and, potentially at least, fluid and transformable" (90). When the silent rhetor engages in a rhetorical exchange, she believes in the potential of her rhetoric to transform, to change and to create.

While I find fault with Lanham's general statement that every man [and woman] possesses an irreducible identity, there must be an original model of identity, at the moment of rhetorical exchange, if transformation or change is to come about. In *King Lear*, for example, Cordelia's overwhelming need to maintain her integrity implies that she is both self-aware and cognizant of the value of the "identity" she perceives in herself. Charles Taylor explains that our

fundamental evaluations and certain qualities that we value in ourselves as agents define our identity. He goes on to state that it is "because these properties so centrally touch what I am as an agent, that is, as a strong evaluator, that I cannot really repudiate them in the full sense. For I would be therefore repudiating myself, inwardly riven, and hence incapable of fully authentic evaluation" (*Human Agency* 34).

When Cordelia responds to her father's demand, her identity is momentarily "irreducible." At this particular point in time, under these particular circumstances, while addressing this particular audience, Cordelia believes her identity is stable and irreducible. This does not mean, however, that she possesses only one fixed central self. As Mikhail Bakhtin tells us, every utterance exists only in relation to other utterances; I would add every identity exists only in relation to other identities.

At Cordelia's moment of rhetorical utterance her identity is shaped by her circumstances. In Charles Taylor's words:

> To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. (*Sources* 27)

When I borrow Lanham's terms – *homo seriosus* and *homo rhetoricus* – I refer to two theories of knowledge. The female rhetor understands her identity to be

defined first by those qualities and evaluations she values in herself, and second, by the demands of her society to conform to the model it has constructed for her. When the female rhetor attends to her rhetorical impulse, it is in defense of her central self – that is, what she perceives, at that moment, to be those qualities she values in herself. At that particular moment, her identity is irreducible. As Lanham notes: "The Western self has from the beginning been composed of a shifting and perpetually uneasy combination of *homo rhetoricus* and *homo seriosus*, of a social self and a central self. It is their business to contend for power" (6). Silence, I shall argue, is a rhetoric and one whereby *homo seriosus* confronts *homo rhetoricus*.

By rhetoric I mean a symbolic act that is a way of making meaning. I draw upon George Kalamaras's use of the term rhetoric which he defines as "a way of constructing knowledge through acts of symbolic interpretation" (7-8). He explains that rhetorical acts are, "not simply methods of 'public discourse' as the term has come to more narrowly connote, as a result, in part, of the influence of classical philosophy and techniques of oration" (7-8). I explore some of these classical theories to show how rhetoric holds the capacity to make meaning that is not necessarily dependent upon vocal or written utterance. Silence, I argue, when deliberately employed as a way of making meaning, is rhetorical.

As a rhetoric, silence takes many forms. As Leslie Kane explains, "the fluidity of silence allows the artist to journey to the depths of the psyche, to exteriorize, dramatize, and emphasize what the Symbolists termed l'état d'âme" (14). She catalogues a long list of different ways silence can communicate on the

stage. Some include: the dumb silence of apathy, the sober silence of solemnity, the fertile silence of awareness, the active silence of perception, the baffled silence of confusion, the uneasy silence of impasse, the muzzled silence of outrage, the expectant silence of waiting. Her list continues, and we can relate these forms of silence to protagonists such as Viola whose surprised silence of astonishment and Cordelia's pregnant silence of truth persuade the audience of their "état d'âme." These silences, Kane writes, "illustrate by their unspoken response to speech that experiences exist for which we lack the word" (15). The silent rhetor illustrates how these ineffable experiences may indeed be communicated on the stage.

In any study of silence on the stage one might expect Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett to dominate and inform the discussion. While I passingly refer to their works, the conception of silence as an expression of hopelessness and the failure of language to communicate conflicts with my formulation of silence as a rhetoric that communicates and persuades. Kane notes that silent response emerged as a viable dramatic technique as early as the 1890's; however, the dramas of Beckett and Pinter are distinguished by their shocking retreat from the word and their yielding to the temptation and authority of silence to express the unspoken and unspeakable (13)[3]. While evasive forms of expression may communicate, I am interested in that silence which is a deliberate strategic rhetorical act, and not merely what Pinter describes as a "desperate rear guard attempt to keep ourselves to ourselves" ("Writing" 579).

Beckett and Pinter, I suggest, use silence as a dramatic, rather than a rhetorical strategy. For example, in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* both the setting and the discourse are bare and uncertain. The language is fragmented and thoughts are incomplete as a way of expressing anxiety, incompleteness and also as a way to stalemate conversation. As Kane demonstrates, Gogo repeats the word "caime" until, "having exhausted the topic of 'caime' Gogo must find new inspiration to stall the advancement of Silence"(115). In this context 'Silence' means death or the loss of existence. It is through discourse that Beckett's characters seek to exist, and so continual repetition of stories and words is not evidence of knowledge but rather an attempt to keep silence at bay. Silence and pauses that signal a retreat from the word characterise Beckett's drama. This use of silence is antithetical to my use of silent rhetoric which, I shall demonstrate, functions as a tool for entering into new conceptual frameworks of understanding.

Part One begins with a discussion of women and silence, and suggests why and how silence employed as rhetoric may be considered a viable option for women communicators.

Theatre and rhetoric are both ancient arts. Consequently, I begin my study of silent rhetoric at the beginning with an examination, in Chapter 1, of the classical tradition. I show, for example, how Plato's celebration of rhetoric as a means to generate, create, and discover knowledge is useful to a reformulation of rhetoric that embraces silence.

Until recently, any discussion of the rhetorical tradition evoked theorists and philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, George Campbell, I. A. Richards, and Kenneth Burke.The consequence of such a theoretical tradition has been to reinforce the dominance of phallogocentric theories of rhetoric and to marginalize women from the discussion. Feminist theories of rhetoric[1] have recently questioned and challenged the closure implied by the traditional male canon and suggest the possibilities of multiple, diverse rhetorical traditions. The rhetoric of silence is such a suggestion. Through an examination of Aristotle and Plato, I am able to identify the limitations of the classical tradition for women and to reformulate a feminist theory of rhetoric.

In Chapter 2, I show how the theatre[5] provides an ideal stage for a discussion of rhetoric. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and his *Poetics* have informed theoretical debates about rhetoric and drama for 2500 years and both remain dominant threads in twentieth-century recoveries of rhetoric. The knowledge-making properties of language and persuasion are inextricably interwoven. Like rhetoric, the theatrical event produces meaning, and may also be viewed as a tool to persuade, generate knowledge and promote values.

Both rhetorical and theatrical practices are concerned with the transmission of signals[6] between an audience and a character (or rhetor) and back again. The role of the audience has raised a number of questions for both rhetorical and theatrical theorists. Indeed, students of the two disciplines have grappled with the "problem" of audience for some time. Contemporary rhetoricians ponder some basic questions such as what is the meaning of the term "audience": what does

the signifier "audience" actually signify; what do me mean when we talk about "audience." Theatre studies have recently questioned the audience's experience of the theatre: to whom is the performance directed; how is the spectator involved; how does the audience affect the performance. Susan Bennett opens her study, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, with a quotation from Jerzy Grotowski, which may very well be applied to rhetoric, "Can theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance." In *Audience and Rhetoric*, James E. Porter reminds us that audience is often invoked, along with the "writer" and the "topic" as one of the key three arms on the communication triangle. Porter examines how audience contributes to the knowledge system. In Chapter 2, I draw upon Bennett's, Porter's, and Louise Rosenblatt's studies of audience to explore the interactive nature of audience in theatrical and rhetorical practice.

Feminism and theatre share many of the feminist challenges to the rhetorical tradition. Women's absence from the classical stage, for example, has allowed for the female to be constructed as a man-made sign. In the introduction to her recent study, *Unmaking Mimesis*, Diamond links the gender bias in ancient Greek culture to Plato's and Aristotle's proscriptions. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, for example, women are denied the capacity to exemplify tragic virtues. Although feminist critic Sue-Ellen Case claims that the erasure of women from social representation means that mimesis is not possible for them, Diamond suggests that "if mimesis was not possible for women, it was not possible without them"

(vi). Her goal is to remake our understanding of classical mimesis so as to suggest the possibility of a feminist mimesis.

The most distinctive feature of modern theatre, Helen Keyssar writes, is its rejection of monologism and the patriarchal authority of the drama in performance (119). Performance art, for example, is autonomous, nontextual, and performance-oriented, and consequently, the genre is wide open to definition and interpretation. Recent theatre has undergone changing relationships including, for example, in the 1970's and 1980's the introduction of performance art. The Aristotelian law which demanded that a work be of a "certain magnitude" with a clear "beginning, middle, and end" has been successfully challenged and revised by the emergence of performance art. Michael Vanden Heuvel writes that in its purest form, "performance art privileges the spontaneous and physical activity of performing as an autonomous form of artistic expression. That expression is said to differ from literary, textual, or 'closed' forms in that it does not impose a preformed hierarchy of discourses or meaning upon the spectator"(11).

Jeanie Forte describes women's performance art as a discourse of the objectified other, and "precisely because of the operation of representation, actual women are rendered an absence within the dominant culture, and in order to speak, must take on a mask (masculinity, falsity, simulation, seduction), or take on the unmasking of the very opposition in which they are the opposed, the Other" (252). For this study, my interest in performance art is limited to its theoretical concern with the objectification of women and their traditional representation that precludes female agency. I am interested in how the rhetoric

of silence is a strategy of resistance to power and operates to unmask the representation of women as incapable of independent thought and action.

In *The Rhetoric of Silence*, my intent is to suggest the possibility of a feminist rhetoric that includes silence and non-verbal response. Re-reading male-authored texts allows me to explore the potential of silence as a site of feminist resistance to the loss of self-hood. In *Eminent Rhetoric: Language, Gender, and Cultural Tropes*, Elizabeth Fay's thesis is that rhetoric, as the purposeful manipulation of language to gain political ends, is the unacknowledged weapon of ideology, and that women are the greatest target and the greatest victims of a political rhetoric that is most often used to support and reinforce masculine hegemony. Moreover, certain rhetorical tropes can be isolated, identified, and made recognizable so that women can protect themselves against the political manipulation of their minds, loyalties, and hearts against their own well-being. All of my protagonists are rhetors who recognize that they are subject to such manipulation. Some recognize the rhetorical tropes, but all refuse to be manipulated. They all insist upon the steadfast maintenance of individual agency.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the silent rhetor as one who strategically employs silence in an effort to forge a new identity as an independent thinker. I show how Shakespeare's Cordelia exemplifies Plato's ideal rhetorician. She possesses the four cardinal virtues that distinguish the rhetor from the sophist. Cordelia is compelled to maintain her self-image as honest and not to surrender her integrity. She seeks truth and understands how thinking is fundamental to discourse and to the function of rhetoric to generate, create, and discover

knowledge. Reading Cordelia as a paradigmatic silent rhetor serves as a preparation for Part Two in which I explore silence in twentieth-century drama.

In Part Two, I demonstrate how some of the modes of rhetorical communication discussed earlier may be applied to female protagonists who are traditionally viewed as silenced. Re-reading these women as silent rhetors provides a different theoretical position that feminist theatre may employ to persuade the audience of its message. The three plays selected share a focus on powerlessness and, in different ways, they illustrate how the female body may communicate to allow the rhetor to assume a subject position. The silent rhetors in this study are chosen because they express the marginalized voices of those who are in conflict with the dominant ideology and who resist the loss of individual agency. They are daughters, wives, and women who say "No" to the paternal authority that demands control of their identities, their bodies, their minds, and their ways of knowing.

Oscar Wilde's Salomé, Jean Anouilh's Antigone, and Timberlake Wertenbaker's Philomele in *The Love of the Nightingale* are twentieth-century re-interpretations of classical, male-authored, mythic figures. What differentiates these protagonists is the way in which they use their bodies to speak and the motivation that compels them to communicate under challenging circumstances. These rhetors use silence as a means to articulate their subjectivity and to resist their traditional roles as objects. I show how Salomé's dance may be read as language. It is non-verbal response to Herod's demand for pleasure. Her dance allows her

to re-create herself by subverting her stepfather's desire. Antigone demonstrates how silence as a strategy may be used to resist male power and the loss of control over one's thinking and ways of knowing. Philomele will not accept her position as a voiceless concubine and patiently discovers the best means of persuasion to tell her story.

In her novel *Middlemarch* George Eliot writes:

> If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. (226)

It is my goal to study not only the silence that surrounds and interacts with speech, but the roar that silence communicates. I explore the potential of silence as a site of feminist resistance to the loss of self-hood and as a strategic act of agency.

NOTES

[1] All citations from the play *The Tragedy of King Lear* are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton, 1997). I am aware of the scholarly debate concerning the First Folio and the First Quarto editions of the tragedy. Consequently, I have chosen to follow the First Folio text –*The Tragedy of King Lear.*

[2] I have substituted Lanham's use of "man" with "person." Whenever the need for a gender-specific pronoun is required I have chosen to use the feminine.

[3] See Leslie Kane's study *The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama*, for an in-depth discussion of silence and the dramas of Beckett, Pinter, Albee and others. Her purpose is to show how silence as a language directly, dramatically, and implicitly reflects doubt and disjunction. She does not relate silence and rhetoric; her definition of silence encompasses the absence of speech and even of implicit expression.

[4] See, for example, Patricia Bizzell, Susan Jarratt, Andrea Lunsford.

[5] Keir Elam differentiates the dramatic text from the theatre (or performance) text. He explains his use of the two terms in his book, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*: "'Theatre' is taken to refer here to the complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction: that is, with the production and communication of meaning in the performance...By 'drama,' on the other hand, is meant that mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular 'dramatic' conventions." For this study, Elam's definition of theatre is most useful because I argue that rhetorical and theatrical practices are similar in their reliance upon interpretative communities.

[6] The transmission of signals on the stage is not limited to language and dialogue. Certainly lights, costumes, setting, physical activity and music are a few of the elements which contribute to the transmission of signals. Bernard Beckerman describes the stage as a performer in the action. It does not serve merely as background but rather reinforces or counterpoints the action and communicates mood. How the characters relate to the setting, for example, may serve to reveal their spirit. See Beckerman's chapter "The environment of the Presentation" in *Dynamics of Drama* for a discussion of setting and audience response. See also Tadeusz Kowzon's article, "The Sign in the Theatre: An Introduction to the Semiology of the Art of the Spectacle." My study is limited, however, to a discussion of language and silence as transmitters of signals.

PART ONE

WOMEN AND SILENCE

Le silence même se définit par rapport aux mots, comme la pause, en musique, reçoit son sens de groupes de notes qui l'entourent. Ce silence est un moment du language; se taire ce n'est pas être muet, c'est refuser de parler, donc parler encore.

--- Jean-Paul Sartre

Silence is an integral aspect of communication. In any communicative act we verbalize, pause, think, re-think, revise and verbalize again. Communication is a social game and while we are planning our next move, or strategizing, we are most often silent. Silence, as Sartre describes, is a moment in language. Within this context silence is active, attentive, and, as we shall see, silence is communicative. My definition of silence expands beyond the familiar understanding of silence as oppressive or passive where voice equals power[1] and the voiceless, who are generally associated with women[2], are considered docile, submissive, and subservient. In this section, I define silence and show how it may be a rhetoric of choice for women communicators.

Tillie Olsen's groundbreaking book *Silences*, in 1978, opened the discussion of silence and paved the way for literary critics and feminist theorists to develop new critical frameworks. Olsen considers the social forces that silence the voices of women, the marginalized, and the powerless, whether through the disruption of the creative process, censorship, the psychology of self-censorship, economics, or race. Olsen explains in her dedication for whom she writes her book:

> [F]or those of us (few yet in number, for the way is punishing),
>
> their kin and descendants, who begin to emerge into more

> flowered and rewarded use of our selves in ways denied to them -- and by our very achievement bearing witness to what was (and still is) being lost, silenced.

Her call to bear witness to the silencing of women had an enormous impact and the subject of silence became the center of much feminist literary theory. The pervasive absence of women, not only from the literary canon but all academic disciplines, contributed to the uncovering of a female literary tradition by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their important work *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Adrienne Rich also explored the subject of silence in both her poetry and prose. "But poems are like dreams," she says in her autobiographical essay "When We Dead Awaken," and "in them you put what you don't know you know"(40). Her writing serves as a way of coming to know and discovering her self. Rich "breaks the silence" in her poem "Diving into the Wreck" which was written "under the impact of the cataclysm her life has undergone through her separation from her husband, his tragic suicide, and her own discovery of a hitherto unknown intensity of love in the revelation of 'one woman's meaning to another woman'" (Felman, "Woman" 135). Her intensely personal writing reveals the reality in her own life of many of the crippling social forces that Olsen had identified.

Susan Gubar cites Olsen and Rich in her essay "The Blank Page," explaining how these writers "teach us about the centrality of silence in women's culture, specifically the ways in which women's voices have gone unheard"(89). Feminist criticism has tended to cast silence as the place of oppression for women where the tendency has been to situate silence and speech as both distinctive and conflictive.

Olsen, Rich and others rightly argue for the voicings of women and the breaking of imposed silence which has for so long disenfranchised them.

There is a difference between the silence that must be broken by speech, that is silence which is repressive and denies communication, and the silence which is communicative. Imposed silences, however, it should be noted, emphasize the primarily external impediments to communication. That is, the lack of education, economic inequality, and the responsibilities of motherhood, to name a few, precluded women from entering into the conversation. We shall see, for example, how the women protagonists in this study are hindered in their attempts to converse verbally. Their use of silence as a method to communicate, however, allows them to tackle these impediments and join the conversation.

Recent critical perspectives in the wake of poststructuralism, make frequent reference to the "gaps," silences, and discontinuities in a discourse. Feminist critics such as Elaine Hedges and Shelley Fisher Fishkin focus on silences that are intrinsic, rather than external, to the text, "such silences, in turn, might reveal reticences culturally imposed upon women, the workings of a repressed ideology, or, alternatively, women's deployment of silence as a form of resistance to the dominant discourse"(5). As a "form of resistance" silence is not necessarily an obstacle to communication. In such a theory, the emphasis must be on the interpretation and the reading of silences, on what is repressed. In this case, "breaking" silence means that we, as readers/audience, begin to listen to and to attend to the internal silences. Audience participation is central to a study of silent rhetoric because it is the audience who interprets and deciphers the silence as language.

King-Kok Cheung, too, cautions against interpreting narrative gaps in women's texts solely in terms of response to external pressure. "I differ with those critics," she says, "who view verbal restraint as necessarily a handicap stemming from social restrictions. I view it more as a versatile strategy in its own right"(33)[3]. When we view it as a strategy, we sympathize with mute characters and applaud the muting art of the author. We shall see how the playwright's artful use of silence becomes a persuasive strategy on the stage. My focus, however, is not on the playwright but rather on the audience's act of interpretation and response to the character's use of language.

Since 1978, Olsen's arguments and insights have been modified, re-defined, and contested. Recent feminist critical approaches to the problem of silence include, for example, reading silence as presence (King-Kok Cheung), as an empowering form of resistance (Janis Stout, Patricia Laurence), as knowledge-making (George Kalamaras), and as communication (Deborah Tannen). As Janis Stout writes, "the reading of textual silences, of what is not actually there but might have been there or is evoked by what is there, especially when writers call attention to the fact of such omissions, limitations, or outward pointings, is among the liveliest and most provocative developments in criticism in the past twenty years and not in deconstructive criticism alone"(2). We shall see how the playwright's strategy of interweaving silence and speech invites the audience to interpret "what is not actually there but might have been there."

My intent is not to quarrel with feminist theories that posit speech against certain forms of silence especially in light of the historical and current

marginalization of women's voices. On the contrary, I suggest that we re-read silence and, in so doing, go beyond the emphasis placed on the oppressiveness of silence and discover its assertive, active, and expressive qualities. As Hedges and Fishkin argue, we need to continue the struggle against the silencing effects of dominant constructions of gender, race, and class. Many forms of women's silence continue to exist; "there are still silences because women are not speaking, silences because women are not heard, silences because their voices are not understood, and silences because voices are not preserved"(13). I suggest that attending to these silences as rhetoric and listening to what they communicate is one way to "break" the silence.

NOTES

[1] I would like to point out that the overvaluation of speech and consequent mistrust of silence is primarily a Western phenomenon. See, for example, George Kalamaras who discusses the generative aspect of silence that Eastern philosophies propose, and King-Kok Cheung whose study explores Asian American positions on speech and silence.

[2] Women are certainly not the only marginalized group which has been silenced. Feminist scholars tend to overlook the degree to which men, too, struggle for expression and must repress their emotions due to conventional notions of manhood. A reading of *Hamlet*, for example, could parallel my study of Cordelia as a silent rhetor. My study, however, is centered around a discussion of women and for this reason it is beyond the scope of this work to consider other marginalized groups who have been silenced or those for whom silence is an option.

[3] I would like to thank Tomoko Kuribayshi for a number of discussions about silence and the difference between American and Asian attitudes toward the tacit dimension. In English, silence is represented as the opposite of speech. As the opposite of speech it does not express or communicate, rather, silence is a withdrawal from the word. It is interesting to note that in Japanese the character for silence represents the opposite of noise and confusion, not speech. Unlike the English interpretation, silence in Japanese does not signal the absence of communicative power but rather it signals attentiveness. For many Asian cultures silence actively communicates respect and sensitivity on the part of the speaker for the listener and vice versa. The Japanese adhere to the saying, "silence is golden, speech is silver."

CHAPTER 1

THE RHETORIC OF SILENCE

> The entire history of women's struggle for self-determination has been muffled in silence over and over...Each feminist work has tended to be received as if it emerged from nowhere; as if each of us had lived, thought, and worked without any historical past or contextual present.
>
> --- Adrienne Rich

RHETORIC

Rhetoric is a symbolic act. It is a way of knowing, a way of communicating and as such it is a tool for making meaning. It was Aristotle who first defined rhetoric as the art of persuasion, and Plato insisted on the importance of dialectic as a generator of knowledge. Concepts of persuasion, dialectic, and shared discourse, which imply that rhetoric is an active, discursive endeavor and point to the importance of audience and response, are still relevant today. The tentative emergence of a modern or "new" rhetoric, as Andrea A. Lunsford tells us, "has been characterized by the attempt both to recover and reexamine the concepts of classical rhetoric and to define itself *against* that classical tradition" ("Distinctions" 37).

The first "revival" of classical rhetoric took place in the eighteenth century with the introduction of such works as John Ward's *A System of Oratory* (1759) and George Campbell's A *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776). In 1810, for example, John Quincy Adams wrote *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*, which promoted the classical doctrine.[1] A second "revival" of classical rhetoric surfaced in the late 1930's and early 1940's with the growing interest in literary criticism and the

"communications movement" ("Revival of Rhetoric" 8).[2] In 1931, classical theory was the guiding principle in Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives*. In his 1959 edition of *Roots for a New Rhetoric*, Daniel Fogarty "identifies what he calls the 'old model' of 'current-traditional rhetoric,' against which he posits his own version of a 'new' rhetoric" (*Reclaiming* 5). More recently, Wayne Booth has redefined classical rhetoric as "the art of discovering warrantable beliefs and improving those beliefs in shared discourse" (*Modern Dogma* xiii).

These efforts to redefine and reconstruct a "new rhetoric," however, are limited, as Lunsford notes, to an exclusively masculinist reading of rhetoric. They perpetuate a tradition of language that excludes women and, indeed, that implies the incompatibility of women and rhetoric.[3] Recent feminist studies of rhetorical traditions suggest that the realm of rhetoric has been almost exclusively male, not because women were not practicing rhetoric[4] but, as Lunsford explains, because the tradition has never recognized the forms, strategies, and goals used by many women as "rhetorical" (*Reclaiming* 6). My intent is not to re-define a new rhetoric but rather to demonstrate how silence is such a rhetorical strategy and the silent rhetor is an agent who actively participates in shared discourse.

My study of silence as a rhetorical strategy used by women on the stage begins with an exploration of classical traditions of rhetoric in order to show that, as C. Jan Swearingen points out, knowing Socrates or even multiple "Socrateses" does not preclude our knowing Diotima at the same time (28). Re-reading classical theories allows for the dismantling of patriarchal assumptions and the uncovering of traditional women protagonists as rhetors. In this study, re-reading entails revising

interpretations of classical traditions while interweaving marginalized theories of rhetoric in order to lay the groundwork for an understanding of women's silence as rhetoric.

Rhetoric is a twenty-five-hundred-year-old system for the production and interpretation of discourse. Classical rhetoric concerns itself with all of the manifestations of discourse and its enduring characteristic is its adaptability to new language situations. In the past two decades the wave of literary theory has enabled us to re-conceptualize the foundations of discourse, language, and silence.[5] Like all discourse theories, the rhetoric of silence does not rely on one rhetorical tradition alone. I shall show how the textual interaction between Aristotle's and Plato's writing contributes to a theory of discourse that includes rhetoric in the form of dialectic as generative (in that it generates knowledge for the rhetor and the audience), as interactive, and as persuasive. These elements of rhetoric are especially salient for women because the dialectical process involves alternating the roles of audience and rhetor. Each has an opportunity to question, respond, and refute. Michel Meyer explains that a discourse composed of questions and answers makes the interlocutors potentially equal, and makes it impossible for them to take on a position of authority with respect to the other (Golden 32).

Dialectic is fundamental to rhetoric in the generation and discovery of knowledge because it involves thinking, as in the creation of thoughtful questions. It may be described as a self-correcting philosophical conversation. In the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, Plato stresses the importance of thinking and insists on dialectic as the method for sorting out truth and for creating knowledge. Kathleen Welch

describes Platonic dialectic as a process which "involves the activity of forming discourse while at the same time criticizing that discourse in order to reach a higher level of understanding" (5). Rhetoric that did not embrace dialectic was, for Plato, mere sophistry.

An active interchange of rhetoric and dialectic implies the active engagement of two sides in a search. The search for knowledge, in this case, is a joint enterprise. "Passivity precludes dialectic. The activity, the interdependent exchange of ideas and emotions, the push and pull of spiraling intellectual and psychological inquiry, constitute Plato's conception of philosophical rhetoric in *Phaedrus*" (Welch 101). Dialectic, with its emphasis on argument, represents the ideal rhetorical form. Strategies include first questioning, then answering, and justification. Answers are cross-examined and often modified so that the original position held by either rhetor is altered. Socrates tells Phaedrus that an ideal discourse is one which "is inscribed with genuine knowledge in the soul of the learner, a discourse that can defend itself and knows to whom it should speak and before whom it should remain silent" (70).

Women have also embraced dialectic as an ideal discourse. Indeed, Plato's Socrates shows Aspasia [6]engaging in classical rhetorical practice in the fifth century B.C.E. In the opening of Plato's *Menexenus*, Socrates tells Menexenus that Aspasia is his teacher, one who is "an excellent mistress in the art of rhetoric – she who has made so many good speakers, and one who was the best among all the Hellenes – Pericles, the son of Xanthippus"(Hamilton 188)[7]. Socrates is so enamoured with her art that he offers an account of an oration she had given the previous day.

Dialectic as a conversational strategy has proved very useful for women ever since Aspasia first taught the art. In the eighteenth century Mary Wollstonecraft, best known for her feminist manifesto *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, argued for her right to participate in dialogues with philosophers, educators, politicians, historians, and artists. In the nineteenth century Margaret Fuller not only questioned existing gender hierarchies, but also taught rhetoric to young women at a school in Boston, Massachusetts in 1837. Her classes were not meant to replicate the rote memorization that characterized the boys' training, rather she intended her students to engage in conversation and thinking[8]. In her study of Margaret Fuller, Annette Kolodny explains that Fuller's conversations were not mere casual exchanges between women. Fuller's ideal conversation was informed by her re-reading of Plato's Socratic dialogues: "Fuller's letters indicate that she consulted Plato throughout the years of the Boston conversations... And from Plato, especially in his early dialogues, she had taken the courage to raise questions for which there might not be any answers" (149). Fuller sought to engage her students in thinking and in dialectic as a means of gaining knowledge.

Persuasion is perhaps the most significant defining feature of rhetoric. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in a given case the available means of persuasion" (24)[9]. Plato claimed that rhetoric embraced any form of discourse designed to win the soul. "Plato held firmly to the view that one of the primary functions of rhetoric is to persuade the listener to adopt specific courses of action and, when necessary, to modify his beliefs and attitudes in accordance with ideal forms and societal values" (Golden 29). All communication on a basic level is

persuasive in nature because it is oriented toward the listener or audience and his response. In *Personal Knowledge*, Michael Polanyi notes that knowledge cannot continue to exist without being shared:

> In order to be satisfied, our intellectual passions must find response. This universal intent creates a tension: we must suffer when a vision of reality to which we have committed ourselves is contemptuously ignored by others. For a general unbelief imperils our own convictions by evoking an echo in us. Our vision must conquer or die. (150)

Polanyi refers to this drive to solidify one's own beliefs by persuading others to share them as the "persuasive passion." Even the most apparently neutral informative discourse cannot be dissociated from the worldview and belief system held by the informer which she is compelled to share.

The classical concept of persuasion covered a wide range of meaning and, as George Kennedy writes, a whole spectrum of purposes:

> from converting hearers to a view opposed to that they previously held, to implanting a conviction not otherwise considered, to the deepening of belief in a view already favorably entertained, to a demonstration of the cleverness of the author, to teaching or exposition. (4)

Plato takes rhetoric beyond these basic purposes to a higher level where persuasion is driven by the desire to influence behavior morally. For Plato the purpose of

persuasion was to lead and to guide the listener; thus, his rationale for supporting any form of persuasion was its potential to motivate the listener to live a moral life.

Louise Rosenblatt argues that we cannot ignore the persuasive dimension of all literature. She is less concerned, however, with the qualities of texts and more with the responses of readers, finding fault with literary and rhetorical theorists for their minimal involvement with the audience. They tend to emphasize the way in which speakers persuade listeners, rather than the way listeners and readers are persuaded. Rosenblatt's work of the 1930s took issue with literary theorists, their focus on texts as self-contained aesthetic objects, and their authors as the sole allocators of meaning. Her rhetorical theory views the speaker and listener, the writer and reader, as participants in discourse. In *Literature as Exploration,* she argued that literature should not be divorced from ethical and social considerations and that literary texts contain, "implied moral attitudes and unvoiced systems of social values"(4). Rosenblatt did not view the persuasive power of texts as either good or bad; she hoped for the kind of participation between text and audience that would allow for and promote the challenging of moral attitudes and belief systems.

Aristotle was also concerned with the promotion of moral good. In the *Rhetoric* he offers a highly specific account of how it is that hearers are persuaded through discourse. He refers to these as the modes of persuasion:

> The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker;
> the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind;
> the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words
> of the speech itself. (24-25)

The three means of effecting persuasion are through an ethical appeal (*ethos*), emotional appeal (*pathos*), and a logical appeal (*logos*). In exercising the rational appeal, the speaker addresses the audience's ability to reason or to understand. The speaker argues her point. In the emotional appeal the passions and emotions of the audience are addressed. Finally, the ethical appeal is based on the perceived moral character of the speaker. Persuasion of the audience depends on its willingness to believe the rhetor. The rhetor's presentation of self as credible is relevant in determining her persuasibility.

Some feminists tend to view the concept of persuasion as antithetical to feminist ideology. Persuasion holds the potential to undermine collaborative conversation and destroy epistemic inquiry. Persuasion can be hierarchical and coercive when the audience is forced to resign itself and concur with the speaker. Persuasion may imply competition and a winner/loser power dynamic that generates an ethic of superior/inferior. Feminists note that such concepts tend to denigrate personal experiences and emotions because of their insistence on the authority of the public (masculine) experience.

Feminists view the role of traditional rhetoric to persuade as one that potentially excludes women[10]. Aristotle's emphasis on logical appeal, for example, presumes the importance of a deductive logic that relies on publicly accepted reasoning. Such reasoning does not always reflect alternative logics that may be based on personal experience, emotion, or intuition. These logics are not always validated by the judgement of mass logic.

Feminists also challenge Aristotle's emphasis on emotional appeal. Women risk exclusion from rhetorical discourse because their arguments are dismissed as emotional pleas. Krista Ratcliffe argues that Western epistemology mystifies the power of the emotional by hiding it in the negative and renaming it *il*logical, *ir*rational, *non*sensical, *un*true, *in*valid. "Because their logic does not neatly fit the dominant logic of the masses, feminists are often labeled 'mad' or 'angry,' accused of giving way to emotional tirades, and dismissed as having no sense of humor" (Ratcliffe 19-20). Such labels and accusations, she claims, deny the validity and importance of feminists' different emotional appeals.

