

Providence and the Self in *Pericles*

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ABSTRACT: The present article attempts a reading of *Pericles*, focusing on the hero's self in relation to providence.

Pericles' visit to Antioch highlights his self-knowledge as a mortal man through the image of a skull as a mirror. His solution of the riddle for suitors would reveal Antiochus' incest and endanger himself. He decides to get away in a dilemma.

Back in Tyre, Pericles is seized by melancholy. He feels the shadow of Antiochus hanging over him. Out of a concern for his people rather than for himself, he decides to leave Tyre for Tharsus. Having offered corn to the starving people there, he puts out to sea again, where he suffers shipwreck. Washed up on the coast of Pentapolis, he has nothing left to identify himself, but the armour of his dead father disgorged by the sea helps him enter the joust. He begins to sense the presence of providence above fortune.

On the voyage to Tyre, a storm hastens Thaisa's labour pains. A baby is left behind her. While calling divine providence into question, Pericles prays for his daughter. A sense of loss is intensified as he accepts the sailor's advice to send his wife's remains overboard. Cast up on the shore of Ephesus, Thaisa revives with medical art.

Having grown up in Tharsus, Marina regards this world as "a lasting storm", in which she finds herself alone and tossed about by fate. Carried off by pirates, she is taken to Mytilene. At his revisit to Tharsus, Pericles is shown his daughter's tomb. He takes to mourning and endures his lot with patience.

Bereaved of his wife and daughter, Pericles has been in self-loss. On the ship off Mytilene, he meets a maiden, in whom he glimpses an image of his deceased wife. Hearing the name of "Marina", he feels himself made a fool of by a god. Convinced of their miraculous reunion, he gives thanks to the gods. "The music of the spheres" heard by him suggests that his soul has been purified. Falling asleep, he sees a vision of Diana. As he wakes up, he decides to carry out her will. Placing trust in divine guidance, he sets sail with Marina for Ephesus.

At the Temple of Diana, we witness family reunion. Pericles' prayer conveys his faith in the providence. We find the self of the hero recovered through his selfless trust in divine providence.

Keywords: storm, fortune, providence, trust, self-loss, recognition, self-recovery

In Act II, scene i of *Pericles*, the title hero has been washed up by the sea after suffering shipwreck. He meets three fishermen on the coast of Pentapolis, where Shakespeare poses two contrary views on man and fortune. Pericles expresses a wish to hew out his fortune by taking part in the joust, while the 1st fisherman responds to him with folk acceptance of fortune or taking things as they are. Pericles sometimes appears to be a passive hero, but how are we to understand his attitude to fortune? How will he realize himself? What ultimately moves the world of the play? In what follows I would like to read *Pericles* scene by

scene and to consider the implications of these problems.

Late in his life, after completing his major tragedies, Shakespeare finds himself on the frontier of dramatic art. At this period of his career, he looks back to one of his earliest comedies, *The Comedy of Errors*, or rather a medieval romance behind it, as a mine for pioneering a new field. The story that frames this classical comedy of mistaken identity is based on a romance which centres on the fortunes of an old man and his family. It is the same romance, *Apollonius of Tyre*, which now furnishes Shakespeare with a material for the first of his final plays.¹⁾

In *Pericles*, this romance is not merely a frame as it was in *The Comedy of Errors* but makes up the body of the play. Moreover, Gower, the medieval poet who

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wrote “Apollonius of Tyre” as part of his collection of tales called *Confessio Amantis*, revives “from ashes” (I.Chorus.2)²⁾, enters as Chorus at the beginning of each act and concludes the whole play. Shakespeare changed the hero’s name from Apollonius to Pericles, renamed his daughter Marina, and modified other details for his artistic purposes.

Though Egeon tells of his younger days in the opening scene of *The Comedy of Errors*, he is already an old man at the play’s beginning. On the other hand, *Pericles* is an account of half a lifetime beginning with the adventure of the hero in his youth.

While *The Comedy of Errors* is set throughout in Ephesus, where the action takes place within a day according to the classical unities of time, place and action, *Pericles*, also ending in Ephesus, changes its *locale* time after time as the hero wanders from one place to another in his life over the years.