Ethical appeals, which for Aristotle are based on the perceived character of the speaker, also create a problem for feminists because women have traditionally been denied what Ratcliffe describes as a respectable public reputation. She points out that the concept of *ethos* has traditionally not included a space for women whose sex is visibly marked on their bodies. "The sight of women or the sound of feminists behind the bar or in the pulpit has almost always evoked resistance before they could ever utter a word, or The Word" (20).

While the potentially exclusionary nature of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals are a concern for feminists, they offer a starting point for re-conceptualizing rhetoric for women. Understanding how emotional appeals can be "hidden within the negative" can be instructive for women rhetoricians. Finally, if women rhetors understand the exclusionary nature of *ethos*, they may be better prepared to combat marginalization by discovering strategies that will allow them to speak publicly.[11]

Rhetoric, however, is not dependent upon vocal or written discourse. Contemporary rhetorical theory, including feminist inquiries into language, open up possibilities for multiple rhetorics – the rhetoric of reading, the rhetoric of music, of dance, of art, and the rhetoric of silence.

SILENT RHETORIC

Silent rhetoric, as I will use the term, is wordless response. It functions as a tool for both the rhetor and her audience so that they may enter into new conceptual systems of understanding for it is both a persuasive act of expression and an act of discovery or knowing. Silence as a response is crucial to our understanding of silence as a rhetoric because classical rhetoric was always associated with speaking, orating, and persuasive discourse and, hence, with an addressee. Its end was to convince or persuade an audience to think or act in a certain way. This involves making choices. Like rhetoric, silent rhetoric is persuasive because it involves urging the audience to make certain choices, even if the decision-making process is internal.

An important and very significant contribution to rhetorical epistemology, which may be applied to an understanding of silence as rhetoric, comes from Susanne Langer.[12] Her theory of language as a primary source for meaning making and her view of rhetoric as interdependent upon text, speaker, audience, logic, and feeling is very useful for a study of silence as rhetoric. Langer's philosophy of language demonstrates how all knowledge is based in the symbols of a community, and meaning grows out of "a collaborative dialogue between the expressive, feeling self

and the community's stable, preserving structures" (Lyon 266). Language does not merely communicate. For Langer, language makes symbols, which then construct reality. Arabella Lyon explains how the philosopher argued, first in *Philosophy in a New Key* and then in *Feeling and Form*, that meaning is founded on an innate human need to make symbols of experience. Langer argued for a primary understanding of language as "the symbolic transformation of sense-data. No longer did she focus on concepts and the things that they refer to, but instead on the mind's process of symbolizing the world" (271). Langer writes, "Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conceptions of objects... It is the conceptions, not things, that symbols directly 'mean'" (*Key* 60-61). This concept is relevant to an understanding of silence as language. Silence acts as a vehicle for the conceptions of objects and ideas. It symbolically communicates thoughts and concepts such as the depth of one's love for another, the idea of freedom, or beauty. Silence may replace verbal symbols in the conception of one's identity.

Langer's theory of language as symbolic transformation includes thinking, feeling,[13] and society as inseparable aspects of communication. Her work, Lyon tells us, forges the links of this complex relationship. "Langer believes a speaker and her listeners make meaning most naturally in an interactive context where their individual meanings or conceptions are created and reinforced by the concepts of common experience and common articulation"(272). We shall see how the mutual interpretations and interaction of speaker and listener contribute to the creation of meaning.

The silent rhetor understands how silence may function as response and how it involves the interactive relationship of thinking, feeling and society. She actively engages in thinking and questioning to discover genuine knowledge; her answer, silence, reflects both an awareness of her audience and the communicative power of unspoken meanings. In a recent study of Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan*, King-Kok Chueng demonstrates how Kogawa "textualizes the inaudible." Cheung explains how the protagonist lives and communicates in a territory of silence: "the language of her grief is silence. She has learned it well, its idioms, its nuances. Over the years, silence within her small body has grown large and powerful" (121). Cheung notes how successfully Kogawa renders her wordless figure into an unforgettable character. The woman's grief is powerfully communicated through an "ideal discourse" that can defend itself.

Wayne Booth describes intrapersonal discourse as one where the rhetor dialectically addresses an attendant self. Booth's rhetoric, like Plato's and Aristotle's, is a social construction. Knowledge is discovered through interaction between selves, between rhetor and audience. Wayne Booth views the self as not an isolated entity but rather "a field of selves":

> It [the self] is *essentially* rhetorical, symbol exchanging, a social product in process of changing through interaction, sharing values with other selves. Even when thinking privately, "I" can never escape the other selves which I have taken to make "myself," and my thought will thus always be a dialogue. (126)

The silent rhetor is a dialectician. She is self-aware and has access to what James Moffett calls "inner speech". [14] Her silence is not a reflection of passivity but rather awareness where she suspends extrapersonal discourse in favor of an intrapersonal discourse. This allows her to shape meaning using such modes as trusting in the generative aspects of intuition and ambiguity, and understanding the concepts of interconnectedness, reciprocity, and the value of identification with others in order to develop her own individual consciousness.[15]

Langer claims that when a speaker uses language, even intrapersonally, she is using a language that grows out of a shared context. "No matter how original we may be in our use of language, the practice itself is a purely social heritage. But discursive thought, so deeply rooted in language and thereby in society and its history, is in turn the mold of our individual experience" (*Feeling* 220). Individual thought and society are inextricably bound.

In *The Dialogic Imagination,* Mikhail Bakhtin presents a similar theory of thinking and discourse, explaining that discourse is significantly decisive in the evolution of an individual consciousness. Consciousness, he tells us, awakens to independent ideological life when it perceives its difference in a world of alien discourses. Similarly, silence, as a moment in language, achieves its meaning in relation to the language which surrounds it. Bakhtin differentiates between "internally persuasive discourse" and a surrounding language, one that is externally authoritative. "Internally persuasive discourse is more akin to re-telling a text in one's own words, with one's own accents, gestures, modifications" (424), and "it is half-ours and half-someone else's" (345). In Bakhtin's view, "when thought begins to work in an

independent, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us" (345). We shall see how intrapersonal discourse is necessary for the silent rhetor as she develops her own individual consciousness and struggles to free her own discourse from the authoritative word.

As an act of expression, the rhetoric of silence is motivated by the desire to persuade. Aristotle's three modes of persuasion, *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* will frame my discussion of silence as a persuasive strategy. The rhetoric of silence, however, is not insistent on persuasion as a sole end. The silent rhetor believes, like Kant who espouses a Platonic condemnation of sophistry, that we should practice the act of persuasion "solely on the ground that it is right" (171). Booth, following Rosenblatt's theories of the reader, notes that the view of rhetoric as a site for the creation of knowledge means that "the supreme purpose of persuasion... could not be to talk someone else into a preconceived view; rather it must be to engage in mutual inquiry or exploration"(137). Burke's claim that the role of persuasion resides not only in the development of knowledge, but also in the creation of the self through intercourse with other selves is useful in understanding the silent rhetor's motivation to persuade her listener.

The Greeks had a goddess of persuasion called Peitho, which literally means "to believe." She was often associated with Aphrodite but also accepted as one of the graces who consistently exemplified the freedom to make up one's own mind. The

silent rhetor believes in the pursuit of truth and the creation of new understanding. She, too, exemplifies the importance of freedom to make up one's own mind.

Rhetoric, of course, is not always successful as a tool for positive change. Geoffrey Hart explains that "rhetoric is deployed only when it can make a difference. Rhetoric cannot really move mountains, which is why so few people stand at the bases of mountains to orate" (8). Such "mountains" often confront silent rhetors who are compelled to use the rhetoric of silence as a tool because of a need to maintain their moral self-image. Taylor explains how "radical choice" presents a moral predicament for men and women:

> It is more honest, courageous, self-clairvoyant, hence a higher mode of life, to choose in lucidity than it is to hide one's choices behind the supposed structure of things, to flee from one's responsibility at the expense of lying to oneself, of a deep self-duplicity. (*Agency* 33)

The silent rhetor's radical choice to respond wordlessly exemplifies this moral predicament. Regardless of whether or not she is successful in persuading her listener to embrace a new value system, one which, for example, precludes self-duplicity, the silent rhetor does promote values.

Finally, the interactive aspect of a rhetoric of silence is vital because as Lanham reminds us, "man [and woman] has invented language to communicate with his fellow man [and woman]"(1). The interactive element brings the reader/listener/audience to the discussion. Bakhtin tells us that linguists have been attracted to the interactive element of rhetoric, but by and large have "taken into

consideration only those aspects of style determined by demands for comprehensibility and clarity – that is, precisely those aspects that are deprived of any internal dialogism, that take the listener for a person who passively understands but not for one who actively answers and reacts" (280). A passive understanding, Bakhtin continues, is no understanding at all.

Active understanding, on the other hand, is "one that assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system" (282). We can apply this theory to the silent rhetor who strives for such an understanding. She enters into a dialogical relationship with the intention that understanding go beyond the merely passive and purely receptive. Like Bakhtin's speaker, it is her intention to "establish a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enrich[s] it with new elements" (282). The silent rhetor anticipates an audience who is willing to "actively answer and react." Silence as a rhetoric is a viable communication strategy for women because it allows them, as agents, to actively participate in the conversation.

NOTES

[1] See "On Distinctions between Classical and Modern Rhetoric," by Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa S. Ede; "The Revival of Rhetoric in America," by Robert J. Connors, Lisa S. Ede, and Andrea A. Lunsford. The essays in Lunsford's text *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition* offer an insightful discussion of rhetoric and its re-emergence as a ground for human discourse.

[2] By "communications movement" Robert Connors et al. refer to the first communications courses which were taught at the State University of Iowa and at Michigan State University in 1944. The course combined elements of classical rhetoric and literary criticism. It was in 1949 that the Conference on College Composition and Communication was formed which has supported and promoted rhetorical developments in composition and communication studies.

[3] Lunsford claims that these efforts to create a "new rhetoric" have failed for women because in many ways they continue to echo Locke's earlier views on the subject. She explains how in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke differentiates between men who love to use and teach rhetoric and women who embody eloquence, and therefore can never be rhetorical. While eloquence and rhetoric usually hold a similar meaning, Locke does not refer to women who <u>are</u> eloquent but rather women who embody the idea of eloquence. (*Reclaiming* 5-6)

[4] In her essay, "A Lover's Discourse: Diotima, Logos, and Desire," C. Jan Swearingen suggests that we examine Plato's representations of Aspasia and Diotima as accomplished speakers and teachers. She writes:

> The presence of women in public and learned roles in classical antiquity continues to be questioned, dubbed fictional, and charged with wishful thinking. The quickness of such dismissals, I suggest, functions as a different kind of rebuke, for it serves to perpetuate the misogynist belief system that, particularly in Greek antiquity, led to the suppression of women's public presence and of records that represented it as anything but "merely literary" or as jokes. Traces of women's presence and speech are preserved not only in Plato's representations but also in the work of numerous sophists, dramatists, historians, and writers of legal codes (25).

[5] Rhetoric has undergone an incredible revival in the recent past and the contemporary relevance of the classical tradition is evident in the number of scholarly references, books and essays which appropriate Platonic and Aristotelian theory. See, for example: Nan Johnson, Susan Miller, Andrea Lunsford, James Kinneavy, James Murphy, Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth and Richard Lanham. All successfully demonstrate how the essential elements of ancient rhetorical theory may be applied to current thinking about discourse.

[6] In "Aspasia: Rhetoric, Gender, and Colonial Ideology" Susan Jarrett and Rory Ong suggest that Aspasia was perhaps the first female orator in the Western tradition. In

their attempt to reconstruct her as a rhetorician of fifth-century Greece they note that Aspasia caught "the critical attention of a Plato intent on re-reading the rhetorical world to which she gave voice" (22). In addition to Socrates they list Pericles, Aeschines, Xenophon, Antisthenes, and Plutarch as sources that refer to Aspasia in their texts.

[7] Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. *Menexenus*. In *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980. All references to Plato's dialogues are taken from this text and are designated by page number.

[8] In "Margaret Fuller: Inventing a Feminist Discourse," Annette Kolodny explains how Fuller tried to develop in her charges both intellectual discipline and independence of mind. She quotes:

> One of the girls asked her if she should get the lesson by heart. "No," said she, "I never wish a lesson learned by heart, as that phrase is commonly understood...I wish you to get your lesson by mind." She said she wished no one to remain in the class unless she was willing to give her mind and soul to the study, unless she was willing to communicate what was in her mind...that we should let no false modesty restrain us. (144)

[9] All references to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* or *Poetics* come from *The Rhetoric and Poetics of Aristotle*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts and Ingram Bywater. Citations are designated by page number.

[10] The goal of classical rhetoric, in particular Aristotelian, is often identified as persuasion where success and winning is emphasized above all else. In contrast, the new rhetoric (post eighteenth-century) is understood to be motivated by the desire to communicate. See Andrea A.Lunsford and Lisa S.Ede "On Distinctions Between Classical and Modern Rhetoric." They include a wide range of bibliographic references that discuss the rhetor-audience relationship.

[11] Ratcliffe notes such women as Margery Kempe, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Church Terrell, and others who had to fight for their right to speak or write in a public forum about private and public concerns. She argues that this lack of "cultural space" for women is due to Aristotle's concept of *ethos* which she claims refers to the "sense of the speaker which emerges from the text at the site of the audience's listening," and to Cicero's later inclusion of the speaker's reputation. I understand Aristotle's concept of *ethos* to go beyond a "sense of the speaker" or the "reputation of the speaker." *Ethos* is a rhetorical strategy that is used to persuade. The speaker need not be virtuous (in a Platonic sense) nor possess a particular reputation, but rather wise about human values, motivations, and opinions. Nan Johnson describes Aristotle's orator as one who "facilitates decision and action on issues of the probable and the possible, tempering his character according to the subject and the audience"(103).

[12] Susanne Knauth Langer (1896-1985) was a significant, although rarely

acknowledged, force in the revival of rhetorical studies. As an American philosopher she never wrote a rhetoric but her philosophy of language and theories of rhetoric share the same view of discourse as a way of knowing. Although her work is widely read her contributions to rhetorical theory are mostly ignored or even reduced. Arabella Lyon claims, in "Susanne K. Langer and the Rebirth of Rhetoric," that Langer's philosophy is rhetorical and that her theories prefigure those of later rhetoricians who are prominently connected to rhetoric's rebirth such as Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, or Chaim Perelman. Lyon argues that Langer is the mother of contemporary rhetoric.

[13] Langer originally shared the traditional view of rhetoric and logic -- that feeling and logic are separate and logic is a superior force in the creation of knowledge. She later developed a philosophy that privileged feeling over logic in meaning making.

[14] See James Moffett, "Writing, Inner Speech, and Meditation." He outlines how silences and various meditative practices in the classroom allow the student to develop "inner speech." He explains that the student "must talk through to silence and through stillness find original thought" (240).

[15] See Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, which explores how women know and shape meaning. Inner speech, they claim, evolves out of internalization of outer speech. They suggest that women construct knowledge through a critical process of distinction and also through a process of association where they identify with other knowers and their personal experiences. Intuition plays a role in the acquisition of what they call subjective knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

THE RHETORIC OF SILENCE AND THEATRE

The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

--- *Hamlet*

RHETORIC AND DRAMA

This chapter is about silence on the stage. Drama illustrates how rhetoric may be useful as a heuristic tool to understand silence as language because the communicative strategies used by artists to convey information to the audience are often non-verbal. The two subjects – rhetoric and drama – have proceeded along parallel lines ever since the Greek philosophers attempted to define tragedy and teach the arts of good oratory. As two forms of human activity that communicate, rhetoric and drama have proved useful in illustrating how each art functions. For example, poetry serves Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* when he illustrates excellent arguments that come from the speeches of tragedy. In Book III, chapter 16 Aristotle offers Sophocles's *Antigone* as an example of how the orator may look to the playwright to discover how to "depict character, being concerned with moral questions" (127). Plato also interweaves the two arts when he adopts a dramatic form in his dialogues to persuade his audience of the relevance of dialectic to discovery[1].

The primacy of Aristotle's *Poetics*, for dramatic theory, and his *Rhetoric*, for literary and rhetorical theory, is unchallenged. While central to both dramatic and

rhetorical theory, however, Aristotle's work requires re-consideration. I recognize, for example, the feminist objections, as seen by Jeannelle Laillou Savona, Sue-Ellen Case, Elin Diamond, and Jill Dolan to Aristotelian concepts. Major disagreements center around terminology and the definitions of such concepts as *mimesis* and *katharsis* in drama, and *enthymeme* and *pistis* in rhetoric[2]. There have also been criticisms of Aristotle's linear thinking about drama[3]. Nevertheless, I find that Aristotle's emphasis on thought and dialectic links up usefully with twentieth-century discussions of language and audience, especially those elements of classical drama which complement rhetorical theory. Although Aristotle separated the arts of rhetoric and the poetic, there is evidence that speech and poetry or rhetoric and drama have some characteristics in common which contribute to our understanding of the rhetoric of silence on the contemporary stage.

It appears at first that Aristotle's concern when he composed the *Poetics* was literary excellence, and the primary concern when he composed the *Rhetoric* was persuasion aimed at an audience. These two concerns, however, either overlap as rhetoric or speeches are honored for their literary excellence and drama is always aimed at an audience. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle rarely uses the term audience, certainly not to the extent that he refers to the "hearers" in his *Rhetoric*. His dramatic theory, however, depends upon the elements of *katharsis* and the emotions of pity and fear. While the definition of *katharsis* has proved troublesome -- is it meant to be considered a Greek medical term in that tragedy does not encourage the passions but rather rids the spectator of them? Or is it a moral term in that it purifies rather than eliminates the passions? -- the concept of *katharsis* implies audience. If the drama is

meant to generate emotions of pity and fear in the spectator, then the drama, like rhetoric, is aimed at an audience.

Aristotelian dramatic theory includes a discussion of the element of thought or *dianoia* in the *Poetics*. Here, however, Aristotle quickly refers to his discussion in the *Rhetoric* claiming that "it belongs more properly to that department of inquiry" (248). Even so, Aristotle adds the following comment:

> The thought of the personages is shown in everything to be effected by their language – in every effort to prove or disprove, to arouse emotion (pity, fear, anger, and the like), or to maximize or minimize things. It is clear, also that their mental procedure must be on the same lines in their actions likewise, whenever they wish them to arouse pity or horror, or to have a look of importance or probability. The only difference is that with the act the impression has to be made without explanation; whereas with the spoken word it has to be produced by the speaker, and result from his language. (248-49)

Thus Aristotle differentiates between verbal and non-verbal communication in drama. Non-verbal acts must present the character's mental impression. The aim of silent rhetoric is to do just that – communicate without explanation.

Thinking plays an important role in rhetoric and in drama because in both arts we witness a process of transformation. Rhetoric is an art of inquiry where the rhetor and her audience seek new levels of truth and understanding. Through dialogue they re-think and perhaps modify their beliefs and attitudes in accordance with ideal forms

and societal values. Drama too, is about creation and transformation. Aristotle, in Chapter 15 of his *Poetics*, explains how good portrait painters reproduce the distinctive features of a man but at the same time make improvements in his appearance. The artist is not embellishing but fulfilling. He is imitating an ideal toward which the example is moving but which it has not yet achieved (Carlson 17). The poet is creating or transforming ideas and showing things not as they are but as "they ought to be." The rhetor, through discovery, is also transforming ideas and suggesting new strategies for action.

Discovery in the form of *anagnorisis* is also an element of drama for Aristotle. However, the "recognition scene," where the character comes to know himself and together with the spectator acknowledge a "truth," presents an image or meaning as stable and fixed, such as a universal image of "man." Keyssar argues that this type of discovery, of who a person "really" is, dominates Western dramaturgical strategies from the Greeks to the present. In *King Lear* we witness Lear's change, as Aristotle ordered, from ignorance to knowledge. Keyssar points out, however, that this "kind of change may, for both the characters on stage and the spectator, call into question the particular image of this particular character, but it does not necessarily call into question 'a certain image of man.'" (119). It is precisely this implicit essentialism to which critics of Aristotle's theory object. Keyssar's suggestion that drama offers another possibility, that of presenting and urging the transformation of persons and our images of each other, of imagining men and women in a continual process of becoming other is foreseen in the *Rhetoric*. "It is *becoming* other, not finding oneself, that is the crux of drama; the performance of transformation of persons, not the

revelation of a core identity, focuses the drama" (119). As a tool to generate knowledge, rhetoric also presents and urges the transformation of persons and of each other. Rhetoric encourages discovery through dialectic and at the same time questions stable and fixed meanings. Dialogue/dialectic journeys away from the acquisition of knowledge as information and instead facilitates the acquisition of knowledge as a dialectic of interior discourse. Knowledge is not a commodity but rather a way of thinking and becoming. We shall see how the protagonist's use of silence as a rhetoric is a process of becoming.

Classical theories of drama[4] and rhetoric are interwoven with contemporary approaches to the two disciplines. Bernard Beckerman, in *Dynamics of Drama*, defines drama as occurring when one or more human beings isolated in time and space present themselves in imagined acts to another or others.[5] These imagined acts (what the character does) reach the spectator through dramatic activities (what the actor does) (19)[6] and contribute to the general function of theatre which is to generate meaning to an audience.

Similarly, modern rhetoric is viewed as occurring when rhetor and audience join in the discovery of communicable knowledge. The rhetor's actions (her use of language) contribute to the function of rhetoric which, like theatre, is to generate meaning to her audience. Bakhtin describes, in *The Dialogic Imagination*, how a dialogical relationship between language and meaning is one that is reciprocal. Meaning does not occur in a vacuum but rather results from what he calls "heteroglossia" or a set of conditions -- social, historical, economic, physiological -- that affect and shape meaning. In other words, "all utterances are heteroglot in that

they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve" (428). All theater is dialectic and, like Bakhtin's dialogical theory, is not an isolated enclosed event but is a site of reciprocity to which multiple forces contribute.

On the stage the multiple forces which contribute to meaning include some of the dramatic elements of light, costumes, dialogue, and silence. Meaning, semioticians tell us, is produced with the creation of signs. The stage provides a rich array of interpretative possibilities because every sound, action, and object is a theatrical sign that is produced by the actor's activities, the actor's appearance, and the theatrical space.[7] A dramatic character, for example, generates meaning when the audience interprets the different sign systems such as her gestures (frowning or shrugging her shoulders), her appearance (costume or makeup), or the scene (lighting, or decoration). These signs may also apply to a rhetorical situation where the audience's interpretation of the rhetor's meaning is influenced by her gestures, tone, appearance and so forth.[8] Although semioticians show us how theatre is comprised of a multitude of signifying systems, for this study of silent rhetoric I limit the discussion of signs to those that are produced by the actor's activities.

LANGUAGE

Language as a major dramatic activity takes a number of different forms. Debate, which was very popular with the Greeks, shares with rhetoric many of the same functions. For example, in *The Oresteia*, we witness the persuasive efforts of

Clytemnestra as she debates with the elders after the murder of Agamemnon. In both *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex* the entire plays consist of a series of debates where knowledge about life and happiness is generated for the protagonists and the audience.

Soliloquy is another form whereby the audience hears the actor, though alone, speak aloud. This activity of self-contemplation or intrapersonal dialogue reveals the protagonist's inner thoughts to the audience and to the protagonist as well. James Moffett notes that "how we inform ourselves in soliloquy will influence what we communicate in conversation" (88). In other words, soliloquy allows the audience to see the protagonist generating self-knowledge. From these inner thoughts the audience constructs the protagonist's pattern of thinking and observes how it influences her belief system, attitudes, and point of view. The audience observes her at the moment of coding new phenomena or generating understanding (Moffett 88).

Dialogue is perhaps the most immediate and accessible form of dramatic activity. When we experience the social speech or interpersonal dialogue (conversation) of two or more protagonists, information is communicated and the audience is persuaded. Through interaction – that is, what the characters say and do to each other in specific situations – the audience comes to understand the kind of beings the characters are, the kind of event they are engaged in, and the nature of their world. Debate, soliloquy and dialogue are three forms of dramatic activity that highlight the protagonist's use of silence on the stage.

As a dramatic activity language may be gestic. Brecht's theory of *Gestus* offers an interesting way to understand how silence communicates to an audience and

may be viewed as rhetoric. The cornerstone of his theory is the *Verfremdungseffekt*, or alienation effect, which is the technique of defamiliarizing a word, an idea, or gesture so as to enable the audience to experience it as if for the first time.

Gestus and traditional gesture are similar in that both make external something otherwise hidden. In Brecht's theory, however, the two modes differ in that gesture reveals subjective personal states, while *Gestus* is always social – it makes corporeal and visible the relationships between persons (Carlson 384). In his work *Schriften*, Brecht offers the example of a laborer whose task is a social *Gestus* because "all human activity directed toward the mastery of nature is a social undertaking, an undertaking between men"(Carlson 384). *Gestus*, which may be a gesture, a sound, or an action, reminds the audience of the social implications encoded in the drama and encourages conclusions about social circumstances to be drawn.

This is particularly interesting for feminist critics, such as Elin Diamond, who seek ways to dismantle the male gaze and to expose social attitudes and sex-gender complexities within drama.[9] Brecht explains the complexity of the *Gestus's* communicative power:

> These expressions of a gest are usually highly complicated and contradictory, so that they cannot be rendered by any single word and the actor must take care that in giving his image the necessary emphasis he does not lose anything, but emphasizes the entire complex (Willett 198).

Elin Diamond notes that a famous social "gest" is when the actor, Helene Weigel in

Mother Courage, snaps shut her leather money bag after each selling transaction, thereby underscoring the contradictions between profiteering and survival – for Brecht the social reality of war ("Brechtian" 89).

Gestus may be understood as a form of silent rhetoric because silent rhetoric addresses what Brecht refers to as the "moral sense" of the audience. To achieve a level of instruction in the theatre Brecht argued that "everthing must be made 'gestisch,' gestic, since 'the eye which looks for the gest in everything is the moral sense'" (Carlson 384). I would argue that Mother Courage's act of snapping shut her bag is a form of silent rhetoric. As an epistemic tool of persuasion, silent rhetoric, we noted, functions to generate understanding, promote values, and produce action. Mother Courage's silent rhetoric is a communicative and persuasive act that generates understanding and promotes values when it suggests to the audience that they consider the moral dilemma war presents. Indeed, Brecht demands a rigorous participatory effort on the part of his audience. As Diamond notes, Brecht's wish was for an instructive, analytical theatre which invites not only the participatory play of the spectator but also "that significance (the production of meaning) continue beyond play's end, congealing into choice and action after the spectator leaves the theatre" (86). As a silent rhetorical form, the act of snapping the bag shut encourages the audience to think about their culture and to respond through social change.

As a form of language, silence on the stage is not new. Kane[10] reminds us that we can trace the use of silence to Greek drama:

> Aeschylus' taciturn characters Pylades and Cassandra are significant in their non-verbal presence: an unspoken

> silence communicates Pylades' love and support for Orestes, while Cassandra's wall of silence contains and is ultimately shattered by her unspeakable apocalyptic vision. (23)

There are other examples as well. Sophocles illustrates the power of silent communication in *Oedipus Rex* when Jocasta refuses to respond to her son/husband's queries and thus communicates fear and heightened expectation to the chorus and the audience. In Euripedes' *Electra*, Kane notes the inarticulate response to uncertainty. "The disconcerting silence of the poet on the issue of justice wordlessly communicates the playwright's thematic concern" (24).

All silence on the stage is a dramatic strategy. Nothing on the stage is an accident, as Langer reminds us. In drama, she writes, "we do not have to find out what is significant; the selection has been made -- whatever is there is significant, and it is not too much to be surveyed in toto" (310). The playwright's employment of silent response is purposeful and holds meaning. In order to understand silence as communicative, it is necessary to consider how and why the playwright employs silence as a rhetoric.

Kane lists some of the reasons why the playwright views silence on the stage as a viable dramatic technique:

> Historically, then, silence has been employed by playwrights to evaluate, censure, or support an act, to indicate manipulative relationships, to increase or release dramatic tension, to make words more significant by their contrast with silent response, to

> reveal interior states of being, and to make thematic statements. In addition to these traditional functions of nonverbal symbolism, the modern playwright, reducing the role of speech and increasing that of silence, has employed the latter as a metaphor for evanesence and entrapment. (24)

For this study, I view the playwright's use of silent rhetoric as a form of action to reveal character and invite audience participation. In Chapter 2 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle tells us that the objects the imitator represents are actions. Language as a form of dramatic action shapes identity and creates character because character emerges from action. Gerald Else explains that the "fundamental principle of Aristotle's theory of character-development is that we become what we do, that our acts harden into character" (70). The rhetor's use of silence as dramatic action reveals, to the audience, her identity as an independent, thinking subject when she employs silence as a strategy of resistance. The shaping of identity through rhetorical means is a crucial component of both the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* because rhetoric plays a vital role in fashioning and representing character to the audience in the theatre.

Silence as dramatic action may be seen as a tool for the playwright, one that holds the potential to create worlds, to define the characters, and to create a drama that is dialogic. Silence employed as a rhetorical strategy is a major aspect of dialogic art in drama. Its potential to shape the drama through the definition of character is perhaps the most common use of silence on the stage.

Both Shakespeare and Harold Pinter illustrate how the use of silence as a form of dramatic action contributes to the rhetorical shape of the scene at hand by revealing the character's identity. Pinter's use of silence allows him to reveal his characters through the power of suggestion. He describes how his silences are employed to express the character's struggle to communicate:

> One when no word is spoken. The other when a torrent of language is employed. This speech is the speech locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of what we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness. (Jacket copy to *Landscape and Silence*).

Silence for Pinter, shapes the drama by revealing the characters in their most real and vulnerable state. Pinter's wide use of the pause allows the audience to experience the character's hesitation or fragmentation. The pause may also reveal the character's exercise of power. Although I concur with Pinter that silence may be expressed by a torrent of language, this silence may not necessarily function as rhetoric. The "speech locked beneath" the torrent is not rhetorical if it fails to communicate or if it does not generate knowledge or persuade the audience. It is worthwhile, however, to explore how an example of Pinter's use of the pause may be interpreted as a rhetoric of silence.

In *The Homecoming*, Pinter demonstrates, over and over, how the command of language, including silence, is a question of power. Ruth, however, communicates very little in the first act. She has comparably few lines, and while there are eight pauses after she has delivered her lines and the next character speaks, her own text is not punctuated by silence (pauses). Although Ruth is on the stage, she does not become a character until the second act when she employs language, words and silence, to represent herself.

In the second act, Ruth becomes a character by appropriating male power of language when she tells her stories and takes control of her future. It is, after all, her decision to send Teddy away and remain with his family. "The irony within the play, and one Pinter very carefully prepares, is that the manipulating men are in her power at the end. It is fascinating to find that her only pauses occur when she is bargaining with the men" (Benston 122). First her telling of stories, then her negotiating for a room, a maid, and a wardrobe are punctuated by pauses as she creates her self and a new role for her future. Her pauses communicate her independence. They are persuasive and generate knowledge about her as a character because Ruth now has an audience. Other characters do not interrupt her pauses, and together with the audience they watch her develop into a character. Ruth does not find herself; she becomes a new person.[11]

Pinter's use of silence as rhetoric allows him to shape his drama as dialogic. Keyssar uses this term to refer to drama which deliberately and conscientiously asserts polyphony, refuses to finalize or assert dominant ideologies and resists patriarchal authority and a unified field of vision (121). The rhetoric of silence is

polyphonic, it encourages interaction and multiplicity of meaning. It presents and mediates ideas but does not promote any dominant ideological point of view. The use of silence in *The Homecoming* does not allow the audience to relax in the expectation of such conventional character exposition as one finds in traditional drama. As Alice Benston explains, the dialogue is patterned with interrupted monologues that not only repress exposition but make us concentrate on the character's attempt to define his identity (120). Pinter's characters resist uniformity by breaking with the audience's expectation that speech will follow speech. Their pauses and use of silence as a form of dramatic action contribute to the audience's engagement or detachment with the play.

Harvey Rovine explains how Shakespeare controls the amount of silence that intrudes upon sound during the denouement of tragedy to affect the audience's response to the final scene. "In *Hamlet*, the words never give way totally to silence; rather, sound and silence are alternately the primary means of expression. But, in *King Lear* the silence at first intervenes, and ultimately subsumes speech until language is no more and the final silence seems even louder than Lear's raging on the heath"(96). The use of silence allows things to come into presence by inducing the audience to look back over the play and perhaps consider how words and their misinterpretation led to tragic consequences.

Jean E. Howard's work, *Shakespeare's Art of Orchestration*, examines how Shakespeare's stage technique influences audience response. She rightly argues that the verbal diversity of the plays does more than manifest a comprehensive social vision or delineates character. "Equally important is the role played by the

orchestration of speech and sound in governing the rhythm of the audience's theatrical experience and in shaping its perceptions of and responses to the progressive flow of stage events" (24). James Hollis reminds us that silence and sometimes dialogue often appear lifeless, unbalanced or unrelated on the printed page. When we read the individual lines of dialogue we may not read the silence in the text or it may pass over us as insignificant. On the stage, however, silences, such as Pinter's, may occupy as much space as the speech. When dialogue is brought to life on the stage we discover the balance, the relevance and the meaning. "The same attention to detail which seems trivial in the reading produces a rise and fall of suspense in the staging. The pauses force the audience as well as the characters to consider the possible responses available. The pauses, then, are not empty but filled with expectations seeking to be engendered" (Hollis 124). This leads us to consider the second essential aspect of both rhetoric and the theatre – the audience whose role it is to interpret the silence on the stage.

AUDIENCE

When Hamlet, alone on the stage, remarks how he has heard that "...guilty creatures sitting at a play / Have by the very cunning of the scene / Been struck so to the soul that presently / They have proclaimed their malefactions,"[12] he expects that his play will provoke Claudius, his targeted audience, into revealing his responsibility for King Hamlet's death. Young Hamlet understands how drama can provoke and

engage the audience in the creation of meaning. The indispensable role the audience plays marks the most striking similarity between drama and rhetoric. Good drama, like good rhetoric, precludes a passive audience. In addition to the text, script, actors, and director, the audience is an integral part of the theatrical event. Meaning is made, as Keyssar argues, when the cultural material from which the drama is created is repeatedly mediated and revised as it interacts with the playwright, the performers, and, finally, the audience (110). Many have argued that the most important relationship in the theatre is not among the actors but, rather, between the actors and the audience, and both play a role in the creation of meaning. The actor and spectator actively cooperate to make drama happen. J.L.Styan explains that the spectator does not go to the theatre merely to have the text interpreted through the skills of the director and her actors, but rather to share in a partnership without which the players cannot work (224). In order to understand silence on the stage as communicative, we must consider how the audience interprets this dramatic activity as rhetoric.

All drama demands that the audience exercise their eyes, ears, intellect, emotions, and imagination. They participate by interpreting and responding to the sights, sounds, motion, noise, actions, innuendo, and silences before them. Interest in how the audience interprets and responds to dramatic activity is not new. From Aristotle, who believed the audience should experience the play emotionally through *katharsis*, to Brecht, who rejected the entire tradition of Aristotelian theatre, widely differing theories of audience response have emerged from both dramatic and literary theorists.

For example, Styan argues that, "at its simplest reduction, the reciprocity of

the theatre is the desire of the spectator to jump into the shoes of the actor on the stage, and of the actor to understand this" (Styan 225). By jumping into the shoes of the actor Styan refers to the empathy that the audience should feel. That is the innate ability to identify with and to share the feelings of the character. The audience must feel what she[13] thinks Nora feels just before she walks out the door. She should understand Hamlet and Claudius, Antigone and Creon, or Cordelia and Lear.

Brecht, on the other hand, advanced *Verfremdung* or alienation, as an alternative to the sympathetic understanding that was expected of the audience. "To alienate an event or a character is simply to take what to the event or character is obvious, known, evident and produce surprise and curiosity out of it" (Carlson 385). As a Marxist, Brecht's intent was to create a critical distance allowing the spectator to consider the historical process more objectively, to become aware of the antagonism of classes and how one class is always oppressed by the other.

Brecht's concept of theatrical performance is not unlike contemporary theories of rhetorical performance. Both are concerned with production and reception. Brechtian theatre is motivated to provoke social change by activating the stage-audience exchange. The alienation effect is meant to provoke the audience into adopting a critical stance. The aim of rhetoric is similar in that it seeks a critical exchange with the audience, one that grows out of logical and objective reasoning. Rhetoric, like Brechtian theatre, suggests to its audience that something is not right. Both rhetorical performance and Brecht's theatrical performance depend upon an active audience who is willing to unite all of her resources – intellect, will, and emotion – in communicating with one another. Brecht is often misunderstood as

renouncing emotional involvement on the part of the audience. In fact, just as rhetorical practice involves emotion (*pathos*) in discourse, Brechtian theatre tries to arouse and awaken an attitude of criticism which grows out of emotion such as anger, indignation, etc.

While Brechtian theatre rejects Styan's insistence on the audience's emotional identification with the character, Brechtian theory does not preclude identification altogether. Diamond notes that the spectator is free to compare the actor's/character's signs to her own material conditions, her own politics, her skin, her desires. The possibility of pleasurable identification is effected "not through imaginary projection onto an ideal but through a triangular structure of actor/subject – character – spectator... the difference between this triangle and the familiar oedipal one is that no one side signifies authority, knowledge, or the law" ("Brechtian" 90).

Identification is vital to audience participation but, unlike Styan, I think the audience identifies with the act or the predicament and not with the character alone. Christy Desmet discusses Aristotle's subordination of character to plot, and notes his comment in the *Poetics* that men differ in character and the actions on the stage are "performed by agents who exhibit ethical tendencies that place them somewhere along a continuum of virtue and vice" (4). Aristotle privileges tragedy over comedy and in so doing confirms that character is dependent on plot. He writes: "Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life. In a play accordingly they do not act in order to portray the characters; they include the characters for the sake of the action" (Desmet 4-5). Desmet understands this to mean that, "all human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain

kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions that we are happy or the reverse" (5). Identifying with the action rather than the character allows for a certain amount of the critical distance and the objective analysis for which Brecht argued. Regardless of whether the audience is expected to experience empathy, "alienation," "*katharsis*," or entertainment, what is most important for a study of silent rhetoric and drama is the interactive element of audience / rhetor and audience / character.

The theatrical and the rhetorical text or performance have no intrinsic value. The interpretive communities with which they interact accord value. Rosenblatt, a rhetorical theorist, uses the term "transaction" to describe the interaction between reader and text. It is "an ongoing process in which the elements or factors are, one might say, aspects of a total situation, each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (*Reader* 17). Transaction is a useful term for the rhetorician because it suggests an equal contribution by both parties. The rhetor presents language to the audience who then responds personally by testing this language against its own experience, and then signals its reception to the rhetor. That this contribution is balanced is essential to the rhetorical view of language. Interpretation, on the other hand, or response implies that the reader acts on the text or the text produces a response in the reader.[14] "Each of these phrasings [interpretation, response], because it implies a single line of action by one separate element on another separate element, distorts the actual reading process. The relationship between reader and text is not linear. It is a situation, an event at a particular time and place in which each element conditions the other" (16). If we view the performance as such an event, then we may apply

Rosenblatt's theory of "transaction" to what happens between the audience and the character. As with the rhetor, the performer presents dramatic action to the audience who then responds personally by testing this activity against its own experience, and then signals its reception to the performer.

Silent rhetoric is especially demanding of the audience who is expected to interpret silent communication. We are meant to feel and share in the emotions when words are absent. In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, when Viola and Sebastian turn to discover the other twin is alive, we supply the emotions of joy and relief. In Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House*, when Helmer leaps up with the sudden hope that he may be able to convince Nora to remain with him, the audience hears only the abrupt slamming of the door. We share both, and perhaps simultaneously, Nora's intense frustration and resolve and Helmer's confusion and fear.[15] Each performance, we must remember, is a unique and often unpredictable event. Actor and audience recreate this event every time the door slams, and, together, they actively engage in a search for meaning. Just as Plato argued that to "seek truth" is the aim of good rhetoric, drama generates understanding and seeks truth when it induces the audience to participate.

Drama, like rhetoric, persuades when it communicates states of mind to the audience even if the assent has no practical outcome. This is to say that the persuasive potential of drama is not necessarily aimed at converting the audience to move from one belief system to another unless, of course, the drama is politically motivated. Rather, its intent is to grant the spectator an insight and to suggest choices – did Lear die of grief because he thought Cordelia was dead or did Lear die joyous because he

believed his precious daughter was alive? We do not know for certain and so we respond by feeling one way or the other or perhaps ambivalently. Beckerman wonders, "is Lear's frenzied reaction to filial ingratitude an action whose formal power absorbs us in a closed world of *King Lear* or does it reflect the cruelty of a world we inhabit?" (*Dynamics* 147). The playwright does not tell his audience what to think; he suggests a new perspective through dramatization. The audience is persuaded when they are engaged with the action, when they enter into a dialectic balanced by actual and imaginary action.

Aristotle's theory of persuasion can be applied to a twentieth-century understanding of the transactional relationship of rhetor and audience. As we have seen, Aristotle tells us that rhetors persuade others by three means: *logos*, whereby the rhetor appeals to the listener's reason; *pathos*, whereby the rhetor appeals to the emotions of the listener; *ethos*, whereby the rhetor's character appeals to and influences the listener. The rhetor will choose whichever means (all three or one or two exclusively) is most effective depending upon the audience addressed, the current circumstances, or the thesis presented. In drama, the playwright also chooses the most effective means to present action to her audience. Subject matter, for example, may provoke the audience to respond emotionally. Beckerman points out that *The Diary of Anne Frank* can exert a deeper effect in performance than its quality warrants. While the script is competently enough written, it lacks anything beyond a single dimension of sentimentality; however, the presentation, in Germany particularly, aroused a penetrating response that one might call "tragic" (136). The recognition of the horrors of World War II prepared our post-holocaust world to experience a deep

emotional response and intense sympathy for the young girl. In this case, the action of the play persuades the audience, via their emotions, to view unbelievable horror in a human perspective.

The playwright may choose to appeal to the reason and logic of the audience as in the example of Brecht who hopes to make his audience "critical." He explains:

> ...the epic theatre ...proclaims the slogan: 'Reason this side, Emotion (feeling) that.' It by no means renounces emotion. Least of all the sense of justice, the urge to freedom, and righteous anger: it is so far from renouncing these that it does not even assume their presence, but it tries to arouse or to reinforce them. The 'attitude of criticism' which it tries to awaken in its audience cannot be passionate enough for it. (227)

Brecht notes that although Mother Courage learns nothing at least the audience can learn something through objective observation. To describe the primacy of reason over emotion, Brecht compares the example of modern science, where the scientist must approach the experiment logically while admitting some emotion in her observational habits, to drama, where the playwright must create theatre which "appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason" (23). To do this, the playwright discovers the best means to present the material so that the audience is persuaded by the logic of the argument.

An appeal to the audience on the principle of goodness is also an option for the playwright. Aristotle writes that "It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes

nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (*Rhetoric* 25). We believe good men more readily than others, he argues, and this tends to be the case when exact certainty is impossible. Linda Kintz applies this rhetorical strategy to drama, but she interprets Aristotle's *ethos* to imply that, "..a certain concept of goodness connects the protagonist, who is a 'good man,' to the citizens in the audience who are 'like' him, this identification ensuing he merits their identification and sympathy"(63-64).[16] Like Kintz, who understands the playwright's use of *ethos* as a strategy to engage, or persuade, her audience, Kenneth Burke argues that unless the audience identifies with the protagonist the play will fail.

One of Burke's most famous studies is his analysis of Antony's address to the mob in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Burke was interested in how an audience responds to the characters. Why do we respect Caesar and not Brutus or Cassius? Certainly Caesar did not fit Elizabethan standards of heroism. Burke asks, "who could identify with such an undistinguished person?" And yet, Burke firmly believes the play will not succeed unless we do. Burke answers his question:

> For such reasons as these you are willing to put a knife through the ribs of Caesar. Still, you are sorry for Caesar. We cannot profitably build a play around the horror of a murder if you do not care whether the murdered man lives or dies. So we had to do something for Caesar -- and you would be ashamed if you stopped to consider what we did. I believe we made Caesar appealing by

> proxy. That is: I, Antony, am a loyal follower of Caesar;
> you love me for a good fellow, since I am expansive,
> hearty, much as you would be after not too heavy a meal,
> and as one given to pleasure. I am not likely to lie awake
> at night plotting you injury. If such a man loves Caesar,
> his love lifts up Caesar in your eyes. (*Philosophy* 66-67)

Burke argues that *ethos* is so indispensable a feature of the protagonist that in its absence it needs to be attributed by proxy through another character associated with the protagonist. Whether or not we read the play in the same manner as Burke his point is clear: we look for reasons to identify with the protagonist. However, it does not follow that the playwright is wholly dependent upon what Kintz describes as the "structuration of sameness as a foundation for empathy" (64). Aristotle does not say that ethos means identification or sameness. Certainly, Othello does not see Iago as the "same" nor does he identify in any way with his officer. Yet Iago most certainly and most fatally persuades Othello. I argue that Othello believes "honest" Iago to be a "good man" and his personal character renders him credible in Othello's eyes.[17] The audience, of course, knows differently. They are privy to Iago's asides that reveal his inner thoughts. The audience, on the other hand, believes Cordelia to be credible because her asides reveal how she struggles with her conscience – should she satisfy her father's wish for sophistry or her own need for truth? Shakespeare depends upon Aristotelian *ethos* as a mode to persuade his audience to view Cordelia as honest, "good" and credible.

Finally, drama promotes values and produces action when, like rhetoric, it generates social knowledge. In 1931, Kenneth Burke wrote his first book, *Counter-Statement*, to dispel the view that art and literature were merely ornamental. He argued that the verbal arts including literature, speech, pedagogy, and drama affect both social knowledge and political decision-making. Life, for Burke, is not like drama but rather life is drama and people's actions are themselves symbolic actions. Styan argues that the value of a play lies in the elusive change produced in its audience. He describes how the stage, over all other artistic media,

> has the power to harness the ingredients of human imagination for community experience, guiding an audience towards moral or religious consciousness, inducing a compassionate or satirical attitude, educating it through discussion or dialectic, encouraging the celebration of its past or present, persuading it to the balance and composure of dramatic objectivity (239).

While I do not view all drama as political, I argue that all theatre is a social experience and the audience who come to the drama come to explore, to be aroused and to piece together the many variables that contribute to meaning.[18] Social knowledge, the kind that produces action and change, grows out of the information that the audience sees and hears, creates and destroys.

If, as I have intimated, the theatrical experience is a dialogue between character and audience, it is essential to know what constitutes the audience's side of the conversation. What role does the audience play, and how is it significant for the feminist spectator?

Susan Bennett discusses how the audience need not maintain the passive role that traditional theatre assumes. When they are consulted and involved in the structuring of the theatrical event, they are encouraged to translate their reading of that event into action. "Cultural systems, individual horizons of expectations, and accepted theatrical conventions all activate the decoding process for a specific production, but, in turn, the direct experience of that production feeds back to revise a spectator's expectations, to establish or challenge conventions, and, occasionally, to reform the boundaries of culture"(207).

Bennett's view is similar to Judith Fetterley's concept of the "resisting" reader. Fetterley argues that all literature is political and that it insists on its universality at the same time that it defines that universality in specifically male terms" (xii). The female reader finds herself participating in an experience from which she is excluded. She is, more importantly, asked to identify with a selfhood that defines itself in opposition to her; she is required to identify against herself (xii). The fact that women are taught to identify with the male point of view and adopt male values, one of whose central principles Fetterley points out is misogyny, is relevant to this study. To re-read silence on the stage as a deliberate rhetorical strategy is to question and expose the representation of women as passive and unthinking. Fetterley urges readers to resist this conventional habit of "reading" in male terms, that is, not to identify as readers with the masculine experience and perspective, which is presented as the human one (xxi).

The Latin American director Augusto Boal agrees with feminists when he suggests that the role of the audience need not be restricted by Aristotelian and

Brechtian theory. According to Boal, Aristotle intimidated the audience by imposing a fixed and knowable world upon them, which encouraged passive response. While Brecht discouraged passive response in his theatre, Boal believes that Brecht's rejection of catharsis leads to tranquility and acceptance. In Boal's "theatre of the oppressed," the spectator no longer delegates power to the actor but "himself assumes the protagonistic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change" (Carlson 475). Boal's efforts to liberate the audience from the traditional role of passive receptor to one of involvement exemplify what Bennett refers to as the "contemporary emancipation of the spectator." The audience is invited to play a number of different roles. This is essential for the spectator who is asked to re-interpret women's silence in traditional drama as a deliberate strategy of resistance to male authority.

Another form of transaction between audience and actor occurs when the actors, in turn, attune themselves to the different audiences they encounter. Philip McGuire suggests that actors may emphasize a certain gesture in response to one audience, playing it down for another, and perhaps omitting it entirely for a third. "The exchange, the interaction, between performers and audience determines the most precise features of the exact state that a play assumes during a particular performance. That interaction is inescapable, and its outcome is equally unpredictable" (149). The actor speaks to the audience and it is to the actor that the audience responds. It is this interaction between audience and actor that generates the dialectical activity of the drama.[19] The audience watching Shakespeare's plays, for example, are often acknowledged and, on occasion, are summoned to participate in

the action. At the conclusion of *The Tempest*, Prospero addresses the audience seeking its help to return him to Naples and thus release him from his "bands" of fantasy through their applause. The conclusion to Shakespeare's play is multi-layered in meaning. Is the actor asking the audience to be released from his role? Is Prospero asking the audience to release him from the island? In any case, the point is that the character acknowledges the audience and enlists their help.

The audience also participates in the dramatic relationship with their silence. It is normally expected that the audience will silently witness the action. If this silence is broken through hissing, talking, or an early exit, it usually indicates disapproval or a lack of commitment to the interactive nature of the dramatic relationship. The silence of a responsive audience is not one of passive observance but rather, as in the case of the rhetorical listener, one of active attendance.

Finally, silent rhetoric is a perpetual invitation to interpret. This, Stout claims, constitutes the life of a living literature (3). Silence as a rhetoric addresses the audience when it invites them to interpret the play by perceiving more than merely what is spoken, and to think about how silence communicates. The playwright provokes the audience to think and hear the roar that lies on the other side of the silence.

When silence is used in this capacity it usually bears directly on major concerns of the play such as the issue of peoples' need to develop relationships, as in Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, or the horrors of modern history in *Mother Courage*. Brecht's play invites the audience to alienate themselves and to reconsider a variety of social institutions including war, which is presented as "business-as-usual." Although

Kattrin is a speechless victim of the war, she is not afraid to communicate by taking her drum to the roof and beating it to warn the town that the soldiers are coming. It is a rhetorical strategy through which Brecht provokes his audience to consider the silencing effects of war and one victim's unrelenting need to be heard.

In Albee's *The Zoo Story*, the pauses are a form of silent rhetoric as they provoke the audience to consider the human need for meaningful relationships and communication. Jerry explains to Peter how he unsuccessfully tried to develop a relationship with a dog:

> I was hoping for the dog to be waiting for me. I was.....well, how would you put it.....enticed?.....fascinated?.....no, I don't think so.....heart-shatteringly anxious, that's it; I was heart-shatteringly anxious to confront my friend. (33)[20]

The silence that punctuates Jerry's text communicates his emotional, intellectual, and physical need for social intercourse. He seeks the precise word to describe his feelings in hope of relating to his listener, Peter. His pauses persuade the audience because he is so deliberate in his efforts to first discover and generate self-understanding, and then to articulate his exact feelings. The playwright's use of silent rhetoric as a dramatic strategy invites the audience to participate by thinking about important issues and by provoking the spectator to reconsider preconceived social notions about war or human relationships or love.

CONCLUSION

Re-reading women's use of silence on the stage as a rhetorical strategy has an important implication for women because it challenges notions of women as passive. When the playwright employs silence as passive aggression, for example, it highlights conditions of inequality and denial of personhood that women have long experienced. We will see how Oscar Wilde uses silence as a form of resistance when he presents Salomé as Other. When defined as Other, woman becomes object to man's subject and is thereby silenced. "She is the emptiness that awaits the creating Word. She is made the ally, in her silent objecthood, with 'unconsciousness and, finally, death'"(Stout 9). Salomé, we shall see, is a rhetorical strategist who uses her silence as a weapon against her repressor. Cordelia, too, is a "passive aggressor," one who resists Lear's authority to demand his daughter's self-surrender. Lear tells us that Cordelia's voice was soft and low, "an excellent thing in a woman." Her soft and low voice stands in sharp contrast to Lear's raging bellow and her sisters' firmly articulated empty rhetoric.

In addition to highlighting the significance of silencing on marginalized groups, silence as a rhetorical strategy of resistance highlights the playwright's own resistance to conventional dramatic forms. Such collaborative groups as the Anna Project[21] resist the patriarchal tradition of one author, one director, and an audience whose function is to observe only. We shall see in Part Two how Oscar Wilde places a female (Salomé) in the role of decadent artist that resists every Victorian notion of propriety. As a homosexual in a heterosexual society, Wilde himself was confronted with social forces of propriety which he was compelled to resist. His play, written in

French, bears the mark of his resistance to all things related to his narrow society. We will see how the rhetoric of silence is a strategy of performance that operates as a means to mark and organize a structure of resistance to logocentrism and the denial of women as speaking subjects.

Silence comes in a myriad of forms. The plays will demonstrate how silent response may be expressed in the form of innuendo and intimation, pauses, hesitation, reticence and bivalent speech that implicitly conveys more than it states. Silence comes in the form of such dramatic acts as observing, listening, thinking, meditating, dreaming, and refusing to respond to the speech of others. The dramatist employs such dramatic action as soliloquies where we are presented with an inner dialogue revealing the protagonist's struggle with conscience and reason. In the next chapter, the discussion of Cordelia exemplifies how we may read her silence, including her soliloquies as rhetoric.

NOTES

[1] Plato opens dramatically with an introduction to the scene, the mood and to memorable literary characters such as Phaedrus, Alcibiades and Thrasymachus in *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*. In *Phaedrus*, Plato sets the scene far from the city streets and outside the confines of four walls. It is an idyllic setting, under a spreading plane tree and next to a flowing river. Phaedrus, who leads Socrates away from the society of the city to this natural setting, marvels at his teacher who gives the "effect of a stranger and no native" to the country. It is significant that Plato, the 'playwright', locates his character, the teacher, in an unfamiliar setting because it underscores the whole dialectical process as one of discovery through reviewing, questioning old assumptions, seeking answers and posing new questions. This dialectical process of discovery exemplifies how rhetoric may be defined as a tool of communication. In the plays we will be discussing, we shall see how silent rhetoric functions as such a tool for the protagonists and for the playwrights whose plays are intelligent discussions of a serious problem.

[2] Elin Diamond points out that the link between mimesis and conservative tendencies in dramatic realism has resulted in efforts by most scholars to "shear off mimesis from the cruder connotations of imitation – fakeness, reproduction, resemblance"(*Mimesis* iii). She notes that in Stephen Halliwell's new translation of the *Poetics* he consistently prefers 'representation' to 'imitation.'

[3] Feminists, for example, question the role that Aristotle's *Poetics* plays in promoting the rigid hierarchy of power which limits women's participation in theatrical creation. Aristotle's concept of mimesis, for example, has proved troublesome for feminists because it is often seen as a defining feature of the theatre. The stage employs sign systems such as language, gesture, costume, and setting which are borrowed from a social reality based to imitate "an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself"(*Poetics* 229). Marilyn Frye claims that it is difficult for the theatre to avoid mirroring what she calls "the politics of reality" which she argues is based on a male model. She writes: "insofar as the phallocratic scheme permits the understanding that women perceive at all, it features women's perceptions as passive, repetitive of men's perception, nonauthoritative. Aristotle said it outright: Women are rational, but do not have authority"(165). Frye notes that the social and cultural reality that surrounds theatre is informed by such a politics of reality. Sue-Ellen Case and Jill Dolan also demonstrate their suspicion that Aristotle's *Poetics*, upon which our Western dramatic tradition is founded, does not allow for the full participation of women in the theatrical spectacle – on the stage, behind the curtain, or in the audience. Dolan argues, for example, that in the dominant American theatrical practice all of the material aspects of theatre both on the stage and behind the curtain (text, lights, costumes) are manipulated so that the performance's meanings are intelligible to a particular spectator. This ideal spectator is assumed to be white, middle-class, heterosexual, and male, and for whom, she argues, every aspect of theatrical production from choice of plays, of director, of theatre space is determined

to reflect and perpetuate the ideal spectator's ideology (1).

[4] Performance may generally refer to any human performative activity such as a court room trial, a religious ritual, or a classroom lecture. Drama, theatre and performance are related activities and Mark Fortier suggests that we think of the relationship in terms of drama as a part of theatre and theatre as a part of performance (13). Josette Féral makes a distinction between theatre – a narrative, representational structure that inscribes the subject in the symbolic, in "theatrical codes" – and performance, which undoes these "codes and competencies," allowing the subject's "flows of desire to speak" (178). While performance art could very well include silent rhetoric, for this study I limit the discussion of silent rhetoric to that which occurs as part of performance in a theatre.

[5] Beckerman makes a point of differentiating between "imagined act" and "mimesis" or "imitation." The concept of imitation, he feels, is so closely linked to model and reflection that he chooses to avoid it altogether. Beckerman's "imagined act" includes both imitative and constructed acts because, he says, even in its most documented state drama subjects historical experience to reconstruction through the operation of the imagination.

[6] Beckerman explains that "dramatic activity is an activity of appearance, or illusion" (22). The actor is creating an illusion of actuality when she acts. She is not actually cleaning a table or professing her love; she is playing a character who is cleaning or professing. The element of fiction is important because it introduces the crucial distinction between drama and other presentations such as circus performance or the real life drama of the court room.

[7] Theatre semiotics studies how meaning is produced in the theatre through the production of signs. Semioticians, such as Erika Fischer-Lichte, explain that a sign fundamentally consists of three nonreducible constituent elements: the sign-vehicle, its object, and its interpretant. The sign-vehicle may include the actor's activities that produce linguistic, paralinguistic, mimic, gestural, and proxemic signs. Signs may also be produced by: the actor's appearance including mask, hairstyle and costume; theatrical space including decoration, props, or lighting; and nonverbal acoustic signs such as sounds and music.

[8] Rhetoric, like stage speech, involves a gestural element. The transitions between unspoken and articulated thoughts imply an action of the mind that affects the character physically. Such physical acts as pausing, closing or rolling the eyes, shifting and fidgeting contribute to the audience's interpretation of the rhetor's articulated thoughts. For this reason I argue that rhetoric is comprised of a much more complex system of signification than has thus far been explored.

[9] In Elin Diamond's article "Brechtian Theory / Feminist Theory, Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism," she suggests an intertextual reading of key feminist topoi with

key topoi in Brechtian theory and proposes a theatre–specific feminist criticism which she names gestic criticism. Brecht's social gest, she explains, signifies a moment of theoretical insight into the culture which the play is dialogically reflecting and shaping. Diamond's thinking is particularly useful for me in my discussion of the audience and I will return to her article in the chapter on *Salomé*.

[10] I differ from Kane in my approach to silence on the stage. Kane views silent response and muteness as metaphors for solitary confinement, where "silence confirms man's inability or unwillingness to relate to others and his concomitant torture by exclusion"(24). It is my contention that we may read silent response as an alternative mode of communication where the character is not unwilling to relate to others but rather chooses silence as the most effective means of persuasion.

[11] I realize there is a fine line of distinction between becoming a new person and finding oneself. Finding implies a passive discovery of something that already exists, whereas becoming suggests a transformation or the creation of the person. The silent rhetor creates, not finds, her identity through discourse, thinking.

[12] This passage comes from II, ii. All citations from Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton & Co. 1997).

[13] I refer to the audience in the singular form and consequently use the feminine pronoun. My discussion, however, does not preclude a male audience.

[14] I use the term "reading" to refer to the process of interaction with and interpretation of dramatic characters, and not to the reading of a play text or novel.

[15] See Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences* where she illustrates possible strategies of reading/constructing the on-stage world of Ibsen's play.

[16] Kintz, who feels it is necessary to find an alternative to Aristotle, notes that the appropriate portion of goodness for a man is, of course, greater than that for a woman or a slave, and only the character who has a great capacity for goodness can appropriately express bravery, or activity. She quotes Aristotle when he professes that it would be inappropriate for a woman character to be manly or active. We shall see how Cordelia, who is a woman character, epitomizes goodness and yet she is not passive.

[17] Shakespeare utilizes all three of Aristotle's modes in his creation of Iago as a sophistic rhetor. For example: *Pathos* -- Iago preys on Othello's emotions; *Logos* -- Iago twists the truth and the evidence in order to supply Othello with logical proofs.

[18] Northrop Frye writes, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, "In our own day Bernard Shaw states in his early manifesto, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, that a play should be an intelligent

discussion of a serious problem"(286). I would like to differentiate between a "political" play and one which is an intelligent discussion. *King Lear*, in my view, is an intelligent discussion about a number of things such as the family or truth or blindness. It is not political in the sense that it attempts to persuade the audience to adopt a new social position and act upon those new beliefs.

[19] Although the interaction, on the stage, between the silent rhetor and other characters is relevant to the dialectical activity of the drama, my concern here centers on the theatrical audience.

[20] All citations from *The Zoo Story* come from: Albee, Edward. *Two Plays by Edward Albee: The American Dream and The Zoo Story*. New York: Signet Book, 1961.

[21] The Anna Project is a group of women: Suzanne Odette Khuri, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Banuta Rubess, Maureen White who collaboratively wrote the play *This Is For You, Anna*. It was first performed in 1983 as part of the Women's Perspective Festival.

CHAPTER 3

SILENT RHETORIC and AGENCY: CORDELIA as PARADIGM

If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more.

--- Jane Austen, *Emma*

Silence as a rhetorical strategy is a viable option for women because it operates to resist invisibility. As a strategy, silent response may function as a weapon, and the employment of such a strategy is not new as Stout notes, and it is not confined to playwrights[1]. Strategies of resistance are most often used to highlight the effects of silencing and the repression of women by a patriarchal social structure. The silent rhetors we shall examine are motivated to reclaim and to resist the loss of self-hood. They resist the narrow social roles they are traditionally expected to play and fulfill inner needs such as the maintenance of a sense of individuality and authenticity by developing strategies of silence.

Although silent response as a rhetorical strategy is not new, it remains an unremarked feature of familiar plays. In this chapter, I apply my rhetorical theory to a re-reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear* to show how Cordelia serves as a paradigmatic silent rhetor. As a traditional female character, Cordelia exemplifies how the repression of individual agency may lead to disastrous ends. Re-reading Cordelia's much debated act of resistance to her father's demand as silent rhetoric allows us to recognize silence as rhetoric and to understand how it functions in more recent drama.

Classical rhetoric developed as a system of language whereby individuals employ their resources – emotion, intellect, and will in order to communicate with one another. According to the classical tradition, the goal is to discover truth and generate knowledge in order to make intelligent and responsible choice possible. Cordelia exemplifies Plato's ideal rhetorician. To begin, she is a communicator who is interested in the discovery of truth and she is a thinker.

Not all rhetoricians are interested in the discovery of truth[2]. Plato argued against the use of rhetoric where ideas that are deemed as truth are used for unscrupulous purposes. Those who claimed to be rhetoricians by using a "shadow play of words" were artful deceivers who relied on the "superfluity of their wits" to meet ends which had little to do with truth or knowledge[3]. Communicators who were not guided by good reasons were named sophists.

This century has witnessed the success of too many demagogues whose diabolical rhetoric consisted of half-truths, specious arguments, and emotional appeals aimed at an audience willing to dispel reason out of fear. In the novel *1984*, George Orwell showed us the devastating effects of brainwashing, a form of dangerous rhetoric used for unsavory ends. Orwell also introduced us to "doublespeak" where rhetoric is used to deceive and terrify its audience. Such rhetoric can also be employed by the media to confuse rather than clarify meaning in a deliberate attempt to create a sensational or controversial situation and ultimately attract a greater audience. The potential power of rhetoric to persuade, influence, and alter belief for unfavorable purposes demands that we understand the principles of persuasive discourse so as to respond critically to the rhetorical language of others.

Wayne Booth discusses such uses of rhetoric as perversions. He refers to these perversions as unbalanced rhetorical stances. One example is "the pedant's stance." Here the emphasis is placed on the topic while disregarding the relationship of speaker and audience. Because the audience is ignored this "stance" lacks rhetorical purpose. Booth describes another perversion which springs from an undervaluing of the subject and an overvaluing of the audience so as to create pure effect – "how to win friends and influence people." He names this "the advertiser's stance" which, much like sophistic rhetoric, operates on the notion that stirring up the audience is an end in itself.