The opening scene of *Pericles* plunges the audience *in medias res*. His journey to Antioch being omitted, Prince of Tyre is in the presence of King Antiochus, who has already told him “The danger of the task you undertake” (I.i.2). In order to marry his daughter Pericles undertakes the task of solving a riddle.

Self-knowledge is a vital problem for Pericles. Antiochus displays the skulls of those who failed to solve the riddle so that he may warn and avoid the suitors for his daughter. While the adventurous spirit of Pericles defies the danger of death, he perceives his future self in the image of a skull:

Antiochus, I thank thee, who hath taught
My frail mortality to know itself,
And by those scornful objects to prepare
This body, like to them, to what I must;
For death remember’d should be like a mirror,
Who tells us life’s but breath, to trust it error.

(I.i.42-47)

Since man is mortal, self-knowledge is based on the recognition of his own death. Behind his words lies the medieval tradition of *memento mori*,³⁾ in which a skull serves as a mirror to help one remember and meditate on one’s death. The graveyard scene of *Hamlet*, where the prince holds a skull and is sunk in deep thought, belongs to this tradition. In the above words of Pericles, breath refers to the transience and insecurity of human life.⁴⁾

Though the suitors who came before failed to answer the riddle, Pericles sees through it to know the incest between father and daughter (I.i.65-72). However,

while he is to lose his life unless he resolves the riddle, its solution would reveal the secret of Antiochus’ sin and endanger his life. Finding himself in a dilemma, Pericles just replies, “Few love to hear the sins they love to act; / ’T would braid yourself too near for me to tell it” (I.i.93-94). Left alone on the stage, Pericles senses danger behind the king’s hypocrisy, and decides to protect his life by escaping under cover of night.

Back in Tyre, we find Pericles seized by melancholy. However far removed, he cannot but feel the shadow of Antiochus hanging over him. As befits his kingship, he has a deep concern for the people of Tyre rather than for himself. So he accepts Helicanus’ advice to “to go travel for a while, / Till that his [i.e., Antiochus’] rage be forgot, / Or till the Destinies do cut his thread of life” (I.ii.106-108). To bide his time and to leave the matter to “Destinies”, he decides to set sail for Tharsus.

While the task before Pericles in Antioch tested his intellect, the heroic deed in Tharsus concerns his generosity and modesty. As the fourth scene of Act I opens, we are in Tharsus, where Cleon, the governor of the once flourishing city, sadly tells his wife, Dionyza, of the fortunes of his people now crying with hunger. He freely offers corn to the starving people, wishing for just love and harbourage in return (I.iv.98-100).

His stay in Tharsus, however, does not last long. Notwithstanding his intention to stay there until fortune favours, or “Until our stars that frown lend us a smile” (108), Helicanus’ letter from Tyre about an assassin sent from Antioch suggests to him that even Tharsus is no longer safe. So he again decides to “put forth to seas” (II.Chorus, 27).

Before he reaches the shores of another country, Gower as Chorus tells us of a shipwreck in the archaic style of rhymed tetrameter after the manner of the medieval poet:

... now the wind begins to blow;
Thunder above and deeps below
Make such unquiet, that the ship
Should house him safe is wreck’d and split;
And he, good prince, having all lost,
By waves from coast to coast is tost.

(II.Chorus. 29-34)

The first Quarto gives a suggestive stage direction:

*Enter Pericles wette.*⁵⁾

Having lost his men, his ship, and his fortunes, he

has nothing left to support or identify himself. He has been exposed to the elements, particularly to wind and water. He cries out to the stars:

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!
Wind, rain, and thunder, remember, earthly man
Is but a substance that must yield to you;
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you.
(II.i.1-4)

While “you” in the first line refers to “angry stars of heaven”, Pericles goes on to invoke “Wind, rain, and thunder”, which he also calls “you”. Behind the furious nature he sees the presence of Fortune symbolized by the stars. Pericles feels how powerless a man is in the face of natural forces. Based on this view of human nature, he declares to obey Nature. His knowledge of himself as a mortal man shown in the opening scene is no longer a subject of meditation but has been attested by experience.