These corruptive rhetorical stances lack balance between the subject, the audience, and the speaker. "We all experience the balance whenever we find an author who succeeds in changing our minds. He can do so only if he knows more about the subject than we do, and if he then engages us in the process of thinking – and feeling – it through" (32). I concur with Booth that a great rhetorician is one who "presents us with the spectacle of a man passionately involved in thinking an important question through, in the company of an audience" (32). The silent rhetor is such a thinker. Cordelia is presented as a woman who is passionately involved in attempting to engage her father in a dialectical inquiry so that they may discover the meaning of love.

Plato insisted that dialectic is central to discourse. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke contends that the dialectical process "*absolutely must* be unimpeded, if society is to perfect its understanding of reality by the necessary method of give-and-take (yield-and-advance)" (Burke's emphasis 444). He describes

dictatorship as an imperfect medium, which functions on the premise that there are no vital questions still unanswered, and therefore dispenses with the assistance of vocal opposition. "Dictatorships, in silencing the opposition, remove the intermediary between error and reality. Silence the *human* opponent, and you are brought flat against the *unanswerable* opponent, the nature of brute reality itself"(444).

It is important to differentiate between the rhetorician who strategically uses silence in an effort to silence or control her opponent, and the silent rhetor I describe in this study who strategically uses silence in an effort to communicate and discover with her opponent a new truth. The silent rhetor I discuss does not use rhetoric for unscrupulous ends. Unlike Cordelia, however, Shakespeare's Iago is a highly successful rhetorician who uses silence as a strategy to control his opponent.

When Iago plans his attack on Othello, he understands that his most lethal weapon is his ability to manipulate not only language, but also silence. He knows how to incite curiosity and his discourse is speckled with innuendo and suggestive gaps that Othello is compelled to fill with his imagination. When Cassio and Desdemona are seen together, Iago mutters within Othello's hearing, "Hah? I like not that." (III.iii.33).[4] Of course Othello, who has already decided that, "Iago is most honest" (II.iii.7) becomes anxious to know exactly what Iago does not like. The conversation continues:

> *Iago.* Nothing, my lord: or if – I know not what.
>
> *Othello.* Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
>
> *Iago.* Cassio, my lord? No, sure I cannot think it,
>
> That he would steal away so guilty-like,

Seeing your coming. (III.iii.35-39)

Iago's utterance, "Nothing, my lord," differs from Cordelia's "Nothing, my lord," in that Cordelia is speaking exactly what she feels – that she does NOT want to say what her father wants to hear. Iago's response begs for the opportunity to say more. Othello's insecurity renders him dependent upon Iago's thinking, as he comments to Iago "I know thou'st full of love and honesty / And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath" (III.iii.123-124). How true! Iago is a thinker; he understands how silence can be more suggestive than words. He is always prepared to make use of every incident and occasion to represent himself as honest and reluctant to make accusations. In this instance, he manages to smear Cassio without actually accusing him of any wrongdoing. Iago's careful choice of words, "guilty-like," "steal away" implies that Cassio is guilty. The word "steal" may remind Othello that he stole Desdemona from her father and now, perhaps, she could be stolen from him. Iago's refusal to answer the Moor's questions leads Othello to thrash about in his imagination until he is so overwrought that his reason is laid asleep and his passions are ripe for more explicit manipulation (Howard 80).

While Iago employs silence as a manipulative rhetorical strategy for his own unsavory ends, the silent rhetor, exemplified in Cordelia, does not. She understands how dialectic, give-and-take, is central to persuasive discourse whose purpose is not to implant pre-conceived ideas or distort truth, as in the case of Iago, but rather, as Booth notes, to "fulfill one's nature as a creature capable of responding to symbolic offerings" (137). This infers that one's nature is not meant to be merely a passive receiver of symbols, but rather to be an active interpreter of such offerings.

In suggesting that dialectic is central to discourse, it is important to note that not all characters are rhetors. As Francis Fergusson points out, "Oedipus's change in ideas, for example, is not dialectic; it comes not from thinking but, 'from suffering and direct experience – a development of the man himself'" (Carlson 402). Although Oedipus is frustrated because he cannot perceive truth directly, he does not apply inductive reasoning, nor does he enter into a dialectical discussion with his wife. We do not witness Oedipus engaged in either a process of questioning and answering or in intrapersonal dialectic as a means of knowing. Oedipus is not a character being transformed or "becoming"; he is not a thinker, but rather motivated by pride and a belief in his omnipotence. Oedipus is a man governed by laws and, as such, seems to be victimized by the oracles. In other words, he does not govern his fate; Oedipus has no real choice. One wonders whether there is any "change in ideas."

Cordelia, however, is not governed by anyone other than her own sense of integrity. Oedipus finds himself at the end of the play when he acknowledges his discovery of the truth about his past by blinding himself. Unlike Oedipus, Cordelia does not find herself; she knows herself. Rather, throughout the entire play she is in the process of becoming. She moves from favored daughter to banished daughter and then to wife and Queen. She finally returns to England as daughter. Shakespeare shapes his entire drama around Cordelia's rhetorically symbolic act of resistance to Lear's demand for control of her discourse and her mind.

Lear, too, is not a rhetor. Although he asks a question of Cordelia, "...what can you say to draw a third more opulent than your sisters?" (I.i.76-77). Lear categorically refuses to enter into a dialogue when he refuses to accept or listen to her

response. He is a man accustomed to getting his own way and in the opening scene we witness how he expects his daughter to comply only and not to think. Indeed, after Lear and Cordelia are captured by Edmund, Lear still attempts to control the situation by suggesting that they live together in prison: "so we'll live/ And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh/At gilded butterflies..." (V.iii.11-13). Silent rhetors are thinkers. Although they may learn "from suffering and direct experience," their knowledge comes from the interpretative quality of their experience and from trust in the generative aspects of silence, intuition, and attentiveness to concepts of interconnectedness and reciprocity.

Cordelia is such a rhetor. She is a thinker. Cordelia is not passive, nor is she silenced. Rather, she is one who chooses silence as a rhetorical strategy. As creatures capable of verbal strategies which may be used or misused in acts of communication, rhetors are purposive agents. Purpose, for them, means individual conscious rhetorical aims that may be fulfilled through the application of appropriate strategies. As purposive agents, silent rhetors seek the power to achieve personal ends. A consideration of agency is important for a discussion of silent rhetors because the intentionalist dimension distinguishes between communicators who are silenced, communicators who use silence manipulatively, and those who choose silence as a rhetorical strategy.

Strategy, Mette Hjort reminds us, is indissociable from a concept of agency and subjective efficacy. In her study, *The Strategy of Letters*, Hjort develops "a pragmatics of literature that grasps the ways in which agents motivated by self-interest interact with other agents in literary contexts" (6). In undertaking a

philosophical and practical account of strategic action she develops "thin" and "thick" conceptions of the term. The thick concept of strategy necessarily involves conflict, interdependence, and self-interested motivational states. She notes that "it is important to remember that 'strategy' is a military term, and that warfare ultimately foregrounds the conflictual and self-interested dimensions of human existence, even when bloody actions are accompanied by a rhetoric of noble goals and intentions" (7). In the thin sense strategy may "refer to agents who pursue perfectly harmless goals in a deliberate manner that involves thinking cogently and carefully about others" (7).

Silent rhetors may pursue goals which appear to be "perfectly harmless" but, as we shall see, more often than not, their goals are driven by self-interest and what Hjort describes as an urgent need to articulate and discover through action their own authentic natures. Conflict arises when the agent is compelled to exercise her will and yet wishes to "think cogently and carefully about others." In this insistence her needs and resolve are in direct conflict with the wishes of others. As strategists in Hjort's thick sense, silent rhetors necessarily engage in action that is a result of a major conflict of interests.

Interdependence is a crucial component of strategy and of rhetoric. In both cases the outcome of the agent's or the rhetor's endeavor is directly related to the actions or the arguments brought forth by at least one other individual. In any strategic action "an agent's decision to match a certain means with a given end will be rational if and only if she takes into consideration the decisions that other agents may be expected to make" (Hjort 53). Rhetoric functions in a similar fashion. Dialectic relies on refutation and response as disputants move in a hierarchical progression

from an original position to a modification of this position and, hopefully, to a conclusion shared by each participant. Plato describes this move as one from an understanding of physical beauty to that of the eternal beauty or form in the mind of God. The interlocutor anticipates how the answer will unfold or where the next question may lead. Although dialectic seeks to create knowledge and is to be used as an instructional device and not to direct answers or thinking in a preconceived pattern, the dialogical method of constructing arguments and counter arguments involves the consideration of decisions (arguments) that the other agent (rhetor) may be expected to make.

Later we will see how the agent's inability to anticipate how her opponents will respond to a given situation will often result in strategic failure. Hjort writes that "strategic success is not necessarily ruled out by a commitment to a set of false beliefs about, for example, the adversary and the context of interaction. Pragmatic success is, however, a far more likely outcome on the scenario of true beliefs" (133).

Motivation is an important element in the discussion of strategy. What spurs the agent to engage in strategic action? Hjort writes that motivation is frequently provided "not by a process of rational deliberation but by some irrepressible passion that somehow invades and consumes the agent" (8). Cordelia is irrepressibly motivated to speak the truth. She strategically chooses to say "nothing" rather than something which is untrue.

The dramatic texts under study will show how the protagonist, while confronted with a course of action which affords different options, is a motivated strategist. She strategically chooses silence in order to advance her desired end. She is

passionately consumed, as we shall see, by a desire for truth, and as a rhetor she possesses the faculty of discovering silence as the available means of persuasion in her given situation. Edward Corbett notes that strategy is a good rhetorical word, because it implies the *choice* of available options to achieve an end (5).

Shakespeare's *King Lear* is paradigmatic of English Renaissance Drama in its model of paternal authority where available options for women are limited indeed. Lear exemplifies the Renaissance masculine attitude[5] toward women especially, women who attempt to assert themselves. In many instances, the father holds the power to dictate how his daughter, wife, or sister conducts her life. Carol Hansen writes that "at the slightest suggestion of her self-assertiveness, either in the choice of a husband or an independent life, deep suspicion is aroused and her virtue is called into question, releasing an avalanche of unbecoming epithets, or the threat of death" (11). In *King Lear*, we witness Cordelia defy the patriarchal attempt to subdue her personal and sexual authority through her refusal to "heave [her] heart into [her] mouth" (I.i.90).

Although Cordelia's presence on the stage is extraordinarily limited, considering how her short speech sets into motion the tragic events that follow, we witness her practice two of Plato's dialectical forms. First, when the audience becomes acquainted with Cordelia before her adoring father introduces her, we perceive her inner struggle with abstract questions such as the meaning of love and the difficulty attendant on its expression. Cordelia's aside allows the audience to be privy to her "philosophical conversation" in the form of intrapersonal dialectic. While

listening to the sophistic rhetoric of her sisters, Cordelia conducts this inner conversation as a method for sorting out truth from falsehood.

Plato privileges thinking as fundamental to rhetorical discourse. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates tells his listener that, "to form an opinion is to speak."[6] Speaking and thinking are inseparable if we are to speak responsibly, self-consciously and, in Cordelia's case, authentically. Discourse begins as we come to know our minds. Susan Miller describes the rhetor:

> Rhetoric in its first categorical manifestations is a matter of personal development, of someone fitting thought and utterance to purpose and situation. The orator cannot step outside himself but rather takes the outside into himself. He persuades others to his views, which are not singular or idiosyncratic but are publicly owned as the result nonetheless of his powers and practice. In this view of discourse, a speaker may be a mouthpiece, but always for his own chosen perspectives within a community's conventional views. He shares an internally constructed representation, his artistry. (129)

Miller's, like Plato's rhetor, is a thinker, and one for whom intrapersonal dialectic is a way of coming to know one's mind.

Cordelia's engagement with a second form of Platonic rhetoric, interpersonal dialectic, occurs when she first considers her response to Lear's demand to know, "Which of you shall we say doth love us most?" (I.i.49). Her initial strategy is to question herself: "What shall Cordelia speak?" (I.i.60). Her answer is quick and easy

because her true feelings of love are not in question. She does not ask the question we imagine her sisters must have posed for themselves: What do I have to tell the old man to impress him? To impress is not Cordelia's intent.

When her father, as a slow quiet rage begins to build, expresses his disbelief, "How, how, Cordelia! Mend your speech a little," (I.i.82), Cordelia responds, again, through questioning: "Why have my sisters husbands, if they say / They love you all?" (I.i. 88-89) Unfortunately, Lear does not answer her question and continue the conversation in an attempt to discover, together with his daughter, the meaning of love and to understand the depth of loyalty and honor Cordelia holds for him. As an exemplary Platonic rhetor, Cordelia meets her responsibility in the dialectical conversation that Lear initiates by not allowing the untrue and inexact statements of her sisters to go unchallenged.

One function of Platonic rhetoric is to generate, create, and discover knowledge. Cordelia attempts to generate this discovery by creating a new understanding of love for Lear. Her use of silence breaks with her father's expected response in the hope that, through discourse, they may discover new knowledge. Lear has posed a question that demands a fitting response. Cordelia knows only that she loves her father and that her sisters, the respondents, are false. Dialectic including refutation, she hopes, will lead to a modification of Lear's original position. That is, she invites a movement away from the competition that Lear has instigated toward a philosophical conversation about love.

Cordelia's argument is not that she holds no love for her father; rather, she asks him to reconsider the meaning of that love. In his recent study, *Modern*

Rhetorical Criticism, Roderick Hart outlines how contemporary rhetoric functions in human society. He explains how rhetoric is used to enlarge our thinking. In asking us to consider new perspectives the rhetor, like Belenky's "connected knower," encourages associations. Linkages, Hart claims, are the workhorses of persuasion. "It is interesting to note that persuaders rarely ask for major expansion of their listeners' worldviews. They imply that only a slight modification is in order. Persuasion moves by increments of inches" (16). Hart's chapter on rhetorical form, which refers to the shape of meaning and how ideas are linked together by listeners, includes a discussion of Goneril[7]. Unlike Cordelia, Goneril implicitly understands how ideas generate a host of associations, and she tells Lear that her love surpasses those things her father already prizes such as, "eye-sight, space, and liberty" (I.i.54). Her speech asks Lear to think of life's most precious qualities, "grace, health, beauty, honour" (I.i.56), and then to round out this mental picture by adding her love to the concoction. Cordelia, in contrast, asks her father to ponder her affection in the company of such unpleasant things as contracts, when she says, "I return those duties back as are right fit"(I.i.86), and jealousy, "that lord whose hand must take my plight"(I.i.90). Law, envy, and love -- hardly a comfortable mixture of ideas for a defensive old man (108). I concur with Hart that Lear is not interested in considering any new perspectives. I also read Cordelia as one who refuses to utilize rhetorical formulas. As Hart notes, "utilizing the formulas of speech requires a Faustian bargain: guaranteed social acceptability in exchange for independence of thought" (108). Cordelia will not opt for such a deal.

I understand Hart's concept of enlargement as another way to consider rhetoric as a tool that generates or constructs knowledge. By enlargement he means asking us

to equate things we never before considered equitable. Cordelia generates knowledge through association by linking the filial love which she owes her father with the love she expects to give to her husband. As far as Lear is concerned, love of father is not equal to love of a husband. Unlike his land, the love that he feels he is owed cannot be shared.

Another function of Platonic rhetoric is to promote values. Plato's rhetor possesses the four cardinal virtues which were upheld by the Greeks at that time: courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice. The first priority that underlies these virtues in Plato's dialogues is the moral and ethical intent. Courage, for example, is necessary when the rhetor must choose between arguments that may appeal to the multitude rather than to the "one." Plato's rhetors must be firm in their pursuit of truth, as opposed to "giving the audience pleasure in wrong and improper ways." (*Laws* 1256)

Cordelia, without a doubt, demonstrates extraordinary courage. As mentioned earlier, to challenge the authority of the father, during the Renaissance, was to risk death, certainly banishment. Shakespeare creates in Cordelia a model of courage as she makes the moral choice to remain true to her self and to her father. Charles Taylor differentiates between courage that is driven and that which is motivated by something higher. A man, for example, may be driven with some uncontrollable lust, or hatred, or desire for revenge, so that he runs into danger. This does not fit Taylor's criteria for a courageous man. Rather:

> courage requires that we face danger, feel the fear which is appropriate, and nevertheless over-rule the impulse to

> to flee because we, in some sense dominate it, because we are moved by something higher than mere impulse or the mere desire to live. It may be glory, or the love of country, or the love of some individuals we are saving, or a sense of our own integrity (*Human Agency* 25).

Cordelia's courage defines her as an agent, one with desires, purpose and the motivation to meet these ends.

Temperance is a vital virtue for the Platonic rhetor because she must display calmness and a moderation in difficult situations if she is to lead a discussion. Consequently, temperance may come into conflict with courage. "Pitted against each other, therefore, may be reticence versus recklessness, or calmness versus fury. Yet these apparent opposites must be blended and woven together in a society and, indeed, in the same soul in order to provide a proper balance of mutually restraining forces" (Golden 23). Cordelia courageously takes a leadership position in the dialectic on love and despite the fury which is engendered, she remains calm. In sharp contrast to Lear who assaults both Kent and his daughter in uncontrolled verbal rage, Cordelia remains respectful. Cordelia's temperance allows her to defend her position when in the presence of her suitors she requests of her father:

> ... that you make known
> It is no vicious blot, murther or foulness
> No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
> That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour,
> But even for want of that for which I am richer,

A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue

That I am glad I have not, though not to have it

Hath lost me in your liking. (I.i. 224-230)

Cordelia is successful as France decides that if Burgundy will not have her for lack of dowry, he will, and remarks that, "she is herself a dowry" (I.i.238).

Perhaps the noblest virtue for Plato is wisdom, for it is wisdom that Plato claims to be the highest goal in life. In the *Phaedrus* Plato gives the soul, "whose pursuit of wisdom has had no ulterior motive, whose search for love has involved the pursuit of wisdom" (502) the highest ranking. Golden notes that the philosopher further held that "the person who achieves knowledge or wisdom experiences the true meaning of what it is to be good; and it is he alone who rids himself of false opinions, becomes an expert in a chosen field, enjoys full happiness, and comes into the presence of the gods" (23).

Many would argue that Cordelia was not wise in her decision to challenge Lear's authority through her refusal to practice what she describes as, "that glib and oily art / To speak and purpose not" (I.i. 223-224). Taylor differentiates between Aristotle's "practically wise man (*phronimos*) who has the knowledge of how to behave in each particular circumstance which can never be equated with or reduced to a knowledge of general truths" (*Sources* 125), and Platonic wisdom which seeks knowledge of the eternal order. Aristotle's practical wisdom "is a kind of awareness of order, the correct order of ends in my life, which integrates all my goals and desires into a unified whole in which each has its proper weight" (*Sources* 125).

Cordelia seeks truth. She is not necessarily practical. Her world renders the practical approach of integrating all her "goals and desires into a unified whole in which each has its proper weight," impossible. She cannot be master of herself and speak freely because Lear will not allow her to stray from his dominion. To desire such self-mastery is equivalent to desertion. She can only hope to reason with her father so that together they may see what is right and what is true. Cordelia is a Platonic "lover of wisdom" for the pursuit of wisdom and truth is her goal. Seeking wisdom for Cordelia means to dissociate herself from false opinions. Her effort to reason with Lear rather than submit to his demand for declarations of ceremonial observance, regardless of their validity, forces Cordelia to strategically develop a discourse that Lear should understand. Cordelia dialectically discovers that she cannot engage in the false rhetoric of her sisters. This is her truth. She observes that the best means of persuasion is to say "nothing."

Aristotle writes in the *Rhetoric* that men honour most the just because it is useful to others in war and peace. "Justice is the virtue through which everybody enjoys his own possessions in accordance with the law; its opposite is injustice, through which men enjoy the possessions of others in defiance of the law" (57). Cordelia is just. She seeks not the possessions of others but rather truth, and by truth I mean her identity as a daughter who loves her father. Lear asks Cordelia, "What can you say to draw a third more opulent than your sisters? Speak" (I.i.76-77). Cordelia is not motivated to "win" the land; she is compelled to speak according to her "bond," her duty as a daughter. This does not mean to say that Cordelia rejects her rightful portion of land. It means that she will not lie in order to win her portion. To lie is

unjust. In this case it would mean "to enjoy the possessions of others in defiance of the law."

Hjort notes that 'strategy,' as a theoretical term is considered useful because it points to the warlike dimensions of human existence (5). Certainly Cordelia's world is militaristic. It is one that glorifies domination through war and conquest. It is a world of strategy. Indeed, the very nature of King Lear's failure to maintain control of his kingdom has proved problematic to critics for hundreds of years. How could such a successful military power strategically fail to maintain his domestic rule? A Platonic reading suggests that Lear was not wise. He did not seek truth, but rather, glory and an illusion of power. Furthermore, Lear lacked the self-awareness to understand Cordelia's plea for reason as a strategic option, despite the fact he approaches family matters in a militaristic fashion. Lear turns his home into a battlefield where Regan, Goneril, and Cordelia are posed to enter into rhetorical warfare for the most desirable portions of territory.

All three women must strategize as they are all agents motivated by self-interest. Their actions involve conflict as well as interdependence: that is, their self-interest is centered around the goal of achieving personal success at the expense of each other. Shakespeare's play revolves around a major conflict of interests. Lear desires ceremony, glory, and respect; Regan and Goneril share a desire for territory and power; Cordelia seeks truth, honor, and perhaps her share of the pie. Although they all seek recognition, the conflict grows out of the differing self-interested motivational states of the four protagonists and the impossibility of a cooperative achievement of their goals. If Regan and Goneril are successful, then Lear loses all

his power. If Cordelia were to succeed in convincing her father to reason, the outcome would be the exposure of Regan and Goneril as self-serving liars. Lear cannot win because his desires conflict with the older daughters' wishes to take his control, and the younger daughter's wish for truth. Lear does not want truth; he wants to enhance his own self-concept. Regan and Goneril are willing to consider their father's need to preserve this self-concept, as a father deserving of unlimited love and subservience from his daughters, because it serves them well. They are motivated to compete for his attention as a means of increasing their own wealth.

In reference to the strategist, Hjort notes, "there are, of course, many complicated situations in which interdependence, conflict, and cooperation combine," (7). Shakespeare's four protagonists, as strategists, are not exempt from the notion that their success depends upon the failure of others. "Strategic action is what a given agent engages in when she both desires to bring about a certain state of affairs and perceives the realization of this end as a source of conflict" (55). Cordelia must strategize because her desires conflict with the others; she desires to answer truthfully. She finds herself in a conflictual situation because she must "follow" her sisters. How would Goneril and Regan have responded if Cordelia had answered first? Perhaps the game would have been played very differently.

As it is, Cordelia cannot divorce herself from the interactive element. "The best course of action for each player depends on what the other players do" (Hjort 6). Goneril's decision to act is dependent upon Lear's demand. Regan's actions are dependent on the decisions of Goneril. Lear's fatally negative reaction to Cordelia is, in part, a result of her sisters' declarations. Lear expected Cordelia, his "joy," in

competition with her sisters, to overwhelm him with sophistic rhetoric. Cordelia's response is clearly dependent upon the decisions made by Regan and Goneril. We witness Cordelia's inner debate as her social self and her central self vie for power.

This inner struggle manifests itself not only orally but also physically.[8] The actor who portrays Cordelia must make her emotional, her intellectual and her physical characteristics visible in order for the audience to understand the intellectual and emotional tug of war that Cordelia experiences. In order to interpret Cordelia's silence as rhetoric, the audience must see her devotion to her father and her determination to express filial love in her own way. Cordelia's response to her father's question, "which of you shall we say doth love us most," serves as an example:

> Good my Lord.
>
> You have begot me, bred me, loved me. I
>
> Return those duties back as are right fit,
>
> Obey you, love you and most honor you.
>
> Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
>
> They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
>
> That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
>
> Half my love with him, half my care and duty :
>
> Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
>
> To love my father all. (I.i.84-93)

The audience knows Cordelia's mind as we have been privy to her intrapersonal dialogue in the form of a soliloquy. Her speech to her father reflects this thinking and

it communicates her willingness to discuss her love. It communicates her honesty and her integrity – two important qualities for one about to profess her feelings. But it also communicates her unwillingness to adopt formulas of love, the sort of ceremonial expression which is repeated daily to Lear by his servants and followers and used by her sisters as proof of their devotion. Cordelia communicates her unwillingness to be manipulated and coerced. The organization of her argument dictates how she will deliver her answer and the gestures that attend such a response.

Cordelia does not answer her father's question. Instead she lists the things her father has done for her. In opening the discussion this way she diverts the attention from what she feels for her father to what her father feels for her as expressed by the fulfillment of his duties. Cordelia's emphasis on "duties" moves the discussion of love away from the expressions of infatuation and adoration that her sisters have professed to an expression of parental love. The language is not romantic, and absent are words such as "dear," "precious," "grace," "beauty," and "joy" which filled the speech of Regan and Goneril. Cordelia addresses her father only (unlike her sisters whose attendant husbands stand to benefit from their wives' performance) and so visual contact is concentrated on him. Her language is deliberate and she is presented as determined and confident in her decision to say "nothing."

There is a transition in the next two lines as she demands a question of her father. Cordelia's tone is now challenging and defensive. Posing a question places her in a new position of authority as the audience waits for Lear's response.

In the last two lines Cordelia ends on a note of resolve and shifts the attention from what she has not said to what her sisters have professed. She appears justified in

not professing her love as demanded and her tone is assertive and determined. Cordelia is very careful not to say she will never love her father like her sisters but rather that she will never marry like her sisters.

Cordelia's speech reflects her mind and contributes to the communicative power of what she does not say – that she truly, honestly loves her father more than "words can wield the matter" (I.i.53). Cordelia's single word, "nothing," as well as the gap left by her refusal to "heave her heart into her mouth," reveals her "subjective personal state," and a determination to be true. The lines invite gestures that have the potential to express her determination and resolve not to give in to the pressures for outward conformity. As Brecht argues, the actor playing Cordelia must take care how she delivers this word. Cordelia is determined to speak the truth; she is not acting out of a need to rebel or be contrary, and if "nothing" is spoken with a tone of sarcasm or screamed in anger, Cordelia's response will not, as Brecht notes, "emphasize the entire complex." If Cordelia screams at her father, it is likely that the audience will feel differently about Lear and perhaps view the king as somewhat justified in his decision to banish his youngest daughter from his sight. If the audience is not as shocked as Kent by Lear's outburst and does not view Lear as mad in his ravings, the play does not hold the same meaning. Cordelia's one-word response is meant, in a sense, to explain the drama. It signals a world turned upside down, where expressions of love as spectacles are valued over sincere emotions.

Most relevant to a study of the silent rhetor is Hart's function of rhetoric as a tool which empowers (by empower I mean simply to enable). Hart reminds us that, above all, rhetoric encourages flexibility which, in turn, provides options: to address

one listener or several; to mention an idea or avoid it; to say something this way and not that way; to tell all one knows or only just a bit; to repeat oneself or to vary one's responses; to speak loud or to remain silent. "Social power.... often derives from rhetorical strength. Grand ideas, deeply felt beliefs, and unsullied ideologies are sources of power too, but as the philosopher Plato told us, none of these factors can be influential without a delivery system, without rhetoric" (17). Rhetoric functions as a flexible tool to allow for the communication of deeply felt beliefs. Cordelia feels deeply about her commitment to her father. She loves him but cannot manipulate her feelings and words as Regan does in the following:

> .....that I profess
> Myself an enemy to all other joys
> Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
> And that I am alone felicitate
> In your dear highness' love. (I.i.64-68)

Cordelia cannot disclaim the love and sensual pleasure she anticipates giving to her future husband who happens to be waiting outside. Regan, on the other hand, is professing to be hostile to all other pleasures because she knows the higher joy of loving and being loved by her father. Cordelia uses rhetoric as a tool to articulate, which means, according to Taylor, "to shape our sense of what we desire or what we hold important in a certain way" (*Agency* 36). Rhetoric empowers Cordelia to become an agent who evaluates, who makes choices and maintains her convictions. Cordelia insists on shaping her own authentic identity.

Strong evaluation, Taylor tells us, is not just a condition of articulateness about preferences, but also about the quality of life, the kind of beings we are or want to be. This is closely connected with the notion of identity. Taylor explains:

> Our identity is therefore defined by certain evaluations which are inseparable from ourselves as agents. Shorn of these we would cease to be ourselves, by which we do not mean trivially that we would be different in the sense of having some properties other than those we now have - which would indeed be the case after any change, however minor - but that shorn of these we would lose the very possibility of being an agent who evaluates: that our existence as persons, and hence our ability to adhere as persons to certain evaluations, would be impossible outside the horizon of these essential evaluations, that we would break down as persons, be incapable of being persons in the full sense. (*Agency* 34-35)

The silent rhetor, like Cordelia, is an agent who chooses. She is motivated to shape an identity which is consistent with her needs and desires. She exemplifies, as Lanham describes, the symbiotic relationship of the two theories of knowledge -- serious and rhetorical.

Cordelia teaches us how we may read silence as a rhetorical strategy and serves as a model for the study of female protagonists in twentieth-century drama. The playwrights employ silence as a form of action to reveal character and invite audience participation. Their protagonists are women who employ silent rhetoric as a

means to re-create themselves as agents capable of independent thought and action, who resist the male appropriation of their identities as thinking subjects.

NOTES

[1] Immemorial generations of women, especially wives, have used silence as a weapon, silence and various behavioral tropes of silence – mocking submissiveness, unresponsiveness, exaggerated passivity, particularly exaggerated unresponsiveness and passivity in bed: these have been the most effective (often the only) weapons in the arsenal"(18). Stout describes such techniques as withdrawal and refusal to participate as passive aggression. She points out that by using such weaponry women have often, in small ways, got what they wanted. I realize that what occurs on the stage cannot simply be regarded as an extension of everyday life. Although there is interdependence between stage reality and everyday reality they are not identical. However, drama, theatre, and other performance genres like film are embedded in social culture and have a complex relation to the world of existing values. Behavior, actions, and speech taken from the everyday contexts of living operate to create and to understand behavior in the fictional world of the play.

[2] By truth I do not mean there is a universal truth that the rhetor seeks to discover. The silent rhetor seeks self-truth. Charles Taylor explains that each person has an original way of being human: "There is a certain way of being human that is *my* way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for *me*" (*Modernity* 29). In order to know this truth of what is to be human I must be in touch with myself. I must, as Taylor notes, listen to my inner voice and resist fitting my life to the demands of external conformity. He says that we cannot find the model to live by outside ourselves, only within. This self-truth is something that only the silent rhetor can discover and articulate. In articulating it she defines herself and realizes a potentiality that is properly her own (29).

[3] See Plato's *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Theaetetus* and *Laws* for further discussion of sophistry. James L. Golden explains how Plato is often considered an enemy of rhetoric because of his frequently expressed concerns about the way that rhetoric was practiced in his day (17).

[4] All citations from the play *Othello* are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton, 1997).

[5] In her book, *Women as Individual in English Renaissance Drama*, Carol Hansen notes that "the masculine code, a psychological mind set based on male bonding which often reaches pathological proportions, should, however, be distinguished from the legal code which all men must ultimately adhere to (80). She also reminds us that not all men share in this attitude toward women. For example, France and Burgundy, in *King Lear*, differ in their assessment of Cordelia as a prize. It should be noted that this "masculine code" is being contested in the period. See, for example, V. Comensoli's *Household Business*, for a recent overview.

[6] See James Hikins, "Plato's Rhetorical Theory: Old Perspectives on the Epistemology of the New Rhetoric," *Central States Speech Journal*, 32 (Fall 1981), 160-76. His study outlines a Platonic theory of discourse whose paradigmatic form is intrapersonal.

[7] Hart's chapter, "Analyzing Form," discusses Cordelia as a rhetorician. He argues that Cordelia is a radical, one who stands on personal principle and her outrage in rejecting the formulas of love render her less a persuader than a critic. Hart points out that "sadly, critics almost never please kings" (107).

[8] Cordelia's gestures should articulate her thinking and emphasize what Brecht calls the "entire complex." Stage speech and literary speech, Bernard Beckerman explains, differ in that stage speech leaves gaps to be filled in by the mental and gestural expression of the actor. In order to present the protagonist's action of the mind the actor must make both an internal and external adjustment. "Vocally, the adjustment may emerge in shifts of timbre, rhythm, force; gesturally, through shifts in degrees of energy, a turn of the head, a change of visual focus, or any other number of ways in which the performer conveys the inner action of the imagination (*Dynamics* 234).