In his helplessness Pericles thinks of “ensuing death” (II.i.7), and only hopes for “death in peace” (11). The entrance of three fishermen brings about a change in tone and a new direction to life. Overhearing their talk, he is impressed by the 1st fisherman’s comparison of fishes’ life in the sea and human life on land. This opens a new vista to the audience as well. As he introduces himself to the fishermen, he gives expression to his self-knowledge reflecting his view of man in nature:

A man whom both the waters and the wind,
In that vast tennis-court, hath made the ball
For them to play upon, entreats you pity him;
(II.i.59-61)

The image of man being trifled with by nature echoes in a milder tone the pessimistic words of Gloucester in *King Lear*:

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport. (IV.i.38-39)⁶⁾

A loss of his identity caused by separation from his past is conveyed through his words to the fishermen: “What I have been I have forgot to know” (II.i.71). To this he adds his self-definition:

But what I am, want teaches me to think on:
A man throng’d up with cold. ...
(II.i.72-3)

Reduced to essentials, he regards himself not as the Prince of Tyre but as a mortal man. The request he makes of the fishermen is either to receive their help or to be “buried” (77) as the sole dignity of a dead man for which he makes modest claim. In addition to his offer of food and gown, the first fisherman provides Pericles with a new direction to life.

From the speech of the fisherman about the king of “Pentapolis” who is called “the good Simonides”, we are informed that Pericles is now in the country whose king is antipodal to the tyrannical Antiochus. His further speech about “a fair daughter” and “joust and tourney for her love” sets the scene in the realm of a medieval chivalric romance (II.i.105ff.) in which Pericles is to be a wandering knight. Though he wishes to carve out his future by taking part in the joust, he cannot even enter the contest, deprived of his fortunes by the shipwreck. Pericles thinks that life is not as he wishes, and the fisherman advises him to take things as they are.

It is then that the armour Pericles inherited from his dead father gets caught in the 2nd fisherman’s net, which helps him participate in the tournament:

Thanks, Fortune, yet, that after all thy crosses
Thou giv’st me somewhat to repair myself;
(II.i.120-121)

Though he does not mention it in clear terms, he begins to sense the presence of divine providence above Fortune that has caused his shipwreck.

According to Boethius, who was widely read in Shakespeare’s times, “Providence is the very Divine reason itself, seated in the highest Prince, which disposeth all things. But Fate is a disposition inherent in changeable things, by which Providence connecteth all things in their due order.”⁷⁾ As an agent of Providence, Fate or Fortune presides not only over Pericles’ self-loss but also over his self-recovery.

When Thaisa, the princess, offers him “this wreath of victory” (II.iii.10) after the joust and calls him “king of this day’s happiness” (11), Pericles modestly ascribes the honours he achieved to fortune:

’Tis more by fortune, lady, than my merit.
(II.iii.12)

This line can be compared with his former words in answer to the 1st fisherman when he decided to take part in the contest:

I.Fish. Why, wilt thou tourney for the lady?
Per. I'll show the virtue I have borne in arms.
 (II.i.143-144)

He now considers his victory to be brought by fortune's favour, not as a result of his own virtue. It is his selfless modesty based on his self-knowledge that stands out in the midst of his victory.

His selflessness is based on his perception of what is above human beings, which he variously calls "stars" (II.i.1), "Wind, rain, and thunder" (II.i.2), "Fortune" (II.i.120), and so on. "Time" is another name for the absolute being, which he personifies with the use of a personal pronoun "he", meditating on his rule over life and death irrespective of human will:

... I see that Time's the king of men;
 He's both their parent, and he is their grave,
 And gives them what he will, not what they crave.
 (II.iii.45-47)

Far from being excited with joy at his success, Pericles keeps calm to such an extent that King Simonides even thinks him to be "melancholy" (54). Hearing from Thaisa about his "misfortunes of the sea" (88), he mentions melancholy again, which he interprets as the result of misfortune:

Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune,
 And will awake him from his melancholy.
 (II.iii.90-91)

In fact Pericles is in a pensive mood because he is lost in thought, musing on the vicissitudes of life.

If *Pericles* ended at the close of Act II, it would be another romantic comedy ending in marriage. After the marriage of Pericles and Thaisa blessed by her father King Simonides, the second half of the play ensues. As a prelude to Act III, we hear the narration of Gower, in which is inserted a dumb show. "A babe" Gower mentions as being "moulded" by the action of Hymen has now been delivered, and so Thaisa enters with a child and a nurse in the dumb show. A letter brought to Pericles by a Messenger is shown to Simonides.