PART TWO

SPEAKING BODIES: THE LANGUAGE of RESISTANCE in TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEATRE

Silence can be a plan
rigorously executed

the blueprint to a life

It is a presence
it has history a form

Do not confuse it
with any kind of absence

---Adrienne Rich

Recent feminist theory has linked together concepts of the body, subjectivity and language. Discussions of theatre and performance art, especially women's performance art which is derived from the relationship of women to the dominant system of representation, benefit from such feminist critique. For example, in her study of tragedy, Linda Kintz points out that the generic requirements of Greek tragedy continue to produce a dramatic and theoretical discourse that in many ways requires there be no female agency, since it presupposes the masculinity of both the protagonist and the theorist (1).[1] In other words, the legitimate speaking subject is masculine.

As Rita Felski has argued, the nature of the relationship between gender and language is determined by structures of power, exemplified by institutional frameworks which serve to legitimate and to privilege certain forms of discourse traditionally reserved for men – public speaking, academic writing, and, I would add, prophesying. She writes that the generalized assertion that women are automatically excluded or absent from a repressive, male language ignores both the flexible, innovative, and creative capacities of language itself and particular instances of the

richness and complexity of language use by women (62). If the legitimate speaking subject is male and most public discursive forms are reserved for men (in the opening scene Cordelia and her sisters speak only in reponse to their father's questions), then we must examine other forms of communication that females are likely to employ if we hope to theorize the female as a speaking subject.

Subjectivity implies the presence of a thinking subject. I do not assume that there exists a notion of the self as a pre-given, inert, separate, and pure identity to be discovered, as Kintz puts it, by tearing away, like the heart of an onion, all the outside layers imposed by culture: "My 'I' is a signifier for another signifier. In this construction of subjectivity, nothing is the subject's 'own,' its 'proper' self, its property – not even its 'instincts' or drives, which have been culturally inscribed as desires" (108). Although human subjects are created through social and linguistic structures, we have to remember that structures themselves are only constituted through the actions of social agents who act upon and modify those structures through the reflexive monitoring of their actions (Felski 57). In other words, human subjects are agents of change. While Cordelia does not possess a fixed, "'proper' self," she understands that in order to create herself as a thinking subject she must initiate the process with a concept of her self which she believes to be "essential." I conceive the subject to be a thinking, speaking agent. In this study, the protagonists, Salomé, Antigone, and Philomele are subjects-in-process who understand the fundamental relation of thinking to language in the generation and discovery of knowledge. To speak, even if in what Bakhtin describes as "internally persuasive discourse," is to act.

Language is central to subjectivity because, as Emile Benveniste argues, it is language that allows the subject to posit himself as "I," as the subject of the sentence. "Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as I in his discourse" (225). Benveniste explains that "the basis of subjectivity is in the exercise of language. If one really thinks about it, one will see that there is no other objective testimony to the identity of the subject except that which he himself thus gives about himself" (226). Thus the subject is constructed in language. The silent rhetors in this study are all compelled to discover a form of communication in order to construct themselves as subjects. They use their bodies as sign-systems to express their resistance to powerlessness and the male appropriation of their identities as speaking, thinking subjects.

Consideration of the body as communicative is not new. Certainly female victims of rape have been charged with "asking for it" through the messages they send with their bodies – the way they walk, or talk, or sit, or stand, or smile, and the clothes they wear: the see-through blouse, the tight skirt. Posture and gesture, for example, not only enhance a verbal message but are capable of sending messages that assert one's authority, express one's emotive state, or present a different "self," one which conflicts with the audience's expectations.[2] Kintz claims that bodily script is read prior to any analysis of a woman's speech. "Female bodies as visual symbols will signify *before* women's speech does, just as 'blackness' will anticipate the African-American subject who speaks words that otherwise are indistinguishable from the words of a white subject" (113).

Theories of the body as sites of symbolic representation can illuminate the importance of the body for the stage and in performance. Jeanie Forte, writing about the debates over the use of the female body in performance art, has argued that "through women's performance art, the body speaks both as a sign and as an intervention into language; and it is further possible for the female body to be used in such a way as to foreground the genderisation of culture and the repressive system of representation" (254). In Salomé's dance her body is a sign which participates in the linguistic emergence of the subject because language is the crux of subjectivity. The subject, Catherine Belsey argues, is "the site of contradiction, and is consequently perpetually in the process of construction, thrown into crisis by alterations in language and in social formation, capable of change. And in the fact that the subject is a process lies the possibility of transformation" (65). In the process of becoming, the subject uses language (rhetoric) to create or maintain a concept of the "central self". As Lanham notes, "the concept of a central self, true or not, flatters man immensely. It gives him an identity outside time and change that he sees nowhere else in the sublunary universe"(7). For this reason, Lanham suggests that, "the Western self has from the beginning been composed of a shifting and perpetually uneasy combination of *homo rhetoricus* and *homo seriosus*, of a social self and a central self. It is their business to contend for power"(6).

Belsey describes the "crisis of subjectivity" which is set into motion at the moment of entry into the symbolic order embodied in the mode of performance. We can apply Belsey's theory to a reading of Salomé's dance. When she performs, Salomé is seen as both subject and object – subject of the dance, her text, and object

of Herod's gaze. This points to what Belsey describes as a disruption of the unified subject which is the source of meaning and action. Salomé's new position of subject places Herod in the uncomfortable position of object – he is now the object of Salomé's attention. In this example, it is Herod who experiences the crisis of subjectivity and it is unlikely that his experience presents any possibility for change. What is useful for my study, however, is the concept of the subject as continuously in the process of construction.

We shall see how Salomé, Antigone, and Philomele are female rhetors who use their bodies to create themselves as subjects and to resist the prescribed roles that patriarchy affords them. Salomé's dance is a language that constructs her new subjectivity by asserting ownership of her body and her desire. Antigone uses her body as a sign system to say "No" to a life of accommodation and to assert ownership of her mind. Philomele uses her body to express her resistance to the invisibility that threatens her survival.

NOTES

[1] In her study, *The Subject's Tragedy*, Kintz's aim is to reveal gender hierarchies and, in particular, the way in which Greek tragedy continues to function as the structural model for theories of subjectivity and for drama in spite of both feminist and Brechtian anti-Aristotelian theory. She suggests that a feminist re-telling the tragic oedipal story which associates man with subjectivity, activity, and force and woman with objectivity and passivity and constructs her as a matter or medium, is important. "Marginalized groups have always recognized, in a way dominant groups have not, the dangers of models of unity which, invisibly and subtly, take the dominant group as the model and require that everyone else remold themselves to fit in"(6). I apply this thinking to Salomé, Philomele, and other protagonists in this study who mold themselves not to "fit in" but rather to create themselves on their own terms as thinking and speaking subjects.

[2] See Nancy M. Henley's *Body Politics: Power, Sex, and Nonverbal Communication*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977. She illustrates how body language relates to status, power and dominance. The body as a language affects our relationships and especially contributes to feelings of inferiority in those who observe them. For example "undignified" positions that are denied women – such as sitting with their feet on the desk, or backwards straddling a chair – are precisely those positions that are used among men to convey dominance. Thus, Henley explains, prescribed female postures are just those which cannot be used to get power (145).

CHAPTER 4

SALOMÉ and THE LANGUAGE of DANCE

O body swayed to music, o brightening glance,
how can we know the dancer from the dance?

W.B. Yeats

Salomé and Cordelia may, at first, seem like strange bedfellows. Cordelia, after all, is usually associated with innocence, virginity, integrity and is seen as one who was unfairly treated by her father. Salomé, on the other hand, usually evokes images of the harlot or bawd, a castrator, one who unfairly manipulated her step-father. The similarities, however, are striking. Both women are daughters adored by their fathers who hold kingly positions. Both come from militaristic families; neither is married. They are both young, beautiful, and live with jealous female role models. Salomé's mother, Herodias, and Cordelia's sisters, Regan and Goneril, offer little in the way of female support. Cordelia and Salomé are eventually executed for attempting what Patricia Laurence describes as the "social dance of selfhood" (162), that is, both women resist surrendering their own visions of 'self' to the visions their fathers entertain. Cordelia, for example, is prepared to leave behind her role as the youngest daughter, to re-create herself in the role as wife, while her father demands she pledge love only to him. Salomé does not envision herself as either a wife or sexual object, while her step-father demands she surrender herself for his use. Rather, Salomé re-creates herself as subject, an agent who seeks experience. Both women are brave and do not consider the consequences of their actions. Suffering is

inconsequential because they understand that while the cost of their strategies of resistance is great, the human cost of acquiescence is even greater. To lose oneself is to lose all.

As an artistic and literary figure, Salomé has captured the imaginations of writers, painters, musicians, and dancers for centuries. The history of her interest to writers is intriguing.[1] Although the first mention of Salomé in the Bible is brief and fragmented, she has been portrayed since in a number of different poses. In the fourth century she was rendered satanic; in the Middle Ages she re-appeared, but she was confused with her mother Herodias; in the Renaissance she was quieter and more dignified; in the nineteenth century she was once again the devouring female, a beauty without morality.

Wilde's play differs from the stories of Salomé told by the three principle sources: the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, and the writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.[2] In Wilde's version Herod and Herodias marry after murdering Herodias' husband who is also the brother of Herod and the father of Herodias's daughter, Salomé. Although Iokanaan (John the Baptist) is his prisoner, Herod is afraid of the prophet because he represents a political threat and also because, in marrying Herodias, Herod had violated religious law. Herod and Herodias are repeatedly accused of sin and threatened with eternal damnation by Iokanaan. However, in Wilde's version, Salomé does not ask for the head of Iokanaan to please her mother and secure revenge for the insults and threats aimed at Herodias. In fact, Wilde's Salomé never speaks to her mother.

Wilde's story is centered on Salomé and her dance, unlike Matthew's version where the mention of Salomé is so minor that she is not even referred to by name. Another radical difference between the Gospel versions and Wilde's play is the sensual element. Wilde has Salomé perform the "dance of the seven veils" before Herod's guests at a banquet. It is this seductive performance where Salomé's enticing removal of the filmy veils, one by one, results in the death of the prophet. The dance is reminiscent of what Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar describe as the "suicidal tarantella of female creativity." They cite Anne Sexton's poem "The Red Shoes" in which Sexton suggests that female art has a hidden, but crucial, tradition of uncontrollable madness. The authors claim that, "After all, dancing the death dance, 'all those girls/who wore the red shoes' dismantle their own bodies, like anorexics renouncing the guilty weight of their female flesh" ("Infection" 297). Salomé's sexual tarantella, however, communicates ownership of her own body and her own desire. As a silent rhetor, Salomé is an agent and her performance is a rhetorical strategy where her body expresses her resistance to powerlessness. Her dance is the text that signals her emergence as a speaking subject.

Wilde's very choice of Salomé – an historic, female, Biblical figure[3] – as the center of his play is a tacit subversion of traditional male ownership of language[4]. Victorian women after all, Stout reminds us, were expected to "suffer and be still"(10). Salomé hardly exemplifies Victorian ideals of female propriety. She suffers, but she is not still. Although she is presented as an enslaved woman in that she is the property of Herod, Salomé uses silence as a tool for the assertion of her personal and sexual autonomy by radically turning imposed silences to her own

purposes. She subverts sexual objectification through her dance and she resists Herod's authority by refusing his gifts. Salomé's silent rhetoric is presented in the form of symbolic acts – her dance, her refusal to respond to the speech of others, such as her mother's, and her acceptance of death.

Judith Lynne Hanna describes dance as a, "socially constructed kinetic discourse." Dance communicates. It is a language-like social construction of reality and a medium of socialization: "Researchers have demonstrated in diverse parts of the world that dance nonverbally communicates identity, social stratification, and values" (Hanna 224). Certainly, dance is a rhetoric. It utilises, Hanna notes, the same underlying brain faculty for conceptualisation, creativity, and memory as verbal language. In her essay, she describes how structural dance patterns are a kind of generative grammar in that there exists a set of rules specifying the manner in which movements can be meaningfully combined (224). Salomé uses her body in performance to communicate her identity nonverbally. Her dance is a rhetorical strategy of resistance to power and operates to unmask the representation of women as incapable of independent thought and action.

Most discussions of *Salomé* are centered on the only part of the play which is undescribed by Wilde – the dance. In fact, it is interesting to note that while most stories of Salomé are stories of the dance, the dance of the seven veils is never depicted. Meltzer sees in the undepicted dance a metaphor for writing. The unimagined dance of Salomé – unimagined by Matthew, Mark, and Luke who do not even mention it, and Huysmans who is limited to describing Salomé's attire and the movements of parts of her body but never "the dance" as a full moment, and, I would

add, Wilde who writes only "Salomé dances the dance of the seven veils"(54) – is a metaphor for writing in what Jacques Derrida has called the logocentric perspective.[5] If viewed as such, the dance (as writing) is seen as deferment, absence, death and, as Derrida has argued, difference. It is opposed to speech, which is privileged, because it is seen as immediacy, presence, and life. In reference to the dance, Metzler continues to explain, "For that which is believed to be the transparent tool of 'real' meaning need never be acknowledged" (45). Although Wilde does not depict the dance in his play, there is always a dance that communicates meaning and, I believe, must be acknowledged.

Nora's frenzied tarantella[6] in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House*, is another unacknowledged form of communication. The audience does not see the dance and only learns of it from Nora's husband who is pleased that his wife received a "tumultuous hand," but feels her dance "may have been a bit too naturalistic." Other than that, he ignores the potentially communicative aspect of the entire performance. The dance, I argue, communicates Nora's growing sense of frustration and imprisonment. Her choice of dance reveals her feelings of impending death and doom.

The presentation of Salomé's dance is left to the director who produces the play visually, or the reader who produces the play imaginatively. It is a visual act and subject to multiple interpretations. Does the dance symbolize Salomé's ravishment by her own imagination? Is her dance an act of masturbation? Does the dancer, as Yeats would later describe, achieve unity of being in becoming one with her art?

The dance presents what Philip McGuire calls "open silence," a silence

"whose precise meanings and effects, because they cannot be determined by analysis of the words of the playtext, must be established by nonverbal, extratextual features of the play that emerge only in performance"(xv).[7] These open silences are established by the playwright, but they make it impossible to use the text as the only resource for all production decisions. The actors, director, and most importantly the audience, hold a considerable amount of power to complete the process of creation that the playwright initiates with the text. Wilde confers such power on his actor and his audience. It is a rhetorical strategy to induce the audience to participate in the creation of meaning.

The theatre audience views the performance from two different perspectives. First, she joins Herod and views the dance in the role of spectator. In such a position the spectator in the theatre reads Salomé's kinetic text as entertainment and a source of pleasure. We shall see how Herod interprets Salomé's unveiling as self-display and anticipates her offering of herself as a sexual object.

The audience, however, understands that Salomé is an elusive object of desire, and pleasure is generated by the position as a spectator. While the audience watches the dance, the audience is also watching Herod watching Salomé. This second position appeals to the intellect of the audience and allows her to read Salomé's dance in different ways. Anne Ubersfeld's study of the spectator and pleasure considers how the audience's active role in interpretation is pleasurable:

> Theatrical pleasure, properly speaking, is the pleasure of the sign; it is the most semiotic of all pleasures. What is a sign, if not what replaces an object for someone under certain

> circumstances? Surrogate sign, a presence which stands for an absence: the sign of a god, the spool of thread for the mother, the stage for an absent 'reality.' Theatre as sign of a gap-being-filled. It would not be going too far to say that the act of filling the gap is the very source of theatre pleasure. (129)

In watching Herod the audience takes additional pleasure in "filling the gap." As language, Salomé's dance communicates to the audience her breaking away from Herod's control. At the same time, the audience witnesses Herod's belief that he is winning greater control of his niece. These two different positions that the audience occupies – looking at Salomé and looking at Herod looking at Salomé – force the audience to confront themselves as spectators and participants in the act of looking. As Diamond says the audience becomes part of – indeed they produce – the dialectical comparisons and contributions that the text enacts (*Mimesis* 88).

Salomé's dance as text can raise questions of identity, gender roles, dominance/submission, female representation, and voyeurism to name a few. It is rhetoric and, as such, generates a search for knowledge through dialectic. As a silent rhetoric, it formulates ideas, generates arguments, suggests abstract ideas and is another way of knowing about oneself and others. Rhetoric is a faculty for constructing knowledge through acts of symbolic interpretation; dance images stimulate thinking, exploration, and the creation of new responses. Hanna argues that dance is a medium of gender education and as such it can both reflect and influence society, transmit or transform a cultural heritage. "When moving images created by dancers violate expected male and female roles and their conventional expressions,

the novel signs onstage charge the atmosphere and stimulate performers and observers to confront the possibility of altered lifestyles" (Hanna 227). We shall see how Salomé's dance is gestic and makes visible social attitudes and ideological notions of power which are encoded in the text. Her dance suggests such possibilities as she silently moves from passive victim of Herod's lust to active subject seeking fulfilment of her own desire.

If Herod is watching Salomé and the audience is watching both Salomé and Herod, on whom does Salomé gaze? John Berger proposes that women know that they are being watched; how they appear to a man will determine how they are treated. They interiorize this knowledge in order to control the process. They become both surveyor and surveyed. "Every woman's presence regulates what is and is not 'permissible' within her presence. Every one of her actions – whatever its direct purpose or motivation – is also read as an indication of how she would like to be treated" (46-47). She turns herself into an object, "an object of vision – a sight." He writes that men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at (47). Certainly Salomé is continually aware that the gaze is directed at her. The Syrian dies from looking at her too much and Herodias repeatedly exhorts Herod not to look at her daughter. Salomé's knowledge of herself as an object of the gaze empowers her to control her surveyor and acquire his power.

Diamond proposes that these layers of watching may be a way to revise Laura Mulvey's reading of the female body's traditional position in representation as constructed for male viewing pleasure.[8] She suggests that Brechtian theory offers us a way to "dismantle the gaze" by "demystifying the representation" so that we can

consider "a female body in representation that resists fetishization" ("Brechtian" 83). Diamond suggests a triangular relationship between actor, character, and spectator which does not enforce Mulvey' s demand for an end to visual pleasure:

> ...the spectator still has the possibility of pleasurable identification. This is effected not through imaginary projection onto an ideal but through a triangular structure of actor/subject – character – spectator. Looking at the character, the spectator is constantly intercepted by the actor/subject, and the latter, heeding no fourth wall, is theoretically free to look back. The difference, then, between this triangle and the familiar oedipal one is that no one side signifies authority, knowledge, or the law. ("Brechtian" 90)

Salomé's outward gaze to spectators reminds them that they, as spectators, are participating in the act of looking. Dolan tells us that for the actor, "the awareness of looking, freed from the pretense of disguise by the fourth wall, makes representation of women part of the performance's subject" (115). The subject of Salomé's dance is representation. She communicates by "revealing" her[self] as a subject capable of thought and action.

The power that Wilde confers on his actor when she dances renders her an artist on a number of different levels: she is the director, designer, choreographer, the subject, author, and dancer. Salomé's dance is similar to women's performance art which Forte describes as an activity which challenges the symbolic order on more than just the linguistic level. She explains that "the very placement of the female body

in the context of performance art positions a woman and her sexuality as speaking subject, an action which cuts across numerous sign-systems, not just the discourse of language" (260).[9]

In "Traversing the Feminine in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*," Richard Dellamora writes that "Salomé projects herself as one of the kings who 'take'...In her dance the bodily power that Herod wishes to take from his stepdaughter by staging her performance for the benefit of his visitors is reappropriated by Salomé who dances for her own pleasure" (259). Salomé does not dance to serve male interests; Salomé dances for Salomé. Her act is a visual, silent revealing. Through it she asserts her sexuality. She rejects the patriarchal "text" – that is the patriarchal positioning of her as object, and through her dance creates her own "text," her subjectivity. One could argue that Wilde opposes the traditional conception of the single, unified (male) subject by posing the woman as subject rather than object. The audience is challenged to reconceptualize traditional notions of subject/object and perhaps masochist/sadist by shifting the balance of power.

Salomé's dance displays an element of sadomasochism, which, I think, is an important component of strip-tease, as it is the driving force behind the power that circulates between the spectator and the dancer. By agreeing to dance Salomé desecrates herself. She appears as a traditional masochist in allowing herself to be humiliated and objectified as sexual entertainment. Herod in asking his virgin stepdaughter to expose herself, reveal herself to her parents and guests of the court, is sadistically exercising his power and control over the object of his desire. However, like a stripper Salomé is an elusive object of desire. The relationship between sadist

and masochist is complex. The masochist holds the power over the sadist because the sadist is dependent upon the masochist's need to be humiliated and abused; otherwise, sadistic pleasure is denied. Thus, the masochist and the sadist exchange positions. Like the spectator of a strip-tease, Herod is willing to pay for the illusion that Salomé is performing for him alone. Salomé, however, thwarts his desire and shatters this illusion when she refuses his gifts which could support her future, like her mother, as Herod's sexual property. In refusing the Tetrarch's gifts and imposing her own demand, Salomé dances not for Herod but for herself and in so doing exchanges sadistic power with her step-father by not playing the game according to his plan.

Like women performance artists, Salomé exposes her body in order to reclaim it. As a silent rhetoric her dance communicates ownership. Salomé's body functions as a sign system (hands undraping the veils, eyes closed, hips swaying, back arched etc.) and she is the "writer"; she controls the text. "In defining the rules of the game and holding the element of surprise as her trump card, a woman may take unprecedented control of her own image" (Forte 263). The audience is persuaded by Salomé's silent "speech."

Francoise Meltzer notes the importance of speech and of hearing in the play:

> ...the Gospels were more often heard than read at the time they were inscribed: information comes through hearing; the sensory is at most a vehicle to meaning. In this sense the New Testament is purely logocentric: what counts is the spoken "Word" of Jesus; his teachings are speeches of which the inscription by the

> authors of the Gospels is merely a subsequent recording. The voice and speech are privileged to the greatest degree, for Jesus is the voice of Truth. (39)

Meltzer points out that Herod himself manifests the privileging of speech. He accepts the binding power of his oath despite his intense fear of what will happen if Iokanaan dies because he believes in the power of his own word. After he accepts that Salomé will not release him from his oath, he cries, "Ah! Wherefore did I give my oath? Hereafter let no king swear an oath. If he keep it not, it is terrible, and if he keep it, it is terrible also" (573). As Meltzer notes Herod, "... agrees to fulfill Salomé's request for his own sake; he had spoken, and the word must be truth"(39).

Wilde's Salomé is "honey-mad"[10] for language. Yaeger describes honey-mad women as "hungry visionary, free, savvy, invulnerable to social closure..." and "appetitive, sexual, aggressive, joyous, exotic beings who steal language happily, who take on and shake the roles of Satan or Adam or Eve at will' (27-8). They are women who understand that language is empowering and they find pleasure in speech. Salomé greedily seeks this power. When the executioner bears the head of Iokanaan to Salomé, she seizes it and speaks:

> Ah! Thou wouldst not suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. Well! I will kiss it now. I will bite it with my teeth as one bites a ripe fruit. Yes, I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. I said it; did I not say it? I said it. Ah! I will kiss it now...(573)

She is shameless as she takes her pleasure and revels in the ownership of language when she tells Iokanaan, "thy head belongs to me. I can do with it what I will"(574)

This appropriation of power is the motivation that drives Salomé to strategize.

If Salomé had simply asked Herod to give Iokanaan to her, she would not have been successful. Salomé's strategy is to negotiate not for Iokannan but rather for Herod's oath – the dance for the oath. To be in possession of Herod's word is to be in possession of power because the Tetrarch cannot break his oath. William Tydeman and Steven Price have recently argued that Wilde erred in having Herod make the "rash promise" prior to Salomè's exhibition, and so deprived the dance of its main motive, namely the seduction of Herod (9). "Wilde's Tetrarch is already 'won-over' before the music begins, so that all his step-daughter's dance achieves is to prevent him from reneging on his sworn oath"(9). While I disagree that the seduction of Herod is the main motive of the dance, I do concur with the authors that Herod is won-over before Salomé slips off her sandals. My main point is that Salomé does not dance to seduce Herod but to win her reward and in this she is successful. Her dance does not communicate her surrender to Herod; on the contrary, Salomé communicates her autonomy. She creates a new role for herself and becomes a "guiltless protagonist."

It was Martha Graham, while creating modern dances for six decades, who coined the term "guiltless protagonist." Her dances "speak of the woman's struggle for dominance without guilt. The women in her treatment of the legends of Oedipus, Jocasta, and Orestes become human protagonists, whereas previously they had been 'the pawns of gods and men'" (Hanna 231). [11] Her dances usually focus on the female point of view and almost every one of her dances include a bed or a dagger because as she says "those objects are so close to life. We sleep in a bed from the time we are

born.....and while we don't, perhaps, actually use one, there are many times when we do wield a dagger in speech, or surreptitiously in our hearts" (Hanna 230). As a choreographer of modern dance[12] Graham's approach to women and performance is, I think, particularly relevant because Salomé's "modern dance" speaks of her struggle to gain control over her body and her choice to be agent rather than object. Salomé is reminiscent of other groundbreaking modern dancers, such as Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan who, as Hanna describes, danced without partners, and created images of women as neither virgins nor sirens, but whole and complex individuals. Asserting themselves against traditional female destiny, the modern dancers' free style of dressing (braless, corsetless, and barefoot) symbolized physical freedom and a renewed, diversified self-image (Hanna 229). I suggest that Salomé is such a modern dancer. Her dance, indeed her very presence, is not about displaying a body but about becoming a self.

From the moment of Salomé's entrance she tacitly pervades the space and dominates the stage. Her very presence is a silent rhetorical strategy to suggest power as she slowly takes control of Herod's territory. The set is sparingly comprised of the throne, a cistern, and the moon. Territoriality is defined by the presence of the throne and the cistern which represent oppositional realms: power and powerlessness; freedom and imprisonment; heaven and hell. The moon is celebrated as a goddess superior to the other goddesses who have "abandoned" themselves to men. Salomé describes this moon as an ideal figure who has never defiled herself, foreshadowing her own repositioning from the role that Herod has ordained. Unlike her mother who has abandoned herself to Herod, Salomé will yield herself to her own passion alone.

Herod's power is first undermined when we learn that the cistern holds Iokanaan and can be opened only under the Tetrarch's direct command. As Salomé floats in, to the fascination of the young Syrian, she announces that the Tetrarch is afraid of his prisoner and, while unafraid herself, she is intrigued by the mystery surrounding the voice which emanates from the cistern. Salomé exploits the Syrian's attraction to her and exhorts him to allow her access to the forbidden prophet. He relents and we witness Salomé subvert Herod's rule.

Salomé continues to resist the Tetrarch's authority when she refuses to return to the banquet. Although Herod sends a slave to demand her presence, she responds by stating, "I will not return" (555).[13] Together with the young Syrian, the slave persists in his duty. He asks Salomé, "what answer may I give the Tetrarch from the Princess?" (556) and she remains silent. The young Syrian suggests, "would it not be better to return to the banquet?" (556), but Salomé ignores him and the slave leaves. Salomé's refusal to return to the banquet and to acknowledge that the young Syrian is addressing her is a rhetorical strategy which communicates her fearlessness.

Salomé further wields her power by refusing to eat fruits, drink, or replace her mother at the throne. Salomé stands silent on the stage while Herod and Herodias quibble and the Jews philosophise. In over three hundred lines Salomé has only three:

"I am not thirsty, Tetrarch" (562).

"I am not hungry, Tetrarch" (562).

"I am not tired, Tetrarch" (562).

As in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," eating the fruit symbolises surrendering the self. When the goblin men bid

Laura "taste / in tones as smooth as honey" (107-8)[14], and she does, the price she pays is a loss of speech. Lizzie, however, resists seduction:

> One may lead a horse to water
> Twenty cannot make him drink.
> Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
> Coaxed and fought her
> Bullied and besought her,
> Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
> Kicked and knocked her,
> Mauled and mocked her,
> Lizzie uttered not a word;
> Would not open lip from lip
> Lest they cram a mouthful in; (422-432)

Laura who is unable to resist the goblin men starts to pine away and eventually "loses" herself. Salomé, however, does not lose herself when Herod insistently pleads with her to share his food. She will not submit to the pleasurable offerings unless the price is right. Although Salomé is "honey-mad," she is a strategist. She is an agent motivated by self-interest and will not accept Herod's gifts if the price she must pay is a loss of selfhood.

When Salomé finally agrees to dance for Herod, it is on her terms. Herod asks Salomé to dance for him, but she answers, "I have no desire to dance, Tetrarch" (567). She twice refuses to dance for her step-father and then patiently waits for Herod to

increase his offer in his negotiations. He expects that her dance will satisfy his lust. Salomé silently attends to his pleadings and enters into a dialectical process when he begs, "Yes, dance for me, Salomé, and whatsoever thou shalt ask of me I will give it thee, even unto the half of my kingdom" (568). She carefully closes the deal and secures her reward when she asks, "By what will you swear this thing, Tetrarch?" (568) Herod reassures her with the response "By my life, by my crown, by my gods" (568). This dialectic exchange between Salomé and her uncle is rhetorical because it produces knowledge. Participating in the exchange offers Salomé the knowledge of herself as a *subject* of rhetorical invention. She is a speaker with an audience and knowledge of herself as a subject-in-process. When Salomé demands Iokanaan's head, Herod's authority is undermined because he is powerless to deny Salomé her reward.[15]

Herod's desiring of Salomé is driven by lust and the will to possess, whereas Salomé's desiring of Iokanaan is driven by the will to acquire his power of language, the power he holds over the Tetrarch. Herod is afraid of Iokanaan. The prophet's hold over both Herod and Herodias results from his use of language as a weapon. So long as he is allowed to prophesise and engender fear by claiming to be the spokesperson of a higher authority, he can control his captors and enforce a psychological subordination. Both the Tetrarch and his wife listen to and comment on every one of Iokanaan's utterances. He rails out against Herodias:

> Ah the wanton one! The harlot! Ah! The daughter of Babylon
> with her golden eyes and her gilded eyelids! Thus saith the Lord
> God, Let there come up against her a multitude of men. Let the
> people take stones and stone her...(565)

As Herodias implores her husband to put an end to his accusations and threats which undermine her position as Herod's wife and threaten her security, Herod answers that he does not want to talk about the prophet:

> But let us not talk of that matter. I do not desire to talk of it. It is the cause of the terrible words that the prophet has spoken. Peradventure on account of it a misfortune will come. Let us not speak of this matter (566).

Despite his fear of "misfortune," Herod nevertheless allows the prophet to rant his "terrible words." Herod fears for his own spiritual well-being and will allow the prophet freedom of language in the event that Iokanaan is a direct link to a higher authority. He pleads with Salomé not to insist upon the head of the prophet as a reward for her dance arguing that:

> It may be that this man comes from God. He is a holy man. The finger of God has touched him. God has put terrible words into his mouth. In the palace as in the desert, God is ever with him...but it is possible that God is with him and for him. If he die also, peradventure some evil may befall me. Verily, he has said that evil will befall some one on the day whereon he dies. On whom should it fall if it not fall on me? (571-72)

Salomé understands her stepfather and the power that Iokanaan holds over her parents. Iokanaan uses language, as a prophet, to create and transform his society. Her desire for Iokanaan's organ of speech is, I believe, not a desire to avenge the accusations against her mother nor the fact that Iokanaan refused to look upon her.

but is rather a desire to possess his power of language and thus position herself as a subject. Language may also be understood as an act of resistance against the disappearance of the individual. Salomé we must remember, like her mother, does not and has never occupied a position of speaking subject. Their positions as objects preclude this possibility. It is not until Salomé strategically negotiates her reward for her dance that her language holds any power because Herod is anxious to persuade her to do something. In this case, he attends to her every word. But it is Salomé's silent rhetoric, her kinetic text, whereby she can resist her invisibility. The success of her silent rhetoric to communicate is dependent upon the language which surrounds it. Salomé does not dance merely to reveal her body and please her step-father. With Herod's oath securely in her possession Salomé dances to reveal a subject-in-process.

When Salomé sees Iokanaan she asks him to kiss her. She compares his mouth to "the red blasts of trumpets that herald the approach of kings, and make afraid the enemy" (559). Iokanaan is adamant that Salomé will not have him."Never! Daughter of Babylon! Daughter of Sodom! Never!" (560). But Salomé is equally adamant and hypnotically chants, "I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan" (560). By targeting his mouth, Salomé zeroes in on the source of Iokanaan's only power, his power of speech. To possess his mouth is to silence him and to appropriate his power.