Gower as Chorus explains the meaning of this silent movement including the gist of the letter. Pericles can now return to Tyre because the obstacle has been removed with the death of Antiochus. Thaisa, who is pregnant, expresses a wish to go with him, taking Lychorida, her nurse. Thus they set out to sea.

Gower's narration introduces us to suffering at sea by touching on another change of fortune which causes a tempest and sudden labour pains (III.Chorus.44-52). Well aware of his role as Chorus, Gower entrusts the rest to the imagination of the audience:

In your imagination hold
 This stage the ship, upon whose deck
 The sea-tost Pericles appears to speak.
 (III.Chorus.58-60)

The audience does not forget that they are in a theatre, looking at a stage. But, according to a common idea in the age of Shakespeare, the world itself is a stage.⁸⁾

Now the stage is to be transformed into a ship through the audience's imagination aided by Shakespeare's poetry. We hear Pericles invoke the gods of the sea, of the winds, and of thunder respectively, and ask Lychorida the nurse about his queen who is heavily pregnant:

The god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,
 Which wash both heaven and hell; and thou that
 hast
 Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,
 Having call'd them from the deep! O, still
 Thy deaf'ning, dreadful thunders; gently quench
 Thy nimble sulphurous flashes! O, how,
 Lychorida,
 How does my queen? (III.i.1-7)

Tossed about by the wind and waves, his ship is floating on the boundless sea between heaven and hell. In the macrocosm Pericles finds himself helpless, and prays for divine protection. Anxious about his wife's condition, he calls upon Lucina, the goddess of childbirth:

Lucina, O
 Divinest patroness, and midwife gentle
 To those that cry by night, convey thy deity
 Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs
 Of my queen's travails! (III.i.10-14)

His prayer is heard, but inscrutable are the ways of Heaven which govern life and death. On the ship in a storm, Lychorida brings him a new born baby left behind by his wife's death:

... Take in your arms this piece
 Of your dead queen. ...

Patience, good sir; do not assist the storm.
Here's all that is left living of your queen,
A little daughter ... (III.i.17-21)

Based on the Renaissance idea of the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm,⁹⁾ Lychorida asks him not to “assist the storm” but to be patient because the storm in the outer world is supposed to gather force with the inner storm of passion.

When he showed his readiness to die at his first trial in I.i, death was a matter of general, impersonal meditation. Now at the untimely loss of his beloved wife, death has become a matter of immediate experience for him. Pericles appeals to the gods as “you” and calls divine providence into question:

O you gods!
Why do you make us love your goodly gifts,
And snatch them straight away? (III.i.22-4)

“Patience”, to which Lychorida exhorts him again, gradually becomes a principle governing his behaviour in his prayerful life. In the midst of the sea-storm, Pericles prays for his daughter, whom he speaks to with “thou”:

Now, mild may be thy life!
For a more blustering birth had never babe;
Quiet and gentle thy conditions! for
Thou art the rudeliest welcome to this world
That e'er was prince's child. Happy what
follows!

....
Now the good gods throw their best eyes upon't!
(III.i.27-37)

Life is a voyage to the newborn child both literally and metaphorically, to whom Pericles refers as “this fresh-new seafarer” (41).

A sense of loss and separation is intensified as he reluctantly accepts the sailor's advice based on folk belief to send his wife's remains overboard because the sea and the wind will not calm down “till the ship be clear'd of the dead” (47ff.). In spite of his objection to “superstition” (50), he makes a bitter decision to observe the maritime custom:

As you think meet. Most wretched queen! (53)

As he spoke to the newborn child, so does he talk

intimately to his deceased wife, using the second person pronoun “thou” (55). In his talk to her, his thought moves from her childbed to her corpse at the bottom of the sea. Learning that they are near Tharsus, he concludes the scene with his decision to alter course from Tyre to Tharsus for the safety of the newborn infant: “there I'll leave it / At careful nursing” (78-79).

After the storm at sea, we are relieved by the calm of a dawn on land. Cerimon the physician thinks that life and death depend on “nature” (III.ii.8) and that a medicine works through nature within the limits of medical art. Before long we are told that the land is called Ephesus. Servants enter with a chest (III.ii.49-51). The 1st Servant thinks that it is “like a coffin” (52). The gradual discovery of Thaisa's corpse excites wonder (III.ii.61ff.). Cerimon reads a letter found in the coffin (III.ii.70-77). Though the coffin was thrown overboard, the letter shows Pericles' last hope for her interment in an unknown land.