When Salomé's wish is granted and the prophet is to be executed, Salomé wonders at his acquiescence and the silent acceptance of suffering. She leans over the cistern and listens, "there is no sound, I hear nothing...Ah! If any man sought to kill me, I would cry out, I would struggle, I would not suffer" (573). When Salomé's execution is ordered, however, she too is indifferent to the inevitability of her own

suffering and the price she must pay for her intensely personal and unique experience. Salomé's symbolic act of indifference may be read as a form of silent rhetoric because it communicates her independence and fearlessness. It is reminiscent of Antigone who refuses to submit to Creon's bullying attempt to own her. When he twists her arm Antigone moans in pain and so Creon grips her even tighter. After a few minutes of excruciating pain Antigone calmly tells Creon, "now you are squeezing my arm too tightly. It doesn't hurt any more"(792).[16] Creon stares at her and drops her arm. Neither Salomé nor Antigone will allow their uncles to hold any power over them. The two women cannot be controlled.

Salomé's rhetoric of silence persuades the audience because her acceptance of death appeals both to their emotions (*pathos*) and to their reason (*logos*). Impending death will generate emotional responses such as anxiety, fear, and horror. Aristotle tells us that in addition to "stirring the emotions" rhetoric is persuasive "through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question" (*Rhetoric* 25). His system of language unites the audience's intellectual and emotional resources. Although the audience feels horror at Iokanaan's execution, they are "stirred" intellectually as well.

In alienation lies the drama. Styan writes, and he stresses the importance of elements such as ambiguity, anxiety, and uncertainty if the audience is to participate. For Styan, McGuire's open silences serve to trap the audience in a state of uncertainty as to how to respond. Provided the audience is permitted to feel sympathy in the first place, he explains, ambiguity, in a central character especially extends an audience's affective perceptions: "Any theory of dramatic response must take into account the

stretch and strain of mind and feeling which keeps an audience receptive and perceptive. The element of anxiety which comes of uncertainty and ambivalence produces a most serviceable tension and is the likely source of most interplay between stage and audience" (229). It is this interplay of emotion and intellect (*pathos* and *logos*) which generates the dialectic necessary to any successful rhetorical act.

The audience is bound to feel some ambivalence and uncertainty as Salomé prepares for her dance by removing her shoes and wrapping the veils around her body.[17] As Hanna notes, dance, "because it uses the body – the signature key of sexuality, essential for human survival and desirable for pleasure – dance is eye-catching and engaging. It is a riveting way of continually reconstituting gender roles and meanings (Hanna 236). The dance addresses both the emotions and the intellect of the audience.

Aristotle explains that *ethos* provides a means, when the speech "is so spoken" (*Rhetoric* 25), to make the audience perceive the speaker as "credible" (*Rhetoric* 25). He argues that the most effective means of persuasion is through the speaker's character and he points out that, "it is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 25). But he also says "that this kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak" (*Rhetoric* 25). Aristotle insists that it is the speech itself which must create the impression that the speaker is a person of good sense, good moral character and good will (*Rhetoric* 91).

Nan Johnson defines *ethos* as "a pragmatic strategy which serves practical wisdom in human affairs. The rhetorician need not be virtuous in a Platonic objective sense, only wise about human values, opinions, and motivations" (103). She points out Aristotle's insistence, in the *Rhetoric*, that a major factor in presentation of an effective *ethos* is the orator's assessment of the subject, the persons addressed, and the occasion (102).

Salomé's ethical appeal manifests itself first in her role as a dancer. Her professionalism is evident in her preparations. When Herod asks Salomé why she tarries, her answer – "I am waiting until my slaves bring perfume to me and the seven veils, and take from off my feet my sandals"(52) – indicates her understanding of dancing. Knowledge of the orator's subject is necessary for the orator to be deemed credible and of good sense.

Salomé presents an effective *ethos* because she makes an accurate assessment of the "occasion" and the "persons addressed." She understands that if she wants to acquire the object of her desire – her personal autonomy, then she must negotiate this with Herod. She also realizes that she is the object of Herod's desire. The occasion is ripe for her to strategically take action. Herod is hosting a banquet and demands entertainment for his company. He is weary from Iokanaan's persistent railing and Herodias's complaining. The Tetrarch is ill at ease from interpreting the dark omens and symbols all around him. His unsettled state provides an excellent opportunity for Salomé to negotiate. Indeed, Herod makes an oath offering Salomé whatever she pleases.

Although Aristotle and Plato hold different views of what constitutes good moral character, Aristotle nevertheless does claim that the rhetor should possess those virtues which are necessary "to make our hearers take the required view of our own characters." Aristotle's "forms of Virtue" include justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, wisdom (*Rhetoric* 56). Courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom coincide with the cardinal virtues that Plato insist the ideal must possess in order to promote values.

Courage, for Aristotle, is the virtue that disposes the rhetor to confront danger in accordance with the law and in obedience to its commands (*Rhetoric* 57). Salomé indeed confronts danger when she agrees to dance for Herod knowing that he will be required to surrender Iokannan in accordance with the law. Salomé displays temperance when she "obeys the law where physical pleasures are concerned" (*Rhetoric* 57). She takes sensual gratification only after she has followed the laws and Herod has honored his oath. "Justice is the virtue through which everybody enjoys his own possessions in accordance with the law"(*Rhetoric* 57). Certainly Salomé demonstrates the virtue of justice. She patiently negotiates and earns the object of her desire according to Herod's law. The pursuit of wisdom, for Plato, is the highest goal in life. For Aristotle wisdom is aligned with prudence, which he describes as a "virtue of the understanding which enables men to come to wise decisions about the relation to happiness of the goods and evils "(*Rhetoric* 57). As mentioned earlier, Aristotle's formulation of wisdom is a practical wisdom, one that informs the rhetor how to behave in certain circumstances. Salomé is wise, in both Platonic and Aristotelian senses. Like Cordelia, she seeks truth in that she is determined to re-create herself as

a subject. Unlike Cordelia, Salomé possesses the understanding necessary to meet her ends. She is practical and she is aware of her need to strategize and negotiate with Herod.

Salomé's dance is gestic. Brecht claims that the director needs an historian's eye because the spectators' interest is directed purely towards the characters' attitudes. He explains that, in his play *Mother*, "the little scene where Vlassova gets her first lesson in economics, for instance, is by no means just an incident in her own life: it is an historic event; the immense pressure of misery forcing the exploited to think" (83). Salomé's dance, I argue, is not merely an incident in her life but rather an historic event because it represents the exploitation of women as objects. It is a social "gest" because it is relevant to society and "allows conclusions to be drawn about the social circumstances" (105).

Salomé's dance as silent rhetoric is an especially powerful "gest" because the essential fact of Salomé's legend as a woman of prey is that she got whatever she wanted. José Ortega y Gasset describes Salomé as "a prodigious mass of desires and fantasies"(133). This, at once, he believes signifies a deformation of femininity because "normally a woman imagines and fantasizes less than a man, and this accounts for her more flexible adaptation to the real destiny imposed upon her" (133). Ortega y Gasset continues to explain that while men may imagine an unreal image of a woman to which he dedicates his passion, this is exceedingly uncommon in the woman because poverty of imagination characterizes the feminine psyche. Salomé, he says, fantasizes in a masculine manner. Wilde, I believe, opposes this misogynistic notion of Salomé as a symbol of "deformed femininity," because Salomé is portrayed

as a strategist, a thinker and, as such, an agent. Reading her dance as a social "gest" suggests women's continuous battle with representation as objects incapable of thought and action.

Salomé's dance tantalizes, taunts, and tempts but she remains inaccessible because she frustrates Herod's anticipated system of exchange. She will not be his property, nor will she exist to grace or serve the Tetrarch. Salomé defies objectification by disallowing Herod pleasurable expectation. She thwarts Herod's desire and, in so doing, asserts her own. She manages to "break with the normal pleasurable expectations in order to conceive a new language of desire" (Dolan 49).

Salomé's dance is a rhetoric of silence. It is a symbolic act that functions as a way of knowing, a way of communicating and, as such, it is a tool for making meaning. As an expression of her power, the dance allows Salomé to know herself as a "speaking subject." She communicates her subjectivity as she creates herself as a woman in the grips of a mysterious ecstasy. Her silent rhetoric generates knowledge because her desire is recognized and addressed. She can now have whatever she wants. Yeats, who admired Wilde, would later use the symbol of the dancer as a symbol of the poetic artist who creates through labor and great cost and yet for only a few moments. How can we know the dancer from the dance? The enduring identity of the artist is realized with the patterns she creates (Kiberd 123). Salomé's dance is self-revealing and the patterns she creates articulate her subjectivity.

NOTES

[1] For an indepth study of the Salomé legend see Helen Grace Zagora's *The Legend of Salomé and the Principle of Art for Art's Sake*. Zagora traces the course of Salomé's "spellbinding power" from the New Testament to Wilde's treatment of her in 1894.

[2] Francoise Meltzer's *Salomé and the Dance of Writing: Portraits of Mimesis in Literature* offers an interesting discussion of these three sources of the Salomé story.

[3] The Lord Chamberlain, it should be noted, refused to license the play on the grounds that it introduced Biblical characters. Although Wilde protested, the interdict remained and Wilde declared that he would settle in France and take out letters of naturalization. Frank Harris quotes Wilde, "I am not English, I am Irish – which is quite another thing"(74).

[4] In the nineteenth century women writers were far fewer than "men" writers. Although I do not wish to make an argument that Wilde was a feminist, as a homosexual he shared with women the experience of marginality. Positing Salomé as an ideal artist, one who appropriates for her own ends the language of patriarchy, suggests a resistance to the dominant order.

[5] In 1967, Jacques Derrida published three major works devoted to the question of writing: *Writing and Difference*, *Of Gramatology*, and *Speech and Phenomena*. His project is to reevaluate the structuring principles of language and philosophy. He argues that Western philosophy has analyzed the world in terms of binary oppositions: mind vs. body, good vs. evil, man vs. woman, presence vs. absence. Each of these pairs is organized hierarchically; the first term is seen as higher or better than the second. Speech, then, is considered primary and writing secondary. Derrida refers to this privileging of speech as logocentrism.

[6] The tarantella is a dance which is meant to imitate the death throes of a person bitten by a tarantula.

[7] McGuire offers the final scene in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* when Barnardine, who is about to be executed, is instead granted life by the Duke. He remains silent. McGuire asks, "does the unbroken silence ...signify his tongue-tied shock at having been given life? Is that silence a way of expressing Barnardine's gratitude, a gratitude beyond words...? Or is Barnardine's unremitting silence a sign of indifference to the Duke's mercy or even of an incorrigibility that such mercy can never touch?"(xvi).

[8] In Laura Mulvey's influential study "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" she argues that Hollywood film conventions construct a specifically male viewing position whereby the spectator will identify with the hero (male), and fetishize the female by turning her into an object of desire. Like Elin Diamond, Mulvey applies

Brechtian concepts of alienation to free the look of the audience into dialectics and passionate detachment (442).

[9] I do not make the claim that Salomé's dance is an example of women's performance art. There are, however, certain elements of women's performance art that I believe relate to the dance. See *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and the Theatre*, edited by Sue-Ellen Case for some provocative discussion.

[10] See Patricia Yaeger, *Honey-Mad Women*, for an interesting discussion of women and pleasure. Yaeger uses the metaphor of food and the "honey-mad woman" to describe the woman writer's relation to speech.

[11] See Judith Lynne Hanna's essay "Tradition, Challenge, and the Backlash: Gender Education through Dance." She outlines aspects of the visual language of the "high" culture of ballet and its succeeding genres – modern and postmodern dance.

[12] At the end of the nineteenth century "modern dance" emerged in reaction to ballet and in particular to male domination in both dance and in society. "Female modern dancers' aggressiveness paralleled women's late nineteenth-and twentieth century questioning of patriarchy, which resulted in change in the conventions surrounding choice of a spouse, a rise in higher education for women, and middle-class women's entry into the labor market during and after World War II"(Hanna 229).

[13] All citations from Oscar Wilde's play *Salomé* come from: *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994. 552-575. References are parenthetically designated by page number.

[14] All citation from Cristina Rossetti's poem "Goblin Market" come from: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 4th ed.Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 1962. 1523-1534.

[15] Francoise Meltzer notes that Herod's oath is a standard rhetoric of the time and "by the custom of oriental courts Salomé could demand the wages of her shame" (footnote 25, 39).

[16] All citations from the Jean Anouilh's play *Antigone* come from: *Antigone*. Trans. Lewis Galantiere. London: Eyre Methuen, 1978. All citations are parenthetically designated by page number.

[17] In her discussion of the feminist spectator, Jill Dolan points out that desire has come to be seen as a male trap that automatically objectifies and oppresses women. But it is important to note that desire is not necessarily a fixed, male-owned commodity, but can be exchanged, with a much different meaning, between women (80). I do not discuss gender in the audience because I argue that Salomé's dance communicates her escape from objectivity regardless of the gender differences in the

audience. Certainly Salomé communicates to both Herod and Herodias and, as Dolan says, when the locus of desire changes, the demonstration of sexuality and gender roles also changes.

CHAPTER 5

THE LAST WORD: SUICIDE as a RHETORIC OF SILENCE

"The silence of the dead can turn into a wild chorus"

---Timberlake Wertenbaker

When, in *The Love of the Nightingale*, Philomele's tongue is cut from her mouth Niobe expresses her pity:

> Philomele has lost her words, all of them. Now she is silent. For good. Of course, he could have killed her, that is the usual way of keeping people silent. But that might have made others talk. (36)

In Niobe's mind Tereus is cunning when he allows his victim to live because her new identity as mute renders her powerless to undermine his authority. In the case of Antigone, Creon has a similar problem. Like Tereus, he believes his duty is to safeguard his domain against dissension and revolution. If he allows Antigone to live, she threatens to disrupt his rule. If he kills her, he will destroy his family. It does not occur to Creon that Antigone will make the decision for him. Unlike Niobe, he does not understand that the silence of the dead can communicate.

Antigone has the last word when she slips the cord of her robe around her neck and silences her own voice forever. Through this silent rhetorical act she deliberately dismantles Creon's authority to use her experience to uphold the very power relationships that have victimized her. Although Antigone's voice is silenced, like Philomele's her story is not. Her purposeful flight into death is an exit only. Just

as a play goes on in the minds of the audience once the actor has made her exit, the echoes of Antigone's words reverberate again and again with its concerns about the meaning of heroic life and the freedom to exercise one's will.

Indeed, Antigone is not forgotten. Like Salomé who has captured the imagination of artists since biblical times, Antigone has inspired and provoked poets, philosophers, artists, and dramatists for over two thousand years. The play, based on Theban myth, was originally produced by Sophocles in March 441 B.C., and was so successful that it was presented 32 times without interruption. In fact, the Athenians wished the author of *Antigone* to hold military office because they assumed that a man who was so skilled in writing must indeed be wise and capable of judging rightly and governing well (Braun 4). They saw in the poet a man who could direct them away from oligarchy because his play presents oligarchic ideas of "order and stability" in conflict with justice and the individual's right to act. Sophocles' characters are human beings caught in a dangerous trap. Either they maintain principles that threaten their humanity and defeat the courage to assert basic human rights, or they exercise their personal freedom by challenging autocratic rule. George Steiner explains that the play turns on the necessary violence which political-social change visits on the individual (*Antigones* 11).

Two thousand years later Jean Anouilh wrote an interpretation of the classical myth. In 1944, while German bombs were dropping on the French countryside, Anouilh's reworking of Sophocles' tragedy had an inspiring pertinence. In his play, *Antigone*, he presents a dramatic re-evaluation of moral values and political power relations. Sophocles' play presents ideas which are in

conflict – tyranny and oligarchy versus democracy and leadership – where Antigone suffers what any individual risks who asserts freedom under tyranny, or individualism against pressure to conform. Anouilh's play also presents ideas in conflict, but ideas that are more philosophical than political in nature. For Anouilh, the conflict is between intransigent idealism and realism: Antigone suffers because she insists on a world where beauty, justice, and freedom take precedence over order and stability.

In many ways the two plays are similar. Certainly they are both thematically complex and suggest a multiplicity of interpretations. Sophocles' play is about Kreon[1]. It is Kreon's story. We witness Kreon exercise his authority when he orders that Antigone be buried alive for disobeying his law, a law which Antigone argues is in conflict with, "the lawful traditions the gods have not written merely, but made infallible" (lns 557-558). Kreon intends that she die in the cave until Tiresias prophesies divine retribution, in which case Kreon decides to give burial to Polynices' remains and release Antigone. It is too late, because Antigone hangs herself in her tomb before the king has a chance to reverse his decision to execute her. Kreon, who occupies the stage physically and thematically because he is the only one there during the important closing scenes, exemplifies Aristotle's formulation of the hero's tragic process which includes *hamartia*, tragic flaw, and *anagnorisis* or recognition. We witness the hero make a tragic error and pass from good to bad fortune. Although Antigone's role is central, there is no reference to her at all during the last ninety lines of the play. She is presented as a somewhat passive spectator who is powerless to prevent the mutual destruction of her brothers.

The primary difference between the modern and classical versions resides in the role of Antigone. In Anouilh's version it is Antigone's story. She refuses to live in a world without beauty and truth and her conflict is presented as one that poses an individual's will against authority. Creon initiates a law for the sake of wielding his authority, while Antigone defies that law for the sake of principle alone.

Anouilh's play has generated an enormous amount of controversy. In 1944, the Germans occupied France and the French people were confronted by a choice between political compromise and unbending idealism in the form of resistance. Anouilh's play, produced in the face of an enemy, was viewed as ambiguous in terms of intellectual approval and emotional sympathy. Although many Parisians saw Antigone's contempt for Creon's authority as a symbol of the French Resistance, as Harold Hobson writes, it was not a unanimous view in Paris in 1944. He explains:

> In the great scene of the debate between Creon and Antigone, all the best arguments are given to the authoritarian, who was identified with the Germans. It received enthusiastic reviews from the collaborationist press, and the rumour ran around Paris that *Antigone* was a Nazi play which no patriotic French theatregoer should go to see. It was not for several months that this view changed, and when it did the Occupation authorities ordered it to be taken off. (11)

The fact that the play ran for 645 consecutive performances during the occupation must also have contributed to the feeling that Anouilh supported collaborationist activities. Anouilh's political intent, however, will never be known for certain.[2]

George Steiner claims that Antigone's argument of resistance to Creon's offer to withdraw his command that she be executed does not in any way weaken Creon's case against the "hooligan Polynice" and against Antigone's "absurd rebellion." Steiner argues that, in Anouilh's play, Creon's punitive isolation is broken and his contact with childhood, as he exits leaning on the shoulder of a young boy, is suggestive of a larger re-entry into life. "Might not this have been the trait, in a play eerily poised between the contrary commitments of its two protagonists and the politics which these commitments entail, which determined German acceptance of the text and of its staging?" (*Antigones* 194). Steiner argues that Creon wins because his rhetoric is more persuasive than that of his niece. I disagree.

We must not forget that Antigone has the last word and that the communicative power of her silent rhetoric reverberates long after Creon walks off the stage. Although the viewpoints of both antagonists are equally and disturbingly cogent, the persuasive power of the play is a result of two powerful and logically defined arguments. Rhetoric, whether silent or verbal, is a transactive act that brings two or more speakers together. The argument is presented through dialectic: there is a response, a refutation, and a conclusion. Antigone's silent rhetoric is expressed in her acts of defiance – she buries her brother Polynices with her childhood shovel and she takes her own life. Her argument is presented with the execution of her actions and Creon responds by insisting she go to her room, renounce her own ideas,

and adopt his way of thinking. Antigone refutes his response with her refusal to give up ownership of her mind. That is, she refuses to adopt her uncle's reasoning and to allow him to dictate how and what she should think. The dialectic concludes for Creon when he orders that his niece be locked in a cave to die, but Antigone makes one more comment when she takes control of her destiny. Antigone's silent rhetoric signals her emergence as an independently thinking subject.

Anouilh's play reveals a single, comparatively simple conflict between two passionately held principles. These principles, however, may take a number of different forms. Does the play address the conflict between divine law and human law, or individual rights and those of the family against the rights of the state, or is the conflict merely, as Steiner implies, between a rebel and authority? Anouilh's play, I argue, reveals the clash that results when an individual's, specifically a woman's, autonomy is threatened and when the need to assert and defend ownership of her thinking is challenged. Antigone's conflict transcends mere rebelliousness; she is fighting for her life because she must resist Creon's attempt to colonize her discourse and her mind.

Antigone's struggle grows out of a desire to escape the fate she shares with her mother, her sister, and especially her aunt, Eurydice. Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex*, for example, is tied to her roles as mother and wife. Her language, her warnings, and opinions are rejected by her husband/son. Such a dismissal is dehumanizing because it denies Jocasta the possibility of self-mastery and of an identity as a thinking person. In the *Republic*, Plato argues that to be master of oneself is to have the higher part of the soul rule over the lower, that is reason over the desires. When

Oedipus ignores his wife, he informs her that she is dominated by desires and is incapable of reasoned thought. In *Antigone,* not a word is uttered by Eurydice. Only her actions speak. Creon tells us how she is "A good woman. Always busy with her garden, her preserves, her jerseys – those jerseys she never stopped knitting for the poor" (69). Such action communicates her passive acceptance of a role that is expected of her. She is presented as a women who acts only to be a good woman, and is not governed by her own reason. Ismene, too, accepts the role she is handed and understands that she is different – a woman. As a woman she lives within assigned limits and risks danger when she attempts to go beyond these limits by putting down her knitting and taking up what Trinh T. Minh-ha calls the "master's tools."

Antigone, however, has not learned to accept her role as "a girl, " and attempts such a borrowing. Minh-ha describes the fate of such a woman who has not learned to tolerate her role:

> She has been warned of the risk she incurs by letting words run off the rails, time and again tempted by the desire to gear herself to the accepted norms. But where has obedience led her? At best, to the satisfaction of a 'made-woman,' capable of achieving as high a mastery of discourse as that of the male establishment in power. Immediately gratified, she will, as years go by, sink into oblivion, a fate she inescapably shares with her foresisters. How many, already, have been condemned to premature deaths for

> having borrowed the master's tools and thereby played into his hands? (79)

Antigone is not impressed with Creon's discourse because it is one that grows out of fear and his need to dominate. The tools he offers his niece – to remain silent about her act, to pretend it never happened and to repent by going directly to her room – will lead Antigone to the sort of premature death to which Minh-ha refers because she will have surrendered her right to any form of individuality and independent thought. Creon intends to control Antigone and if she is to survive she will do so in his image.

Kintz's discussion of colonial discourse may be usefully evoked at this point. She defines colonial discourse as that which attempts to reproduce itself by means of Others and, she notes, both Third World people and females are colonized, though very differently, by the phallocentric discourse of purity (125-26). It is not a discourse that operates on an dialectical system, that is, between subject and object or male and female, but rather it attempts to produce the Other in its own image. Kintz explains how women are required to perform like men within the general category of subject called "human," whose requirements are specifically masculine. Building on Homi Bhaba's study of colonial relations between England and India in the nineteenth century, Kintz discusses the "democratic rhetoric of equality that ostensibly attempts to reform the inequality between males and females in the category of "mankind," or subject. This does not mean that the experience of colonized or post-colonial subjects (any more than the experience of slaves) is the same as the experience of all women; they each require a specific analysis. But they

are structurally linked as results of the organization of phallocentric political systems" (127). Bhaba's study of colonial mimicry is understood by Kintz as a compromise between two opposing needs of power: stasis and increase where the Other is allowed to become a subject in order to reproduce the symbolic system in its particular capitalist form (126). Antigone desires agency; she wants to think for herself. Creon desires to increase his power by "reforming" Antigone so she will be more like him which, in this case, means to think as he does. As a "copy" of Creon, she will produce other copies (the son she plans to have with Haemon) and, in so doing, reproduce the symbolic system according to Creon's plan.

Antigone is steadfast in resisting Creon's efforts to create her in his own image. She is a thinker, and, in the terms of Charles Taylor, a "strong evaluator." Strong evaluators evaluate desires and are capable of articulating their preference for one alternative over another.[3] But they go "deeper" in that they characterize their motivations at greater depth. Their motivations do not only count in virtue of the attraction of the consummations, rather they count in virtue of the kind of life and kind of subject that these desires properly belong to (*Agency* 25).[4] The ability to reflect upon the kind of beings we are or strive to be takes us to the center of our existence as agents. Taylor explains that "Strong evaluation is not just a condition of articulacy about preferences, but also about the quality of life, the kind of beings we are or want to be" (*Agency* 26). Taylor stresses that the conception of agency is inescapably tied to the notion of strong evaluation and to our notion of the self.

Our identities are created by the evaluations we make. To deny an agent the possibility of evaluation is to deny her the possibility of identity. The specificity of

human agents should be sought in the structure of their will, Harry Frankfurt writes, and in the hierarchy they establish between certain motivational states (Hjort, 65). In Anouilh's play Antigone persistently struggles to create an identity for herself which is inseparable from herself as an agent. We shall see how she demonstrates the capacity to evaluate desires as desirable and not merely desire them.

Antigone lives in a world where her identity is tied to the roles she is expected to play – daughter, sister, future wife, and mother. Antigone is described as a "girl," and as such she is not expected to act or to think; this poses a conflict for her because Antigone is a thinker. When the play opens, the princess is lost in philosophic thoughts about beauty and the meaning of life. Her idealism grows out of subjectively chosen values, such as honesty and morality, which she is expected to subdue. But she decides for herself what happiness means and rejects the trite everyday formula for happiness that her family and Creon describes. Ismene pleads with her sister to consider what life has to offer: "Antigone! You have everything in the world to make you happy. All you have to do is reach out for it. You are going to be married; you are young; you are beautiful" (21).[5] Creon tells Antigone, "I have other plans for you. You're going to marry Haemon; and I want you to fatten up a bit so that you can give him a sturdy boy. Let me assure you that Thebes needs that boy a good deal more than it needs your death" (44).

But marriage and motherhood do not guarantee happiness for Antigone. Although we witness Antigone's expression of love to Haemon and her wish to produce the son to which Creon refers, Antigone warns her uncle, "...if he too has to learn to say yes to everything – why, no, then, no! I do not love Haemon!"(57).

Happiness can only be realized for Antigone when she is guaranteed that she or Haemon or their son do not have to say "yes" to everything, and that they do not feel impotent to make decisions and think for themselves. She challenges Creon, "I see you suddenly as you must have been at fifteen: the same look of impotence in your face and the same inner conviction that there was nothing you couldn't do. What has life added to you, except those lines in your face, and that fat on your stomach?" (57). For Antigone, the meaning of life is to live fully and to live free. She finally tells Creon, "I will not be satisfied with the bit of cake you offer me if I promise to be a good little girl" (58).

Antigone is not even considered a woman. Ismene, her nurse, Haemon, and Creon all view Antigone as still a girl. In such a role Antigone is not considered a person or even a woman of reason, but rather, an impulsive, unthinking and stubborn child. She has no voice because no one will listen to her; her speech and her thinking fall upon deaf ears. She commands Creon's attention at this point by breaking his law and thereby forcing him to attend to her and to the situation.

Antigone's act of burying her brother is a form of silent rhetoric. It is a symbolic act and not in any way practical because Antigone's sprinkling of dirt with her toy shovel hardly covers the body. Animals and birds of prey continue to have access to the rotting corpse and the unbearable stench of which Creon complains does not go away. As a rhetorical strategy, Antigone's act communicates her appropriation of the right to freedom of thought. By silently defying Creon's order, Antigone breaks the silence that accommodation imposes upon women. In contrast, Ismene explains why they must obey and not speak out against their uncle; she

reminds Antigone, "He is stronger than we are, Antigone. He is the king. And the whole city is with him" (784). She also points out that this sort of defiance is not acceptable for a woman, "Antigone, be sensible. It's all very well for men to believe in ideas and die for them. But you are a girl!" (785). Antigone's and Ismene's expected roles include a notion that silence and submission is an appropriate condition. Ismene expects Antigone to accept whatever Creon orders and not "to believe in ideas." This is correct behavior. Acquiescence is normal, and manifests Ismene's innate passiveness.

Antigone, however, is not passive. The demand to act out the accepted role for a woman has always posed a problem for her. Ismene believes her younger sister is not sufficiently passive and pleads with her to reason and think things out when she argues. "I always think things over, and you don't. You are impulsive. You get a notion in your head and you jump up and do the thing straight off" (19). Ismene wants Antigone to change her mind and she accuses her sister of possessing a will. But she argues that Antigone's will is not informed by reason, that is the ability to think from judgements, rather, it is ruled by desires. Antigone's response indicates her resentment at the abuse she receives for having a mind of her own and refusing to stifle the freedom of thought that she believes is rightly hers. She tells Ismene:

> Little Antigone gets a notion in her head – the nasty brat, the willful, wicked girl; and they put her in the corner all day, or they lock her up in the cellar. And she deserves it. She shouldn't have disobeyed! (19)

Antigone's nurse also complains that the princess was a continual source of worry when she says:

> How many times I'd say to myself, 'Now that one, now: I wish she was a little more of a coquette – always wearing the same dress, her hair tumbling round her face. One thing's sure, I'd say to myself, 'none of the boys will look at her while Ismene's about, all curled and cute and tidy and trim. I'll have this one on my hands for the rest of my life (15).

Antigone is compared to her sister and comes up short because, unlike Ismene, she blatantly refuses to comply with the nurse's wishes that she accept the role she was born to fulfill.

Creon, certainly, complains that Antigone has not lived up to his expectations of a good and obedient woman. First of all, she breaks his law and then refuses his order to go to her room and go to bed. She also ignores his plan to conceal her crime and she will not allow Creon to save her life. Antigone, Creon believes, is too proud for a woman; he calls her "a daughter of Oedipus's stubborn pride." He tries to censor her by ordering her to be quiet and is forced to resort to violence in an attempt to keep her act a secret. Antigone, however, never submits to either the role or the silence that Creon imposes upon her. Her disheveled appearance and her physical, as well as verbal, acts are her own.

Antigone's wish to articulate her rejection of the life and the role that Creon plans for her is most emphatic and persuasive when expressed as a form of silent rhetoric. To bury Polynices is to say "no" to her uncle's authority. On three

separate occasions while debating with Creon about life and the difference between saying "yes" and "no" to power and to repression, Antigone tells her uncle that he is wasting his time because she will commit her crime as many times as she feels she must. She is persuasive because she has already done the deed and will do it again and again. We believe her and so does Creon.

The act of burying Polynices is a form of silent rhetoric because it communicates and generates knowledge. Antigone's bold act communicates on two levels. First, the act of burying Polynices communicates her commitment to do the right thing which, for Antigone, means attending to the rights of the individual over those of the state. Second, the blatant illegality of the deed communicates her willingness to risk the consequences of breaking a law that undermines her beliefs.

Antigone is often misunderstood and dismissed as a stubborn rebel because she admits to her uncle that the ceremonial burial is absurd:

> *Creon*: Tell me Antigone, do you believe all that flummery about religious burial? Do you really believe that a so-called shade of your brother is condemned to wander for ever homeless if a little earth is not flung on his corpse to the accompaniment of some priestly abracadabra? Have you ever listened to the priests of Thebes when they were mumbling their formula?
>
> *Antigone*: Yes, I have seen all that.
>
> *Creon*: And did you ever say to yourself as you watched them, that if

someone you really loved lay dead under the shuffling, mumbling, ministrations of the priests, you would sream aloud and beg the priests to leave the dead in peace?

Antigone: Yes, I've thought all that.

Creon: And you still insist upon being put to death -- merely because I refuse to let your brother go out with that grotesque passport; because I refuse his body the wretched consolation of that mass-production jibber-jabber, which you would have been the first to be embarrassed by if I had allowed it. The whole thing is absurd!

Antigone: Yes, it's absurd. (45-46)

Antigone admits that she is defying the law not for Polynices but for herself. The rights of the individual are not limited to Polynices's right to a burial, but include her own individual right, that is, to think for herself. Antigone breaks the law not merely to act out some rebellious need, but rather to affirm her right to think differently than Creon. She challenges her uncle's claim that he felt obligated to take the crown and the power it entails when she argues that he had a choice. Antigone tells Creon that she, on the other hand, thinks for herself, "I didn't say yes. I can say no to anything I think vile, and I don't have to count the cost..." (49). She can think for herself and does not have to "count the cost" because she is willing to pay the price for such freedom of thought. To defy Creon's order is the only available means with which she can communicate her individuality. Antigone's act is silent rhetoric because it communicates her beliefs and her determination to uphold them in a dialectical fashion.