Cerimon enters into Pericles' feelings, speaking to him with “thou”:

If thou livest, Pericles, thou hast a heart
That even cracks for woe! (III.i.78-79)

Pericles is indeed “of a broken heart” (*Psalm*, 34:18), bereft of the wife of his bosom.

Cerimon perceives a sign of life in a temporary state of apparent death, and starts to give her medical treatment. As in *King Lear*, the healing power of “music” (93) is applied in this play.

Nature awakes a warm breath out of her.
She hath not been entranc'd above five hours;
See, how she 'gins to blow into life's flower again!
(III.ii.93)

Shakespeare's poetry captures the wonder of her revival through the vital image of flowering as a metaphor.

Though Cerimon's treatment is based on nature, he resembles a priest or a white magician acting as an agent for supernatural power—hence the 1st gentleman's praise of him: “The heavens, through you, increase our wonder, ...” (III.ii.98). At this moment, Cerimon speaks to revived Thaisa, changing his use of personal pronoun from “she” to “you”:

Cer. ... Live,
And make us weep to hear your fate, fair
creature,

Rare as you seem to be. *She moves.*
Thai. O dear Diana,
 Where am I? Where's my lord? What
 world is this? (III.ii.104-7)

Diana, whom Thaisa invokes as she comes to life again, is to be the guardian goddess of the play world. It is also appropriate that the scene ends with Cerimon's prayer to the god of healing: "And Aesculapius guide us!"

We saw Pericles change course in the storm and head for Tharsus for the safety of his newborn child. In Tharsus, he remembers his late wife lying in the sea, and resigns himself to his fate:

We cannot but obey

The powers above us. Could I rage and roar
 As doth the sea she lies in, yet the end
 Must be as 'tis. (III.iii.9-12)

This speech reminds us of the 1st Fisherman's words in II.i: "things must be as they may". Having gone through hardships, he has come to accept his fate with resignation.

Pericles entrusts his little child to the Governor and his wife because he must return to Tyre:

My gentle babe Marina,
 Whom, for she was born at sea, I have nam'd so,
 here
 I charge your charity withal; leaving her
 The infant of your care; ... (III.iii.12-15)

This is the first time we hear the name of Marina as well as its derivation from the sea or *mare* in Latin. After three centuries, she is to give inspiration to T. S. Eliot for his poem, "Marina". It is interesting that "Star of the Sea", a translation of the Latin title "*Stella Maris*", is a traditional title for the Virgin Mary though the etymology of Mary or *Miryam* in Hebrew is uncertain.¹⁰⁾ While the dramatist refrains from mentioning the Virgin Mary in the play, he makes Pericles invoke Diana, a goddess associated with virginity.¹¹⁾ He vows to the goddess that he will deny himself haircut until his child gets married (III.iii.27-30). He leaves Lychorida the nurse behind for the care of his daughter before he sets off for another voyage.

The third act ends with a brief scene in Ephesus, where we see Cerimon and Thaisa again. As for her child, due to her state of suspended animation at delivery,

"whether there deliver'd, by the holy gods, / I cannot rightly say" (III.iv.5). Based on her decision to lead an ascetic life as priestess, Cerimon introduces her into "Diana's temple" (12).

In the fourth act the focus shifts away from Pericles to the fortune of Marina. The play anticipates *The Winter's Tale* in its passage of years between the acts, and owing to her education Marina has become "the heart and place / Of general wonder" (IV.Chorus).

Gower has told the audience about envy aroused in Dionyza at the accomplishments of Marina whose reputation overshadows her own daughter, and her intent to kill her by using a murderer. It is when Dionyza has just appointed Leonine to the job that Marina enters with flowers, and talks to Lychorida in her grave.

Separated from her parents as an infant, she is now bereaved of her nurse:

Ay me! poor maid,
 Born in a tempest, when my mother died,
 This world to me is as a lasting storm,
 Whirring me from my friends. (IV.i.17-20)

A storm to her symbolizes the world, in which she finds herself alone and tossed about by fate. At the suggestion by Dionyza in the guise of kindness, she takes a walk with Leonine along the seacoast for the fresh air, talking to him about the wind that was blowing when she was born (IV.i.51-9). Leonine interrupts her: "Come, say your prayers" (65). Marina soon senses Leonine's intention: "Why will you kill me?" (70) In her attempt to dissuade him, she characteristically appeals to his essential goodness (85-87).