As a form of silent rhetoric, her act fulfills the major function of rhetoric to generate, create, and discover knowledge. Plato's understanding of the epistemic function of rhetoric associates knowledge with recollection[6]. Consequently, Plato placed great importance on the power of memory. In the *Republic*, for example, he asserts that a soul who possesses a genuine philosophical nature must "have a good memory" (217). A major purpose in a rhetorical situation is to enable the participants, through the means of dialogue, to go beyond sensory experiences of the observable physical world and glimpse those universals that adhere to an ideal form. Antigone's dialectic with Creon includes the discovery that, for her, an ideal form is exemplified in her memory of life as a child. Throughout the play, Antigone recalls a time when life was beautiful and people were true to themselves. Toward the end of her dialogue with Creon she tells him, "I want everything of life, I do: and I want it now! I want it total, complete: otherwise I reject it! I will not be moderate.... I want to be sure of everything this very day: sure that everything will be as beautiful as when I was a little girl. If not, I want to die" (58). Antigone's rhetorical act allows her to remember and to re-discover the knowledge that she cannot accept life unless that life allows her to be herself.

The ultimate expression of agency is Antigone's suicide. As silent rhetoric, it communicates her appropriation of Creon's power and the establishment of her own subjectivity. Antigone is not an object to be discarded because she has displeased her master; rather, she is an agent who controls her own fate. She has options: accept Creon's offer of life on his terms, or allow Creon to kill her. Antigone, however, expresses her independence and asserts her personal freedom when she

takes an active part in her own death. Her life cannot be taken from her on any level – physically, mentally, or emotionally. Rather, Antigone chooses death freely and in so doing communicates her self-mastery.

In *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, Nicole Loraux explains that in classical Greece suicide was viewed as a tragic death chosen under the weight of necessity by those on whom fell "the intolerable pain of a misfortune from which there was no way out" (9). In tragedy suicide was mainly a woman's death because for a man it was a deviation[7]. "For women, death is an exit. Bebeke, 'she is gone,' is said of a woman who dies or has killed herself" (19). It is a movement and often implies a transition from one world to another as in the case of virgins who are led to their deaths as brides of Hades.[8] Suicide as a movement is also suggested by the image of the dead woman hanging[9] in the air and gently swaying. Loraux points out that the woman who has hanged herself has left the ground and hangs between earth and sky. Her 'exit' is one of flight. Loraux associates this "rising" with "the 'escape odes,' those lyrical pieces in which often the chorus and sometimes that tragic heroine, overwhelmed by events, voice their desire for a merciful flight into death" (18). Jocasta (*Oedipus Rex*) and Phaedra (*Hippolytus*), for example, are wives who take flight by quietly going to their rooms and hanging themselves in order to escape from "an intolerable misfortune" in their marriages.[10]

Virgins, Loraux notes, have less autonomy than wives do. Virgins do not kill themselves; they are killed:

> Iphigenia, Macaria, Polyxena, the daughters of Erechtheus, all these were virgins offered up to the bloodthirsty Artemis, to the

> fearsome Persephone, or to the denizens of Hades, for the safety of the community; so that a war should start or, on the contrary, end; so that a decisive battle should take place and victory come to the side of those performing the sacrifice. (33)

Creon's decision to execute his niece is not informed by a desire to make her the appointed victim of a sacrifice. Indeed, he tells Antigone, "I am not going to let politics be the cause of your death" (792). Instead, Creon condemns her to die because she has committed a crime and will not repent. Antigone's refusal to comply with her uncle's logic compels Creon to kill her or risk exposure as a weak ruler. When the chorus exhorts Creon to save Antigone and send her away he replies, "Everybody will know it isn't so. The nation will say that I am making an exception of her because my son loves her. I cannot." (796).

Antigone forces Creon's hand and appropriates his power by placing him in an impossible situation: either he must break his own law and bury Polynices, or break his son's heart and consequently his wife's by killing Antigone. But even in his effort to be strong by refusing to surrender to Antigone's challenge and thus "take up the burden of manhood" (796), Creon fails because Antigone contrives her own death and in so doing condemns Creon to the defilement he tried to avoid. Choosing to die by her own will transforms her execution into a suicide. Antigone's suicide is a triumph over Creon's tyrannical holds over her mind and her body a she becomes an agent who has the last word on her destiny.

Antigone's suicide is a rhetorical act that generates knowledge because her decision to take control of her death allows her to take control of her life. Antigone

re-creates a new role for herself as a thinking woman, as an agent, guided by reason in her joint inquiry with Creon. Reason, Taylor tells us is at one and the same time a power to see things aright and a condition of self–possession. "To be rational is truly to be master of oneself" (*Sources* 116). On a physical level Antigone desires to live; we know she worries about physical pain and discomfort when she expresses her fear of the cold and asks the guard, "Do you think it hurts to die?" Antigone's reason, however, rules over her desires and physical concerns so that she is free to control her existence. Antigone's dialectic with her uncle which includes thoughtful questioning, responses supported by examples and refutation, generates the reasoned understanding that the price Creon expects Antigone to pay for her life is too high. She asks her uncle to explain what kind of happiness he foresees for her and what it will cost:

> Paint me the picture of your happy Antigone. What are the unimportant little sins that I shall have to commit before I am allowed to sink my teeth into life and tear happiness from it? Tell me: to whom shall I have to lie? Upon whom shall I have to fawn? To whom must I sell myself? Whom do you want me to leave dying, while I turn away my eyes? (795)

Creon's last word, to imprison Antigone in the dark cave to wait for her death, allows her to go beyond the physical world and attain what Plato calls a "vision of the truth" (*Republic* 206). The truth for Antigone is the knowledge that life must be lived honestly and this knowledge, attained through reason, allows her the agency to become self-possessed.

In Kintz's chapter on Oedipus, she discusses the suicides of Jocasta and Eurydice and claims that their deaths are a result of the knowledge they acquire. For Oedipus, this knowledge leads to transcendence,[11] but for his wife/mother it leads to death. "Jocasta's life has been absolutely reversed into death, yet in this logic it is Oedipus' reversal of knowledge that merits the term reversal. After this long silence on Jocasta's part, even the story of her suicide as an action requiring agency (and agency always equals activity) is obscured by Oedipus" (57). Kintz points out that, although she has just killed herself, the chorus is diverted in its attempt to report the incident by their concern for the protagonist of the plot – Oedipus. Similarly, in Anouilh's play the chorus informs Creon about his wife's death in the final moments of the play and he, like Oedipus, barely comments. The act has little impact on Creon. Eurydice dies quietly and it would seem the role she plays in her own death is almost diminished since she is passively described as if she were asleep and not dead as the result of a deliberate act of agency. The chorus reports, "her smile is still the same, scarcely a shade more melancholy. And if it were not for the red blot on the bed linen by her neck, one might think she were asleep" (70). Eurydice is hardly presented as an agent. Her suicide is passed over as silence and her meaning is lost because she is positioned as Creon's wife. She is the object of another subject and as such she is passive. It is a *feminine* position[12] and, as such, is represented as inferior. Although Eurydice is physically present in the story as she sits knitting and waiting "till the time comes for her to go to her room and die" (11), she does not speak. She is presented with no other identity than Creon's wife and Haemon's mother.

Loraux explains that women who committed suicide in classical Greek tragedy were free to take their lives, but not free enough to escape from the space to which they belong[13]. "The remote sanctum where they meet their death is equally the symbol of their life – a life that finds its meaning outside the self and is fulfilled only in the institutions of marriage and maternity, which tie women to the world and lives of men" (23). She claims that it is by men that women meet their death, and it is for men, usually, that they kill themselves. Antigone, however, is an exception. She does not die by any man's hand or order. Since she has never known the fulfillment of marriage or maternity, Antigone takes her life for herself alone.

Antigone stands in sharp contrast to her aunt. She is not passive and her language, both silent and verbal, is rich and complex. Antigone's suicide differs from Jocasta's and Eurydice's because it is not the result of knowledge (Oedipus's origins or Haemon's death), but rather a result of her own need to take back Creon's control over her life. She uses language and silent rhetoric to create herself as independent and in so doing appropriates Creon's power of language. As Kintz notes, "Colonized subjects and women can and do write and speak and know. They are neither mute nor mysterious, nor do they patiently wait for man as Namer to tell their story" (21).

Unlike her mother Jocasta who is misunderstood by her husband, Antigone is understood by Creon. When Jocasta begs Oedipus to stop his search for knowledge – the origin of the plague – he does not listen to her because as a woman "her words originate from the realm of excess, chance, and particularity" (Kintz 57). Oedipus' comment, "although you talk so well, Jocasta," indicates he is tempted by

her argument, but his pride does not allow him to listen. When Jocasta warns him about the dangers of knowledge, Oedipus' response is not about knowledge, but rather about what motivates Jocasta to speak. He accuses her of worrying about herself –perhaps she will discover that her husband comes from a low birth and she is the wife of a slave. As Kintz points out everything circles back to Oedipus. She argues further that Jocasta, like all women as Freud described them, was unable, perhaps too weak, to repress domestic concerns that conflicted with the public concerns of a city as a whole; she was limited by this inability to repress a concern for the physical and the concrete, remaining locked within the immediate sphere of the body, of life, and death and the immediacy of her concern for Oedipus, 'naturally' closer to the body and farther from reason. (58)

Antigone, however, is not driven by a need to protect the private at the expense of the public. Creon, who initially anticipates that Antigone is acting out of some silly emotional impulse and can be controlled, adopts a similar position to Oedipus when he tells his niece how he must be concerned with the needs of the city, "Kings, my girl, have other things to do than to surrender themselves to their private feelings" (44). His referral to Antigone as "my girl" allows him to underscore his role as superior and one directed by reason against her inferior role as female, one who is powerless and directed by emotion alone. But Creon understands Antigone's rhetoric. He is aware that his niece's wish to defy his order is not an impulsive act. Antigone is willing to sacrifice all that she holds dear in her private life such as her love and the promise of a future with Haemon. Antigone is able to repress a concern for the physical, even though she is afraid of physical pain

and she does not want to die. Antigone's concern is her reason, not her body. She is driven by a will to question the possibility of happiness in a world where her role is circumscribed by the needs of the state and she is denied the opportunity to realize her full potential as a women capable of independent thought and action.

Anouilh's play offers a number of gestic moments. The presentation of moral and social issues invites the audience to consider their own personal and political positions. For example, the conflict between idealism and reality is relevant to a society deeply involved in a war that demands compliance, yet generates resistance. In his play, Anouilh invites the audience to think for themselves. The social "gests" in *Antigone* are rhetorical strategies to provoke the audience to read beyond what is merely spoken.

Gestic moments include Antigone's rhetorical act of burying Polynices. It is a social "gest" in that such an act of defiance is socially relevant because it allows conclusions to be drawn about social circumstances. Burying her brother is an act that suggests the oppression of independent thought under tyranny. "And what a person can do, a person ought to do"(45), Antigone tells Creon, suggesting that people have a moral obligation toward each other even if the fulfillment of that obligation conflicts with social law. As a "gest" the rhetorical act of defiance makes visible the human potential to alter behavior. It functions as Brecht suggests: to put the spectator into a position where she can make comparisons about everything that influences the way in which human beings behave (86).

From a feminist perspective, it also signifies the oppression of women's autonomy in a patriarchal society where the rights that men enjoy are denied to

women. Creon explains to Antigone that he expected to be challenged on his political position one day but not by a "girl" such as Antigone; rather, he expected a "a pale young man" to make an assassination attempt. Men are expected to take action which might disrupt the state; they are simply exercising their civil and political rights. Women are not meant to challenge authority. Ismene exhorts her sister, "Don't try something which is beyond your strength. You are always defying the world, but you're only a girl, after all. Stay at home tonight" (29). By "strength," Ismene does not refer to physical strength because the burial is symbolic and not physically demanding. The strength that Antigone desires is the human right of independent thinking and evaluation. Her position as a woman living in a society managed by men renders her powerless.

Antigone's rhetorical act of suicide is another example of Brechtian "gest" because it signifies that without intellectual autonomy life is worthless. Antigone is offered the choice to abandon her convictions or her life. To live without the possibility of being an agent who evaluates renders life, for Antigone, impossible and so she chooses death. This choice conflicts with Creon's need to dominate and to maintain a rule which goes unchallenged and his need to dominate and control Antigone's mind as well. Creon does not wish to execute Antigone; he wishes her to surrender her insistence on thinking for herself. By forcing Creon to have her put to death, Antigone takes control of her life the only way she can.

In addition to generating knowledge and communicating her resistance, Antigone's acts of rhetorical silence also persuade. Her rhetorical speech combines appeals to the mind (*logos*), to the heart (*pathos*), and her speech is so spoken as to

make her credible (*ethos*). Antigone's ethical appeal is successfully persuasive because she is reputed to possess a good moral character. But Aristotle reminds us that although *ethos*, which includes a consideration of personal character, is the most persuasive appeal, it is the speech itself and not the speaker's reputation alone that produces credibility. Good moral character, for Aristotle, is evaluated in terms of received opinion unlike Plato's understanding of "Good" as that which relates to ideal principles. "In the *Ethics*, Aristotle emphasizes that the Good is not prescriptive but rather relativistic and subjective, in that it must be evaluated along a continuum of human values and situational particulars" (Johnson "Ethos" 102). The rhetorician need not be virtuous in the Platonic sense, but rather wise about human values, opinions, and motivations (Johnson "Ethos" 103).

Antigone's dialectic demonstrates her wisdom in terms of human values as she argues that life loses its value if compromised. Her opinions, such as her point that Creon had a choice to say "No" to power, and to what Antigone describes as the "vile" actions power generates, indicate her wisdom by differentiating between responsibility and power. Creon claims to have a responsibility to the people of Thebes while, in reality, he seeks only the power that he believes this responsibility entails. He cares not about the people; Creon cares about control. Antigone's motivations are wise because they grow from a need to discover truth – what price, for example, is she willing to pay to defend her individuality.

Antigone's logical appeal persuades the audience because her rhetoric is argument-centered. She is not merely defiant, wishing to die in order to avenge her uncle; rather, she is compelled to instruct him so that he will modify his original

position from one of rigid authoritarian to one who has the strength of will. The person who uses reason well, Plato tells us, not only wins our respect but places upon us a moral obligation to agree with his conclusion. Antigone uses reason convincingly and not only persuades the audience that she loves life so much she is willing to give it up, but persuades Creon as well.

When Steiner claims that the play ends with the suggestion that Creon makes contact with the world of childhood and explains how "Creon gently teases the child. It is madness, he tells him, to want to grow up. 'One ought never to become an adult'" (*Antigones* 194), he fails to note Antigone's continual references to her own childhood. How ironic for Creon to take this position about life and adulthood considering Antigone's earlier argument about happiness and the meaning of life. "I want to be sure of everything this very day; sure that everything will be as beautiful as when I was a little girl. If not, I want to die!"(58).

Antigone, I argue, represents the universe of childhood. The play opens with her return from burying Polynices. Antigone "buries" her brother with the same shovel she used when she was a little girl building sandcastles on the beach. She is childlike and the epitome of innocence as she dreamily speaks of the beauty of nature. Her nurse treats her like a very small child who must be checked in the middle of the night in case she has kicked off the covers. Antigone laments the passing of her innocence when she tells her nurse, "...I'm just a little young still for what I have to go through" (23). Later we learn of Antigone's feeble attempt to leave childhood behind and consummate her relationship with Haemon. She fails as Haemon laughs and Antigone departs in anger. Her preservation of the paper flower

that Polynices gave to her when she was young informs the audience of her wish to retain a link to her past.

Life begins with childhood and Creon's consideration of the child at the end of the play suggests that Antigone has persuaded him of the value of innocence and the power of untainted belief. Creon expresses his dismay when he discovers the child's shovel at the burial site and concludes that a "kid" is responsible for burying Polynices. He frets to himself that his enemies have corrupted a real child to his detriment, "Very touching! Very useful to the party, an innocent child. A martyr. ...A free gift to the cause: the precious, innocent blood of a child on my hands" (32). Creon understands the rhetorical power of innocence to persuade the people of his wickedness. At the end of the play, Anouilh reminds us that life goes on as Creon leaves for a meeting, that there are always children waiting in the wings to come forth and commit the same errors as their fathers. Creon's leaning on the child suggests the burden of the past weighs heavily on the shoulders of the young child.

Logos and *pathos* function in a complementary relationship to engage the audience. Emotional involvement when joined by reason in the process of analyzing or judging makes intelligent decision possible. Antigone's use of pathos is successful because the audience's emotions are addressed in conjunction with their reason. Aristotle's system of language insists that the audience unite all of their resources in communicating with one another. Lunsford and Ede understand Aristotle's system to mean that, "In rhetorical discourse the audience must be brought not only to knowledge of the subject but knowledge as relevant and significant for they are either indifferent, opposed, or in partial agreement...If the

whole person acts then it is the whole person to whom discourse in rhetoric must be directed" ("Distinctions" 43). The intellectual and emotional perspectives of the audience interact in Anouilh's play. We are persuaded intellectually by Antigone's rhetoric when she argues that she does not want to be dominated, nor will she accept life if it means she cannot exercise self-mastery. Our emotional adherence is won when our sense of justice is challenged. Creon orders that Antigone be walled up in the cave only because he is afraid not to execute her. Justice is not a the center of his decision and we feel the tragedy of the situation.

Aristotle's suggestion that the whole person be addressed in a rhetorical situation is echoed by Brecht when he explains that while the audience is not encouraged to feel empathy for the protagonist they are expected to be involved emotionally as well as intellectually:

> It is not true, though it is sometimes suggested, that epic theatre (which is not simply undramatic theatre, as is also sometimes suggested) proclaims the slogan: 'Reason this side, Emotion (feeling) that.' It by no means renounces emotion, least of all the sense of justice, the urge to freedom, and righteous anger; it is so far from renouncing these that it does not even assume their presence, but tries to arouse or to reinforce them. The 'attitude of criticism' which it tries to awaken in its audience cannot be passionate enough for it. (Willett 227)

Brecht's theatre is concerned with the stage-audience relationship. Susan Bennett explains how Brecht's theatrical process operates in a context that questions not

specific concerns, aesthetic or political, but instead questions those social relations which are generally accepted as universal or natural (30). Anouilh's play works in a similar fashion. He, too, presents his theatre as "an apparatus of the society in which it exists" (Bennett 30). His questions are not meant to be political nor aesthetic; rather, he considers the social relations with which Antigone, a woman struggling to exercise her right to think, must contend. Anouilh's use of the chorus employs Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt.* The chorus opens the play and he interrupts the action with a presentation of his theory of tragedy. He also speaks directly to Creon and concludes the play with a commentary on life as a process that goes on and on, regardless of one's beliefs and aspirations. The chorus serves to distance the audience and prevent the audience from feeling empathy for, or identifying with, the characters. Rather, since the chorus speaks directly to us, we reminded that we are in a theatre watching actors and consequently, we are "offered a chance to interpose our judgement" (Willett 201).

Antigone's language of resistance is a rhetoric of silence. It is a strategy that communicates her independence while generating the knowledge that life can be "good." Antigone persuades her listener to consider the individual's right to control her own thinking and to pursue such ideals as the "good" life.

NOTES

[1] All references and citations from Sophocles's play come from: *Antigone.* Trans. Richard Emil Braun. New York: Oxford UP, 1989. I have followed Braun's spelling of the names Creon/Kreon. Because the play is not divided into acts and is written for continuous playing without interval the citations are parenthetically documented by line number alone.

[2] Anouilh claims not to have entertained any political interest. In an interview for the Washington Post in 1987, Richard Pearson writes that French audiences interpreted the work as a "Resistance" play and made Anouilh a hero for his clever defiance of Nazi power. "Mr. Anouilh later said that he though he was pleased, he was genuinely surprised. Unlike many of his generation, he did not make a career of beating his breast while boasting of resistance work; he maintained that he had neither the time nor the inclination for politics."

[3] Taylor explains the difference between simply preferring one choice over another and being able to articulate one's preferences. In the case of music, for example, a strong evaluator will have acquired an evaluative language to talk about music, to explain, for instance, why Bach is preferable to Liszt.

[4] Taylor claims that this concept of evaluation and depth is what lies behind our use of the metaphor of depth applied to people. "Someone is shallow in our view when we feel that he is insensitive, unaware or unconcerned about issues touching the quality of his life which seem to us basic or important. He lives on the surface because he seeks to fulfill desires without being touched by the 'deeper' issues, what these desires express and sustain in the way of modes of life; or his concern with such issues seems to us to touch on trivial or unimportant questions, for example, he is concerned about the glamour of his life, or how it will appear, rather than (to us) real issues of the quality of life"(26). This description seems to fit my reading of Lear, Herod, as well as Creon and Tereus as they all are concerned with the 'surface' desire to construct a specific public image of themselves.

[5] All citations from Jean Anouilh's play *Antigone* come from: *Antigone: A Tragedy by Jean Anouilh.* Trans. Lewis Galantière. London: Methuen, 1978. Citations are parenthetically documented by page number alone.

[6] In the *Phaedo,* Plato suggests that learning is recollection and that, if this is so, our soul must of necessity exist elsewhere before us, before it was imprisoned in the body. This previous ideal existence which subsequently is not remembered or only dimly recalled must be discovered anew through the process of recollection (42).

[7] Although, as Loraux explains, women's deaths in tragedy are described in the same way as men's there is still a distinction to be made in the type of violent death. There

is in practice a difference between men and women. Death for men, with a few exceptions – such as the deaths of Ajax and Haemon, who committed suicide, and that of Menoeceus, who offered himself up as a sacrificial victim – takes the form of murder. The sons of Oedipus, for example, killed each other on the battlefield. "As for women, some of them were murdered, such as Clytemnestra and Megara, but many more had recourse to suicide, as the only escape in a desperate misfortune – Jocasta and, again in Sophocles, Deianira, Antigone, and Eurydice; Phaedra and, again in Euripides, Evadne and, in the background of the *Helen*, Leda"(4).

[8] Loraux claims that death is a natural metaphor for marriage because in the course of the wedding procession the young girl renounces her self: "...In sending young girls to their death, it [tragedy] turns the metaphor round: virgins in tragedy leave the abode of the dead just as they might their father's home for the home of the husband, and this can happen whether their unspecified destiny is to find 'marriage in Hades' or to find it in union with Hades himself" (37-38). In *Antigone*, Creon orders that his niece be buried in the "Cave of Hades" and when Antigone discovers this she cries, "O tomb! O bridal bed! Alone!"(797).

[9] Not all women who choose to commit suicide do so by hanging. Loraux notes, however, that hanging in classical Greek drama was the woman's way of death – Jocasta, Phaedra, Leda, Antigone; the man's way of death is by the sword. She explains that in the event a man was driven to suicide, as in the case of Haemon, it would be bloody. "Even suicide in tragedy obeys this firm rule, that a man must die at a man's hand, by the sword and with blood spilt"(12). Some women, however, as in the case of Eurydice in *Antigone*, choose to die by the sword. Loraux explains that death by hanging was associated with marriage, or rather, with an excessive valuation of the status of bride – while a suicide that shed blood was associated with maternity. She uses the example of Jocasta who, in Euripides' the *Phoenissae*, survived the revelation of her incest but the death of her sons leads her to turn herself on the sword that killed them. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* Jocasta hangs herself in her bed when she discovers the truth about her marriage (14-15). We can apply this view of suicide to Anouilh's Eurydice who slits her throat in her bed when she discovers that her son is dead. Her suicide was driven by her identification with her role as a mother. Antigone, on the other hand, kills herself in the manner of a grieving wife because she does indeed grieve for this role she was compelled to relinquish.

[10] Loraux notes that the staging of suicides in Sophocles even follows a standard sequence – a silent exit, a choral chant, and then the announcement by a messenger that, out of sight, the woman has killed herself (20-21).

[11] Oedipus' transcendence does not happen in the same play in which Jocasta takes her life but rather in *Oedipus at Colonus*.

[12] Kintz explains how the male protagonist finds himself passive in relation to the Cause of things, a Cause which lies outside the practical sphere of human activity and

knowledge, and it is the recognition of this moment of passivity, of this logically feminine moment, which seems to constitute tragic recognition. For the female protagonist, however, passivity is a mark of inferiority in opposition to masculine activity.

[13] By "space" Loraux refers to the place where women go to end their lives which is usually the bedroom and it represents the narrow space that tragedy grants to women for the exercise of their will. The bedroom ties women to their roles as wives and child bearers and their deaths in their beds confirms and reestablishes their connections with marriage and maternity (23).

CHAPTER 6

IN VISIBLE WORDS: SILENT RHETORIC in *THE LOVE OF THE NIGHTINGALE*

The idea that a "nothing to be seen," a something not subject to the rule of visibility or of specula(riza)tion, might yet have some reality, would indeed be intolerable to man.

---Luce Irigaray

Greek mythology has provided a rich source of dramatic material for centuries. Indeed, the study of myths has influenced the work of anthropologists, classicists, and psychiatrists who have shown how myths are rooted in culture and reflect the complexity of social family structures. While there are many varied definitions of the term "myth," myths are usually accepted as stories of unknown origin that serve to explain some practice, belief, institution, or natural phenomenon, and are especially associated with religious rites and beliefs. Others would expand the definition to include tales dealing with all circumstances of human life. In this century Freud and Jung were fascinated with the potential of myths to reveal patterns of human behavior. While Freud connected myths and dreams, Jung interpreted myths as the projection of what he called the "collective unconscious" of the race, that is, as a revelation of the continuing psychic tendencies of society. Thus myths contain images or "archetypes" that are the traditional expressions, developed over thousands of years, of symbols upon which the society as a whole has come to depend. In an effort to create a comprehensive poetics of criticism Northrop Frye relied on a system of archetypes to explain literary patterns. He claimed these

patterns are suggestive of the entire range of potentially significant actions in human life.[1]

The tragic legend of Tereus and the daughters of Pandion is a fascinating study of human action in its treatment of desire, lust, betrayal and revenge. Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses* which includes the tale of Tereus, has dominated the subsequent tradition and provided the basic text for a study of mythology. Timberlake Wertenbaker's recent play, *The Love of the Nightingale* (1988), is an interpretation of the tragic story of Philomele, Procne, and Tereus, which departs from Ovid's version most notably in her treatment of the ending.

Unlike Ovid's version which presents Tereus as a war hero and victim of the uncontrollable rage of Procne and Philomele, as one who unknowingly consumes his own son, Wertenbaker's story is about Philomele. It is a feminist play because it exposes the oppression that women experience as a result of the supremacy of masculine power and authority. While the first word the audience hears is "War," the story is not about masculine military exploits, but rather about the battles that two women must fight in order to survive. In *The Love of the Nightingale,* Philomele is the hero who takes control of her situation, settles the score, and continues to tell her tale. Wertenbaker's character, like Salomé, understands the power of language to create oneself. Just as Salomé is "honey-mad" for language and appropriates power by taking ownership of language, Philomele re-creates herself as a subject and resists Tereus's control by reclaiming her power of speech.

We are introduced to the sisters in scene 2 where Procne tells Philomele that she will be marrying Tereus and leaving Athens for Thrace. Philomele promises to

visit her sister. Five years later, Philomele keeps her promise and agrees to take the dangerous journey away from her comfortable home and travel with her brother-in-law, Tereus. When they finally reach Thrace, Tereus can no longer contain his lust. He rapes Philomele and cuts out her tongue to silence her. For another five years he keeps her imprisoned in a hut as his concubine and tells his wife that Philomele is dead. But Philomele is not idle. Over the years she makes three dolls and carries them with her at all times. It is finally on the feast of the Bacchus where Philomele is taken on an outing that she sees an opportunity to tell her story through puppetry using her dolls. Procne is in the audience; she recognizes Philomele and listens to her story. In Ovid's version Procne kills her son, but in Wertenbaker's it is Philomele who kills Itys; while Tereus pursues the two sisters, all three are transformed into birds. Philomele becomes a nightingale, Procne a swallow and Tereus a hoopoe. But Wertenbaker's play includes one more scene where Itys is with the birds and he loves to hear his aunt sing.

Discourse is a very important aspect of Wertenbaker's story. *The Love of the Nightingale*, is a play about language and voice. Wertenbaker shows how a woman's voice is an integral aspect of who she is as a human being, and that to lose her words is to become invisible. Unlike Cordelia who freely chooses to employ silent rhetoric to communicate her love, Philomele is condemned to silence.

When Tereus takes physical and sexual possession of his sister-in-law and brutally forces her into slavery, Philomele's verbal rhetoric allows her to resist her oppressor by waging dialectical warfare. Tereus understands Philomele's facility with philosophical discourse. It first appears that Tereus cuts his sister-in-law's

tongue to silence her from telling anyone how she was violated. But there is no one to tell because he imprisons her in a hut with only Niobe and a servant to care for her. I argue that Philomele's probing questions that force him to see the truth about himself frighten Tereus. When he wants to tell Philomele that he loves her, he does so by telling her, "No, no. The play. I am Phaedra. I love you. That way" (29). His claim to identify with Phaedra, from the play *Hippolytus*, is a ploy to manipulate Philomele by turning her own philosophical concerns about love around. As a Phaedra figure, Tereus creates himself as a hero who is overcome by an irresistible passion that threatens his honor and as one who is not altogether guilty.

Although Philomele has lost her power to speak, she disproves Niobe's comment that, "The silence of the dead can turn into a wild chorus. But the one alive who cannot speak, that one has truly lost all power" (36). While Philomele cannot "speak" she has not lost all power. When Tereus returns to speak with Philomele, the stage directions indicate that she "*stands still*" while he tells her.

You should have kept quiet.

(*Pause.*)

I did what I had to.

(*Pause.*)

You threatened the order of my rule.

(*Pause.*)

How could I allow rebellion? I had to keep you quiet. I am not sorry. Except for your pain. But it was you or me.

(*Long pause.*)

You are more beautiful now in your silence...You are mine. My sweet, my songless, my caged bird.

(*He kisses her. She is still.*) (36-37) [2]

The pauses that punctuate Tereus's discourse indicate the spaces where Philomele silently answers with her body. She stands still. Her complete lack of movement is a creative appropriation of the silence that was imposed to contain and subdue her. It is a form of resistance that communicates her refusal to submit that she "has truly lost all power." Philomele's message compels Tereus' need to go on talking and justify his actions.

Both silent and verbal discourse, including pauses, and conversation, are the major dramatic activity in the play. In fact, *The Love of the Nightingale* is almost static, taking place within a series of psychological revelations which, through monologues and limited dialogues, focus on the inner movements of its characters as they struggle with desire, honor, and truth. The twenty-one scenes that constitute the play consist of conversations where characters converse with each other and with themselves. After Philomele's tongue is ripped out of her mouth, for example, we learn that she has been busy making dolls in the five years of captivity from a conversation between Philomele's nurse and a servant.

In addition to the characters, the choruses also converse. The male chorus members function as narrator and address the audience; they do not speak to Tereus nor do they speak to each other. The female chorus members play more than one role. In addition to addressing the audience and commenting on events, each member is given a name and collectively the chorus acts as Procne's companions. It

is from a discussion among members of the female chorus that we learn about Procne's boredom, homesickness and grief.

The male chorus offers information to the audience about the war and the journey that Tereus and Philomele take from Athens to Thrace. While they comment on the past and ensuing action, their role is neutral, they speak from an objective and detached perspective; that is, they are merely reporters. In Scene 6, the male chorus explains, "We choose to be accurate, and we record" (14). They cannot control the events that are about to take place; their role is to observe.

However, they also philosophize. In Scene 8, they engage in a dialectic with the audience as they explore the meaning of "myth." A myth, they claim, is both public speech and content. They wonder if the speech becomes more indirect when the content is increasingly unacceptable. "How," they ask, "has the meaning of myth been transformed from public speech to an unlikely story? ... Now it is a remote tale" (19). The male chorus warn the audience that they cannot "rephrase" Philomele's tale, "If we could, why would we trouble to show you the myth?" (19). This suggests to the audience that when the content of the myth/tale is unacceptable, the tale cannot be told with words; it must be shown and the audience must construct its own meaning. Their philosophy foreshadows Philomele's showing of her tale, through re-enactment, to her sister.

The philosophical discussion in Scene 8 is followed by a discussion among the members of the female chorus in Scene 9. The women of Thrace are concerned about their inability to communicate the impending danger they feel. Hero tells her companions:

> Sometimes I feel I know things but I cannot prove that I know them or that what I know is true and when I doubt my knowledge it disintegrates into a senseless jumble of possibilities, a puzzle that will not be reassembled, the spider web in which I lie, immobile, and truth paralysed. (20)

June comments, "I am the ugly duckling of fact, so most of the time I try to keep out of the way" (20). Procne is impatient with her companions, the members of the female chorus. She complains that although they claim to sense something, they are unable to name the danger. When Hero and Echo tell Procne that "Images require sympathy," and that this is "another way of listening," they foreshadow how Procne must later listen to her sister's story through the visual images that Philomele creates using the puppets.