At the critical moment, she is captured by pirates, and taken by ship to Mytilene, where she is sold to a brothel. The rest of the fourth act is mainly set in Mytilene. Fallen into the bawd's hands, she wishes she had been killed by Leonine. Resolved to keep her virginity, she prays: "Diana, aid my purpose!" (IV.ii.147), for which the Bawd's response provides a comic contrast: "What have we to do with Diana?" (148)

The next scene brings us briefly back to Tharsus, where we hear a dialogue between Cleon and Dionyza, who do not know Marina's narrow escape. Having heard about the murder, Cleon has a sense of guilt, and is afraid that it will incur the wrath of Heaven (IV.iii.2-3, 20-21). Dionyza, on the other hand, shows an irreligious attitude to her deed (16-19). Her sneer at her husband that concludes the scene suggests their relationship:

Ye're like one that superstitiously

Do swear to th' gods that winter kills the flies;
But yet I know you'll do as I advise. (49-51)

The killing of "flies", an image used by Gloucester to deplore the cruel fickleness of the gods in *King Lear*, reappears here in a different tone, which is closer to the cynicism of Edmund.

In the next scene, Gower informs us of Pericles' revisit to Tharsus to meet his daughter again (IV.iv.9-12). Pericles's sorrow over her death is first presented as a dumb show:

... Cleon shows Pericles the tomb; whereat
Pericles makes lamentation, puts on sackcloth, and
in a mighty passion departs. (IV.iv.23ff.)

Gower tells us how Pericles takes to mourning and endures his lot with patience:

... He swears
Never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs.
He puts on sackcloth, and to sea. He bears
A tempest, which his mortal vessel tears,
And yet he rides it out. (IV.iv.27-31)

The comparison of Pericles' life to a voyage on a stormy sea recalls Marina's words quoted before (IV.i.17-20), which is at once literal and metaphorical. Gower also reminds the audience that Pericles has taken apparent death for reality, and that his course of life is governed by Goddess Fortune:

Let Pericles believe his daughter's dead,
And bear his course to be ordered
By Lady Fortune ... (IV.iv.46-48)

Though he does not appear before the audience until the denouement, we can imagine him going through the trials of a long journey in "the dark night of the soul".¹²⁾

A miraculous event is reported by two Gentlemen in a short scene of IV.v. They wonder at their own conversion "in such a place", having "divinity preach'd there" by a woman whom they just refer to as "she". Such a scene is probably among the factors that have suggested to F. D. Hoeniger the play's resemblance to "miracle plays" or "saints' plays" performed in medieval England.¹³⁾ On and after Thaisa's revival through Cerimon's treatment in III.ii, the presence of the supernatural comes to assume importance towards the end of the play.

The last scene of the fourth act brings Marina into focus. The bawd and the pander are at a loss what to do with her. The interest of the scene lies in the encounter between Marina and Lysimachus, the Governor of Mytilene who visits the brothel incognito. His talk with the bawd and the pander shows that he is one of the "resorters"(IV.vi.22). Left alone with Marina, he is gradually influenced by her response, following in the footsteps of the two gentlemen. "How's this? how's this?" he wonders (94). She attributes her adversity to fortune and prays to the gods for her release (95-101). Lysimachus attests to his conversion (101-4). Each of them calls upon the gods for the protection of the other in turn:

Lys. Preserve in that clear way thou goest,
And the gods strengthen thee!
Mar. The good gods preserve you!
(IV.vi.105-7)

The mutual exchange of good wishes foreshadows their future marriage.

Even when Boulton tries to force her under the command of the Bawd, she dissuades him from his attempts, appealing to his potential goodness as she did to Leonine. Instead of the present trade, she proposes to use her talents to make a living. She gives the gold to Boulton which Lysimachus gave her, and, in order to earn money for his master and mistress, she asks him to place her "amongst honest women" (193) so that she may teach her acquired skills to pupils in the city.

In the final act, the three courses of life come together. Gower first tells us of Marina at "an honest house" (V. Chorus.2) in her new circumstances. While her accomplishments belong to the realm of art, or the work of humans, they wonderfully reach a state which is at once "natural" (7) and "immortal" (3).

Gower then turns our attention back to her father whom "we left ... on the sea" (13):

We there him lost,
Whence, driven before the winds, he is arriv'd
Here where his daughter dwells; and on this coast
Suppose him now at anchor. (V.Chorus.13-16)

It is significant that Pericles and Marina are reunited on the ship off Mytilene whose folks are celebrating "God Neptune's annual feast" (17). According to Gower at the opening of the play, the old tale "hath been sung at festivals" (I.Chorus.5). Within the play fully associated

with the sea, a miraculous reunion also takes place at the festival of the sea god.

In answer to Lysimachus' speech on behalf of the city (V.i.17-19), Helicanus informs him of the recent state of Pericles, "who for this three months hath not spoken / To any one, nor taken sustenance / But to prorogue his grief" (23-6). To Lysimachus' question about the cause of "his distemperature" (27), Helicanus summarily explains that "the main grief springs from the loss / Of a beloved daughter and a wife" (29-30). Later in the scene, his mental state will be called "melancholy" (219). In the final analysis, he has been in a state of self-loss caused by the grief which "springs from the loss" of his wife and his daughter, each of whom is his other self.

The task to recover him and to draw a response from his long silence is entrusted to "a maid in Mytilene" (42). It is clear to the audience that the description of the woman including "her sweet harmony / And other chosen attractions" (44-45) refers to Marina.

Feeling her way toward communion, she changes her approach from a song to a talk and begins to speak to him about herself:

I am a maid,
 ... she speaks,
 My lord, that, may be, hath endur'd a grief
 Might equal yours, if both were justly weigh'd.
 Though wayward fortune did malign my state,
 My derivation was from ancestors
 Who stood equivalent with mighty kings;
 But time hath rooted out my parentage,
 And to the world and awkward casualties
 Bound me in servitude. (V.i.84-94)

Halfway through her story, she stops to speak to herself:

[Aside.] I will desist;
 But there is something glows upon my cheek,
 And whispers in mine ear "Go not till he speak".
 (V.i.94-96)

Urged by this inspiration, she decides to go on. It is then that her words produce a resonance in him. Thus the scene gradually transmutes itself into a scene of recognition.

For the first time in three months Pericles breaks his silence, joining together some fragments of her speech that have sunk in his heart:

My fortunes—parentage—good parentage—
 To equal mine—was it not thus? what say you?
 (V.i.97-98)

As their dialogue continues, he remembers seeing her somewhere before:

Pray you, turn your eyes upon me.
 You're like something that—What country woman?
 Here of these shores? (V.i.101-3)

Her reply, "No, nor of any shores ..." (104-5) hints at her birth on the sea. He glimpses an image of his deceased wife in her, which in turn reminds him of his daughter:

... My dearest wife
 Was like this maid, and such a one
 My daughter might have been: my queen's square
 brows;
 Her stature to an inch; as wand-like straight;
 As silver-voic'd; her eyes as jewel-like ...
 (V.i.106ff.)

It is sorrows commonly experienced by them that arouse compassion in him toward Marina (129-32). He is all the more impressed by her smile with which she has endured her sorrows:

... yet thou dost look
 Like Patience gazing on king's graves, and smiling
 Extremity out of act. (V.i.137-9)

Patience is what Viola mentioned in her story of her imaginary sister in *Twelfth Night*, and what Lear wished for so as not to go mad in *King Lear*. Pericles himself has led a life of patience. Now the very virtue seems to him to be embodied in the maid before him.

To his desire to know her name and her life, she answers:

Mar. My name is Marina.
 Per. O, I am mock'd,
 And thou by some incensed god sent hither
 To make the world to laugh at me.
 (V.i.141-3)

He cannot believe the unexpected event of hearing his daughter's name in a foreign country. Having gone through hardships, he once again feels himself made a fool of by a god, but is urged to listen to her story with

As Shakespeare makes Lorenzo tell Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* (V.i), people clad in mortal flesh cannot hear the music of the spheres. It is exceptionally heard by Pericles because his soul has been purified and has drawn near to heaven, having gone through a series of hardships in the world.