The different functions of the male and female choruses signal the differing roles that men and women play in the two societies – Athens and Thrace; it also underscores the different ways in which men and women communicate. The Athenian men claim to be more objective; they do not influence change and they do not communicate with each other. Their role is to observe and philosophize. When they announce at the beginning of the play that a war is taking place, they merely report. We see how the men engage in dialectic when, at the end of Scene 1, the male chorus suggest that perhaps the story is not about war. Although they claim that "War is the inevitable background" (2), the story is about the battles that two sisters are forced to endure.

Indeed, it is the female chorus, the Thracian women, who are down in the trenches attempting to effect change. Unlike the male chorus who do not speak to the characters, the female chorus attempt to influence Procne by warning her of danger. They imply that her way of knowing – scientifically, logically – based upon the Athenian culture of philosophical reasoning is limiting. The female chorus discuss Procne's dismissal of their fears:

> *Hero*: I say danger, she thinks of earthquakes. Doesn't know the first meaning of danger is the power of a lord or master.
>
> *Helen*: That one is always in someone's danger.
>
> *Echo*: In their power, at their mercy.
>
> *June*: All service is danger and all marriage too. (20)

Although Procne comes from Athens where women have "a reputation for wisdom" (5), she is able to understand danger only in the form of earthquakes or "marauding bands."

Although the Thracian females are identified as communicators, they are unable to express themselves in the conventional form. Helen explains: "Let me put it another way: I have trouble expressing myself. The world I see and the words I have do not match" (20). Unlike their Athenian counterparts, the female chorus are not objective thinkers; rather, they know their world through their senses and intuitive feelings.

As a play that revolves around language, *The Love of the Nightingale* serves to underscore the dilemma Procne and Philomele face when they lose their words.

At the beginning of Scene 4, Procne asks, no one in particular, "Where have all the words gone?"(6). She is depressed when she has no one with whom she can speak. She claims she cannot speak to her husband or her son, and, although she speaks the same language as her companions, "the words point to different things" (7). She tells the chorus, "I am an Athenian: I know the truth is found in logic and happiness lies in the truth... truth is good and beautiful. See...I must have someone to talk to" (7). The conflation of roles, chorus, and companions highlights the inattention Procne receives from her company. As companions, they rarely address her and as the female chorus, they openly discuss Procne as if she were invisible. Shared discourse is important for survival because our relations with others and their recognition of us construct social and personal identities. Without such recognition, Procne "sits alone, hour after hour, turns her head and laments"(6). She is alone because she misses the interactive element of listening, the co-respondance she experienced with Philomele.

Philomele loses her words when her tongue is brutally cut from her mouth. She is a philosopher, but unlike Procne who orders her companions to be "silent" (21), Philomele craves discourse and intellectual inquiry. To be robbed of her ability to question and to discover knowledge is to be robbed of her identity as a thinker. Plato says that thought is like discourse and we do not really know something unless we can give an account of it – we take something which is puzzling and we use speech to describe it, we examine it, articulate its different aspects, identify them, and relate them. Rhetorical discourse is an integral aspect of Philomele's life. In Scene 2 Philomele wonders if the philosophers will start speaking again after the

war and she wants to go and listen to them. Procne tells Itys that his aunt "could speak with the philosophers. She was bold and quick" (37). We witness Philomele, while on the journey to Thrace, engage the captain in a dialectic about truth and beauty. She explains how the philosophers discover truth through questioning and that they are willing to modify their original views once knowledge about the subject is generated. Philomele tells her listener, "...when I've proved all this, Captain, you will have to renounce the beliefs of those wild men" (16). Philomele understands how the philosophers use dialectic as a method for sorting truth from falsehood.

In Thrace, however, there are no philosophers. Philomele is leaving not only her home and family but a world of art and philosophy. Tereus recognizes the differences between the two worlds when he tells the King and Queen that "What I want – is to bring some of your country to mine, its manners, its ease, its civilized discourse" (5). While Athens promotes the theatre and intellectual pursuits, the people of Thrace engage in sport and combat. In contrast to Athens, Thrace is a world of barbarian practices and patriarchal domination. Indeed, the people of Athens are relieved when the Thracians finally leave their city because the Thracian army "...had become expensive, rude and rowdy" (5). The differing cultures is evident when Procne complains that, although her companions speak the same language as the Athenians, the Thracian language is one devoid of logic, philosophy, and the pursuit of truth. A disregard for the truth precludes, for the educated Athenian, the possibility of "civilized discourse."

When King Pandion explains to Tereus that "plays help me think. You catch a phrase, recognize a character. Perhaps this play will help us come to a decision" (9), he hopes to discover a solution to his own problem in the experience of others. Like Hamlet who presents a play to his mother Gertrude and her new husband, Claudius, in hopes of confirming once and for all that Claudius is guilty of murder and his decision to revenge his father's death is the right one, Pandion hopes to confirm that he is making the right decision in allowing Philomele to travel to Thrace.

The play-within-a-play serves to foreshadow the future action in Wertenbaker's play. When Philomele tries to convince her uncertain father that it is safe for her to travel with Tereus to visit Procne, she explains, "Father, I'm not Hippolytus. You haven't cursed me. And Tereus isn't Phaedra" (12). The claim that she is not the doomed son of Hippolytus anticipates the suffering she too will experience because of a lie. When King Pandion asserts that plays allow him to "recognize" characters, the audience sees how he fails to recognize the similarity between his role as father and that of King Theseus, as they both lose their children in the name of passion. He carelessly associates his son-on-law with Hippolytus when Tereus states that he prefers sport to theatre. King Pandion fails to see how Tereus will identify his passionate lust for Philomele with Phaedra's desire for her son-in-law and, like the character in the play Tereus is willing to lie in order to disguise his actions.

It is Philomele, however, who openly "recognizes" how she feels about life in the character of Phaedra. During the play, Philomele and Tereus engage in a

commentary about the character's actions and Philomele freely expresses what she wants from life. She comments that it is not Phaedra's fault she is passionately in love with her stepson and she tells Tereus, "When you love you want to imprison the one you love in your words, in your tenderness," and "Sometimes I feel the whole world beating inside me"(11). Tereus later turns Philomele's words against her. After he rapes his sister-in-law, he accuses her of seducing him with her words. "Who can resist the gods? Those are your words. Philomele. They convinced me, your words" (29). He blames her and attempts to justify his actions by claiming Philomele was "asking for it" through her language.

Like Herod who feared the power of Salomé's self- expression, Tereus is afraid of Philomele's words. Herod consequently silenced Salomé as a way of distancing himself from Iokanaan's murder and thus avoiding retribution in the event the prophet was indeed a representative of God. Tereus silences Philomel, in order to disarm her. Without her words she is powerless to speak the truth. By silencing her, he believes he will be spared from facing the truth: that the rape was not Philomele's fault but rather his own act; that he lied about Procne's death; that he is a man "of tiny spirit and shrivelled courage" (35-36). Philomele threatens Tereus with the truth; indeed, her last word before he cuts out her tongue is "truth."

If the pen is a metaphorical penis (Gilbert and Gubar 3) for the writer, then the tongue must be a metaphorical penis for the speaker. The roles of writer and speaker are, indeed, replete with power and are linked to the notion of the self. The "I," for example, is implicitly present in every act of writing and speaking. Joan Didion explains why she likes the title of one of her essays, "Why I Write." The

sound of the words reiterates selfhood and "writing is the act of saying I, of imposing yourself on other people...It's an aggressive, even a hostile act" (17). Tereus is threatened by Philomele's "hostile" act of speaking against him. Her words hold the potential to strip the man of his dignity, his self-concept as a king worthy of his position, and also his authority. After Philomele is raped, her "body bleeding" and her "spirit ripped open" (34), she is filled with questions. She wants Tereus to explain why he so brutally abused her; she wants to understand. She demands that he answer, but he cannot. He is left, as Philomele is quick to point out, with "nothing inside" (35). Philomele's aggressive appropriation of language disarms Tereus. He has lost his words and his power to defend himself. When he does not answer her questions and does not enter into the dialectic about blame and cause that Philomele craves, she attacks him with the only source of power she possesses -- her words. She wounds Tereus with questions about Procne:

> Did you tell her that despite my fear, your violence, when I saw you in your nakedness I couldn't help laughing because you were so shrivelled, so ridiculous and it is not the way it is on the statutes? Did you tell her you cut me because you yourself had no strength ? Did you tell her I pitied her for having in her bed a man who could screech such quick and ugly pleasure, a man of jelly beneath his hard skin, did you tell her that? (35)

Philomele's choice to frame her attack in the form of questions is an effective rhetorical strategy. It was Socrates who gave to questioning the highest rank among the four steps inherent in dialectic. When analyzing the four rhetorical strategies (to

question, to cross-examine, to respond, and to refute) included in the dialectical method of discourse, it is useful to note the alternating roles of the participants. Michael Myer explains the process:

> As each participant, in turn, ...becomes the questioner, his interlocutor, inversely, takes on the role of answerer. It is for this reason that dialectic – as discourse composed of questions and answers – makes the interlocutors absolutely equal, and makes it impossible for them to take on a position of authority with respect to the others. (Golden 32)

Philomele is a rhetor who understands this perspective on dialectic. Her strategy of posing questions places her on an equal, although temporary, position of authority with Tereus. In this position she challenges him to participate in a process of self-discovery where he could potentially come to know himself.

Sharing his position of authority with a woman is frightening for Tereus. Her words that wield power like swords are dangerous because they render Philomele visible and, therefore, she is no longer the guarantee against his castration anxiety.[3] Her words hold the potential to destroy the process of production, reproduction, and mastery of meaning dominated by the phallus ("Cause" Irigaray 407). Philomele's tongue is a phallic symbol that threatens to destroy Tereus – to rape him, to humiliate him, to leave him, as he left Philomele, "bleeding" and with his "spirit ripped open." Tereus's counter move is simply to remove her source of power – to castrate Philomele.

Luce Irigaray's definition of what it means for a woman to experience castration is worth considering. She writes that,

> Woman's castration is defined as her having nothing you can see, as her *having* nothing. In her having nothing penile, in seeing that she has No Thing. Nothing *like* man. That is to say, *no sex/organ* that can be seen in a *form* capable of founding its reality, reproducing its truth. *Nothing to be seen is equivalent to having no thing. No being and no truth.* ("Cause" 405)

When Tereus cuts off her organ of speech, he is severing her most vital organ for the reproduction of truth and the creation of self.

At the end of the play, he tells Procne that Philomele was responsible for her fate, "I loved her. When I silenced her, it was from love. She didn't want my love. She could only mock, and soon rebel, she was dangerous" (47). He suggests that it was not his fault because he loved her and he was a victim of her ruthless uncaring and consequently a threat to his authority.

Philomele's discourse is threatening to the king because it is a source of power unfamiliar to Tereus. He fails to understand how rhetoric and philosophical discourse functions as a form of control and power. Taylor explains that language is an instrument of control in the assemblage of ideas, which is thought or mental discourse. "It is an instrument of control in gaining knowledge of the world as objective process" (*Agency* 226). The alternative, he claims, "is to lose control, to slip onto a kind of slavery; where it is no longer I who make my lexicon, by definitional fiat, but rather it takes shape independently and in doing this shapes my

thought" (226). The physical power as domination is what controls the world, as Tereus knows it and not personal power.[4] He does not understand how the intellectual interaction between the captain and Philomele is attractive to her. Rather than exercise his personal power by joining the dialectic and taking part in the assemblage of ideas, Tereus slays the captain. For him, this is control and a show of power.

Women who are denied the power of speech are deemed mad and they do not survive.[5] Shoshana Felman writes in "Women and Madness: the Critical Phallacy" that what we consider 'madness', whether it appears in women or in men, is either the acting out of the devalued female role or the total or partial rejection of one's sex-role stereotype (7). In order for Philomele to be regarded as healthy, she must adjust to and accept the behavioral norms for her sex. Felman notes that the social role assigned to women has been traditionally that of serving an image, authoritative and central, of man. A woman is, first and foremost, a daughter/a mother/a wife. Philomele, now deformed and mute, is deprived of her role as daughter because she is removed from her family and of the possibility of fulfilling the roles of mother or wife because she is no longer desirable. When Tereus wants to be rid of Philomele, he orders her nurse to take her to the Bacchae. Niobe tells the servant, "Tereus said, get her out, quickly, into the city. She'll be lost there. Another madwoman, no one will notice. Could have cut off her tongue in frenzied singing to the gods" (39). The fact that "no one will notice." highlights the fact of Philomele's invisibility.

Philomele is motivated to employ silent rhetoric because she knows that without her words she cannot survive; she is rendered invisible. Tereus has robbed her of her dignity and exercised the ultimate power over her by re-creating her as a madwoman, a "king's fancy." Philomele is compelled to speak the truth and will discover in her case the available means of persuasion. Although she has lost the power of verbal speech, Philomele is never silenced, and I argue that her most powerful rhetoric begins when her tongue is cut from her mouth. Her performance with the puppets, her silent dialectic with Procne, and her killing of Itys communicates, generates knowledge, and persuades.

Philomele communicates her story using the dolls to re-enact the rape and her mutilation. Her story generates knowledge because her audience, especially Procne, discovers that all is not well in the kingdom. Procne learns that Philomele is alive and that Tereus has deceived her. Philomele also learns her own mind. Langer attributes the motive for language to be the need of individuals to transform experience into concepts. "We are driven to the symbolization and articulation of feeling when we *must* understand it to keep ourselves oriented in society and nature (Langer *Feeling* 253). By interpreting and expressing her experience, Philomele is able to "make sense of the emotional chaos," which leads her to take action and to change the future by ending the cycle of bloodshed with Itys' death. Philomele's silent rhetoric communicates the truth about her situation. And it persuades her audience because it is scientifically demonstrable, artistically creative, philosophically reasonable, and socially concerned.[6]

Philomele wants her audience to take her seriously; she wants her listeners to believe that her story is true and to heed her warnings. Like the scientist, she must demonstrate this truth with facts, empirical verifiability, or experimental replication. Philomele's use of the puppets when she re-enacts the rape is a replication of the king's violent acts. The story becomes a "fact" when she opens her mouth to reveal the empty space. The audience, including Procne, is satisfied with the evidence and is persuaded that her story is true.

Her rhetoric is artistically creative because it is performance. Philomele directs the story by strategically playing the role of the king using the male doll as a mask, and Niobe unwittingly aids Philomele's telling of the rape by yelling out to the crowd "A mad girl, a mad girl. Help me." As a spectacle it is persuasive because it engages the audience's attention. Susan Bennett claims that how far the audience accepts the performance's receptive strategies will generally depend on some shared socio-cultural background between the text and the audience (142). The crowd that has gathered around Philomele comes from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, but during the feast of the Bacchus they all share the same "background" – they are all women because the men are not allowed on the streets of Thrace.

For a brief period, the patriarchal and military world of Thrace is transformed into a matriarchal festival where the women hold the swords and lances. Soldiers are ordered to stand by the palace all night because the Thracian enemies know that the night of the Bacchic festival is a "strange night" (42). "It is supposed to be a woman's mystery" (42), one soldier complains. Niobe explains to

the servant that "no place is safe from the Bacchae" (39), women run wild and drunk carrying torches and holding flutes to their mouths.

The socio-cultural background that the Thracian audience share with the performers includes not only their gender and their experiences of the Bacchic festival, but also their experiences of the patriarchal and military world of Thrace. Socially the crowd shares an interest or curiosity in the interrelationship between the King and Queen and exhibits this curiosity when Philomele presents her "text" involving the puppets that represent the royal couple and a young woman.

If Philomele had attempted to engage the attention of the audience by presenting a written text, such as the "text" that Philomela creates in the form of a tapestry in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, rather than a performed one, her persuasive power would have been diminished. Unlike a text that is written, or in Ovid's example woven and intended for a reader such as Procne, performance addresses a wider audience. Philomele's show is presented to the community of Thracian women and, consequently, the theatre audience sees both the "text" and the characters "reading the text" in the form of the performance. Rather than hearing Procne read and seeing her react to her sister's story, the audience is persuaded because they are actively "reading" as well when they watch the puppets tell the powerful story.

Philomele's silent rhetoric is persuasive because it is philosophically reasonable. Hart claims that in order to be understood by others the rhetor must be reasonable and her rhetoric must make a kind of "patterned" sense (10). Philomele's rhetoric makes sense because there is logic in the progression of her story. One

cannot argue with the evidence. Even Procne, who is at first reluctant to accept the story, believes her. Philomele persuasively demonstrates the horrific consequences of patriarchal dominance and the bloody future it promises. She communicates the pressing need for change when she irrevocably alters the future by killing Itys.

Philomele's warning that there is a need for change falls under what Hart describes as the rhetorical realm of the socially concerned. When she abandons her solitude by leaving the hut and preparing to speak against the violence to which she had been subjected, Philomele becomes a public person. She is concerned not only with expressing the truth about her own dilemma but rather the truth about all of humanity. The female chorus prepares us for the slaying of Itys when they suggest that without words to demand, or beg, or accuse, or forgive, or forget, without words to discover and create and change, and without words to pose questions and discover answers, there is no future. They ask, "what else was there?" and,

> We can ask. Words will grope and probably not find.
>
> But if you silence the question.
>
> Imprison the mind that asks.
>
> Cut out its tongue.
>
> You will have this.
>
> We show you a myth.
>
> Image. Echo.
>
> A child is the future. (45-46)

Itys is the future and represents the cycle of patriarchal domination, bloodshed and silencing which must be halted.

Philomele's rhetorical act of killing Itys is gestic. The act is a visual sign which "leads to conclusions about the entire structure of society in a particular (transient) time"(Willett 98). The brutality of Itys's murder exposes how violence begets violence. It warns us that although the cycle of patriarchal aggression must stop, it will be costly and destructive. Niobe expresses the power dynamics in the gendered social relations that Wertenbaker represents in her play when she reflects on life amidst Philomele's screams for help. Niobe thinks that Philomele should have consented to her rape because it would have been easier. Women's lot is one where, "You bend your head...You bend it even more. Power is something you can't resist." Philomele, Niobe believes, will understand this, "She'll accept it in the end. Have to. We do"(30). This aggressive patriarchal power traps Philomele in prison and into sexual bondage. In order to disrupt this power dynamic Philomele must destroy so she can create the potential for a new social attitude. She kills Itys to free both him and society from the oppression of patriarchal aggression. As a social "gest", the act suggests the battle that women must wage in order to be liberated from roles as sex objects that render them invisible.

The telling of Philomele's story where verbal language is replaced by a performance using puppets is also a gestic act. Philomele's story exposes the relationship between communication and identity. Her struggle with the large clumsy dolls points to the human need to be heard and to have a voice. As Linda Loman tells her sons in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*, "attention must finally be paid," or we cannot exist. Without her voice, Philomele has lost her identity as a women who can speak with the philosophers. Now she is considered

mad and therefore invisible. The only way she can combat this invisibility is to re-create herself as a speaking subject. To lose her words and her ability to communicate is to lose her identity.

Philomele's silent rhetoric appeals to her audience because her persuasive strategies are directed by *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Although Philomele's "personal character" informs her persuadability, it is her "speech" that leads the audience to perceive her as credible. Philomele's ethical appeal is most evident in her dialectic with Procne. Procne is a resistant audience because she does not want to believe this mad slave before her is indeed her younger sister. Procne does not want to believe that her husband is responsible for the rape and mutilation of this woman. Philomele has told her story and now stands before Procne and looks into her eyes. She does not nod or shake her head in response to Procne's probing questions and demand to, "Do something. Make me know you showed the truth" (41). Philomele understands that Procne's questions will generate the knowledge that Procne needs to understand the truth. Nan Johnson reminds us that for Aristotle, "rhetoric is an art that facilitates decision-making; consequently, 'ethos' is defined as a pragmatic strategy which serves practical wisdom in human affairs. The rhetorician need not be virtuous in a Platonic objective sense, only wise about human values, opinions, and motvations" (103). Philomele's wisdom about human values and motivations is evident in her rhetorical choice to stand and patiently wait for Procne to "see" the truth. Her speech and her faith in the role of rhetoric to discover truth inform her credibility.

Philomele's rhetoric as a dramatic form of action reveals her character as a Platonic rhetor. Like Salomé, Philomele is courageous. She confronts Tereus despite Niobe's warning that she remain silent and consent to her new role as concubine. Philomele is compelled to tell her story and to generate the knowledge that produces action and change. She is deaf to Niobe's exhortations to "get him to provide for you," and "Get some coins if you can." Niobe tells Philomele, "Don't make him angry. He might still be interested. That would be excellent" (33). Philomele will never submit to the sexual bargain that Niobe suggests. She knows that her sister is still alive and exemplifies the Platonic virtue of justice. Philomele's consistent refusal to accept the role as concubine of her sister's husband demonstrates how she will only "enjoy her possessions in accordance with the law" (*Rhetoric* 57).

Philomele is wise. She is a thinker and a speaker and understands the role language plays in the creation of identity. Like Salomé she understands what she must do and how she must persevere and be practical in order to meet her ends. To do as Niobe suggests and to accept her fate would render Philomele invisible. It is worse than death because it means to never have existed. Philomele spends ten years preparing for her chance to tell the truth and to do what is necessary to change the world. Wertenbaker's addition of the final scene to the myth of Philomele suggests a lack of formal closure that allows her story to continue.

Philomele's silent rhetoric is neither overly emotional nor manipulative. Her use of logos and pathos to appeal to her audience functions in a complementary relationship and dissolves the false dichotomy that posits reason and emotion as contradictory. When Philomele lowers the sword on Itys' head, the audience is

inevitably shocked and horrified. Taking the life of a small child is a bold statement that stirs passions and generates response and questions – what will the mother do? What will Tereus do? Could the child not have been spared and transformed into a gentle being that seeks peace? The answer is no. Intellectually the audience knows this. It is unreasonable to think that the future will be different once Itys is king, that tyranny and oppression for women will be discarded in favor of peace and equality. The powerful rhetorical act of slaying the child stimulates the interaction of emotional and intellectual faculties that persuade the audience. "The world is bleak. The past a mockery, the future dead" (47), and that action is necessary for transformation to occur. Philomele's silent rhetoric creates knowledge, promotes values, and produces action.

Whereas his mother and aunt have changed into birds, Itys is not physically altered. His transformation is internal and takes him from a young man fascinated by war and motivated to fight and kill to one who seeks knowledge of the world through dialectic. He tells his parents in Scene 17, "I don't like peace. I like war...So I can be brave. I want to be a great captain. Lead thousands into battle" (37-38). Itys, like his father and many kings before him, believes that the role of conqueror where he is expected to dominate, tyrannize and force others into submission is his only option. Philomele explains to her nephew that although she never liked birds, "the bloodshed would have gone on forever. So it was much better to become a nightingale" (48). By killing Itys she saves him from experiencing the fate of his father, that is, becoming an oppressor. The young man's transformation or metamorphosis is evident in his discourse. Before he is slain he tells his mother

and aunt, "Give me my sword, slave, or I'll kick you. Kill you all. Cut off your heads. Pick out your eyes" (48). These violent threatening words come in sharp contrast to the language he uses with Philomele in the last scene where the two engage in a dialectical discussion about the meaning of right and wrong.

Philomele suggests to her nephew that change is necessary in order to end the anger and bloodshed. It allows you to "see the world differently" (48), she tells Itys. The idea of re-seeing is reminiscent of Adrienne Rich who claims that re-vision is an act of survival, "Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves" ("Awaken" 518). Without self-knowledge we cannot change and start afresh. Philomele demonstrates the efficacy of speaking up and talking back because she understands the transformational potential of human beings, the ability of people to be changed by one another's point of view, the usefulness of trying to show others why they should not have it their own way. Philomele never loses faith in rhetoric. She encourages her nephew to think like a philosopher by asking questions and she teaches him about life through her stories. The play ends on a hopeful note. The transformation of Itys from someone aggressive and overpowering to a thinking and gentle young man is a testimony to the potential for personal change. The audience sees that identity is constructed and, therefore, is mutable and potentially transformable.

In Wertenbaker's play women are identified as sexual beings. Like Salomé, they seek control of their sexual lives. Niobe laments that countries are like women: "it's when they're fresh they're wanted." When a woman is no longer desired, men stop looking at her, "and it's even more frightening. Because what makes you

invisible is death coming quietly. Makes you pale then unseen. First no one turns, then you're not there" (30-31). In Niobe's view, women have no options, however. They must accept their positions as sexual objects, because it is "easier that way"(30), and then they must wait until they are rendered invisible and no longer exist.

Like Cordelia and Salomé, Philomele is young, unmarried, and the daughter of a king. She has fantasies and dreams of a fulfilling love experience. Although Cordelia's sexual self is never revealed, she is ready for marriage and appears prepared to leave her father's home. She expects to love her husband and knows from witnessing the marriages of her sisters what she does not want. Salomé's sexual self plays a large role in the play as she recreates herself as a subject. Philomele also recreates herself and like Salomé resists her role as concubine. Philomele's silent rhetoric allows her to transcend victimization and tell her story in order to promote social change. In so doing she resists the role of madwoman and frees herself from imprisonment. She is a Platonic rhetor in that she is courageous, wise, temperate and just. Philomele's takes action to end male aggression toward women. In addition to creating knowledge by exposing the truth of her existence and her brutal treatment, she promotes values and produces action by teaching Itys the difference between right and wrong.

Wertenbaker's re-telling of the myth of Philomele reminds us that language occupies a central place in understanding what it means to "be." If language is the defining feature of what it means to be human, then to lose language, that is, to lose the ability to communicate and to be denied audience is to lose our humanity.

NOTES

[1] See Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* for a full discussion of his theories of myths.

[2] All citations from Timberlake Wertenbaker's play *The Love of the Nightingale* come from: *The Love of the Nightingale and The Grace of Mary Traverse*. London: Faber and Faber,1989. xi-49. References are parenthetically designated by page number.

[3] For a full discussion of the castration complex see Luce Irigaray's "Another 'Cause'— Castration. " She suggests that the question of castration is one that is relevant to women but that "it refers back to the father's castration, to his fear, his refusal, his rejection, of an *other* sex" (411).

[4] Feminists question whether power can be truly positive; does asserting the self, for instance, necessarily mean denying another? Adrienne Rich re-writes the definition of "power":

> The word *power* is highly charged for a woman. It has long been associated for us with the use of force, with rape, with the stockpiling of weapons, with the ruthless accrual of wealth and the hoarding of resources, with the power that acts only in its own interest, despising and exploiting the powerless – including women and children....But for a long time now, feminists have been talking about redefining power, about that meaning of power which returns to the root...to be able, to have the potential, to possess and use one's energy of creation --- *transforming power*. (*Blood* 5)

When I speak of personal power and empowerment, I refer to Rich's conception of transforming power. Language holds such power to transform and to create. For example, through language character is created which, I argue, is the ultimate power over a person.

[5] Deprivation of speech whether it be verbal or silent leads to a loss of identity. If we cannot communicate we cannot create ourselves; we have no personality and we cannot survive.

[6] Roderick Hart states that "the rhetorical" is depicted as an area bordering on other domains but one that is nonetheless special. Cordelia's rhetoric, for example, is primarily concerned with the philosophical domain, while Salomé's rhetoric is first artistic. Both of these rhetors, however, draw upon the other domains in order to persuade her audience. Cordelia is artistically creative when she uses the word "nothing" as a symbol of her love. I argue that Salomé's dance is persuasive because it draws upon the realm of the socially concerned when it speaks of women's struggle for independence.

CONCLUSION

> If we have learned anything in our coming to language out of silence, it is that what has been unspoken, therefore unspeakable in us is what is most threatening to the patriarchal order in which [some] men control, first women, then all who can be defined and exploited as "other." All silence has meaning.
>
> --- Adrienne Rich

Indeed, silence speaks. It can be a presence or an absence, and it can also be a purposeful strategy, a choice. Speaking silence allows women to take control of language rather than be controlled by it. It can be subversive of the hierarchical order; it offers a way of finding a voice for one's experience; it can be an act of resistance; and, in her poetry Rich shows how silence can also be healing.

When women choose to speak silence they perform a rhetorical act. Aristotle's celebrated definition that rhetoric "is the faculty of discovering in any situation the available means of persuasion" allows for the inclusion of silence as a form of language that persuades. When viewed as a rhetoric, silence also holds the potential to communicate and generate knowledge for the speaker as well as the listener. Silent rhetoric is a strategy that is deliberately and consciously employed for the purpose of responding to an audience.

On the stage silent rhetoric, like verbal rhetoric, is a form of dramatic action. Defined as wordless response, silent rhetoric embraces a wide range of activities. It may mean not speaking; the absence of a message is a

message in itself. Reticences, pauses, and evasions often communicate more than they conceal. Silent rhetoric includes responding wordlessly by taking some action such as walking out the door, defying an order, or ending one's own life.

Silent rhetoric is not limited to one form of dramatic action. Every pause, verbal omission, gesture, or action communicates meaning to the audience, and while the audience is expected to note and listen to the silence, silent rhetoric does not function in isolation of speech. As in the case of verbal language, the context contributes to the meaning. For example, we noted how Cordelia and Salomé strategically speak silence around the words of their fathers. Although King Lear demands it, Cordelia does not express her father's view of love. She is silent. But as he rages at his daughter, Cordelia expresses her <u>own</u> views on love.

We noted how Salomé dominates and controls the exchange when her father assaults her with requests and offerings. In addition to three lines, Salomé speaks silence. Michel Foucault describes the power relationships that operate as words and silence are interwoven:

> [T]he agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know. (Phelan, 124)

Before Philomele loses her ability to speak she asked questions and delighted in philosophic inquiry and in the search for knowledge. Her questioning places her in the dominant position because she controls the discussion. But even after Tereus cuts out her tongue, Philomele maintains her dominant position in the exchange because she remains silent. Although she is forcibly rendered mute, Philomele knows how to use silence to her advantage, to keep her listener "hanging", to command attention, and to indicate her disbelief of Tereus's words. Her silent response weaves in and out of Tereus's speech.

Antigone's dramatic acts of picking up a shovel to bury her brother, and of hanging herself in the cave are silent responses to Creon's demands that she act in accordance with his law. By itself, using a toy shovel to bury someone is not necessarily a rhetorical act, but in the context of Creon's words it functions as a strategic silent response to her uncle's command. Although Antigone is doomed to die anyway by hanging herself, she has the last word in her dialogue with Creon and she dominates the discussion. Her act is rhetorical because it is a response to Creon's verbal demands that she submit to his control.

In Cheryl Glenn's study, *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition Through the Renaissance*, she writes that:

> Silence is perhaps the most undervalued and *under*-understood traditionally feminine rhetorical site. Silence has long been an unexamined trope of oppression, with

> 'speaking-out' being the signal of liberation, especially given the Western tendency to valorize speech and language. But sometimes, some women choose the place of silence. (176)

Re-reading women in dramatic literature, such as Cordelia, Salomé, and Antigone and their silence as active strategies of resistance is a beginning. In order to reconstruct the rhetorical lives of women, Glenn suggests that we must develop techniques and "search out more ways to listen to more women – to demystify women's invisibility and so-called silence" (175). The potential implications for understanding how a woman may choose to employ silence as "the best means of persuasion at any given moment" invites further investigations into women and their use of rhetoric.

Investigative possibilities are rich and endless. Since Aspasia, rhetoricians such as Margery Kempe, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Louise Rosenblatt, and Susanne Langer (to name only a few) have cleared the path so the woman rhetorician can emerge. More recently scholars such as Andrea A. Lunsford, and Lisa S. Ede's, Nan Johnson, Cheryl Glenn, Krista Ratcliffe, Ann Ruggles Gere, and Susan Jarratt have chosen to discover, examine, analyse and celebrate women's rhetorical practices.

As Rich tells us, all silence has meaning. In addition to exploring what women say and write, it is important that we take the time to listen to what is left unsaid. Cheryl Glenn closes her study of rhetoric with the

comment that "our notion of *listening* is just as complicated as any notion of *silence*, for listening must be done consciously and purposefully, within a rhetorical situation, if we are to hear, to really hear. Our listening is every bit as important as any spoken or, for that matter, unspoken word" (178). If we can expand our definition of rhetoric to include expressive acts such as silence we will develop what Eliot calls "a keen vision." If we understand how silence shapes expression, then women will have the audience they need because we will all begin to listen. Then we "should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence."

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