Falling asleep, he sees a vision of Diana who has been the guardian spirit of the play world. It is an oracular dream, whose message can also be heard by the theatre audience (238-47). As he wakes up, he recognizes the dream as truth. He invokes Diana:

Celestial Dian, goddess argentine,
I will obey thee. (V.i. 248-9)

Addressing the goddess as “thee”, he expresses his intention to carry out her will. He places trust in divine guidance, and sets sail for Ephesus to visit the temple of Diana.

Drama being a temporal art, the following line Gower speaks as the scene changes is both impressive and suggestive:

Now our sands are almost run ... (V.ii.1)

With the image of an hourglass, Gower invites us to look back on the passage of time which we have shared with Pericles, and to look ahead to the end of the play which is not far away. The sense of time that runs on in the theatre helps the audience to see the hero’s life as a long voyage, which is superimposed on the unfolding of the play.

Gower asks the audience to imagine what has happened since the previous scene including the promise of marriage between Lysimachus and Marina, which will be carried out only after offering a sacrifice to Diana (V.ii.10-13). He thanks the audience for their “fancies” (20) which have enabled a sailing from Mytilene to Ephesus in an instant, or “feather’d briefness” (15).

Guided thus by the Chorus, we find ourselves in the final scene at the Temple of Diana in Ephesus. In accordance with his dream, Pericles invokes the goddess and recites in outline what has happened to himself and his family. Recognizing him as her husband, Thaisa in the shape of a nun faints:

Thai. Voice and favour!
You are, you are—O royal Pericles!

[*Faints.*]

Per. What means the nun? she dies, help, gentlemen!

(V.iii.13-15)

While Cerimon tells him her identity as his wife and the past event of her revival after the stormy night, we see her recover consciousness, and witness another recognition:

Thai. ... O, my lord,
Are you not Pericles? Like him you spake,
Like him you are. Did you not name a tempest,
A birth and death?

Per. The voice of dead Thaisa!

Thai. That Thaisa am I, supposed dead
And drowned.

Per. Immortal Dian! (V.iii.31-37)

As a variation on the theme of resurrection and family reunion, the scene repeats in miniature the full-length scene between Pericles and Marina. Thaisa’s reference to “a tempest, / A birth and death” has reverberations, suggesting, with a few words, the fortunes of her family in the cyclic processes of nature. Pericles’ prayer to Diana conveys his enduring faith in the providence, which is confirmed by his invocation to the gods:

... You gods, your present kindness
Makes my past miseries sports. (V.iii.41-42)

With a vision of reality gained through life full of vicissitudes, he looks back over the years, regarding his misfortunes as almost illusory like a dream.

The reunion of husband and wife, which has recapitulated that between father and daughter, is followed by further reunion of mother and daughter, whose identity Pericles reveals to her wife:

Per. Look, who kneels here, flesh of thy flesh, Thaisa;
Thy burden at the sea, and call’d Marina
For she was yielded there.

Thai. Bless’d, and mine own!
(V.iii.46-48)

“Flesh of thy flesh”, with a biblical echo, indicates that Marina is the second self of Thaisa.

To Pericles’ inquiry after the agent of divine providence which has brought him “this great miracle” of Thaisa’s revival, she replies:

Lord Cerimon, my lord; this man,
Through whom the gods have shown their power;

...

(V.iii.59-60)

Once again Pericles invokes “Pure Dian” and blesses the goddess “for thy vision” (68-69).

The report of the death of Thaisa’s father mentioned by herself at this moment resembles an equivalent report towards the end of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* in that it makes the play more inclusive by expanding its final image; with this difference—the memory of days irretrievably past comes back to the audience as well. The final prayer in this prayerful play is offered by Pericles to his memory:

Heavens make a star of him! (V.iii.79)

So it sounds natural that he decides to spend the rest of his days with Thaisa in her father’s kingdom, letting his daughter and her husband reign in Tyre after their wedding.

In his epilogue, Gower sums up the workings of the providence in the fortunes of the main characters. To Pericles and his family, he devotes some of his lines:

In Pericles, his queen and daughter, seen,
 Although assail’d with fortune fierce and keen,
 Virtue preserv’d from fell destruction’s blast,
 Led on by heaven, and crown’d with joy at last.
 (Epilogue.3-6)

In his reunion with his wife and daughter, the patient hero has finally recovered his lost-self, in spite of his doubts and his sorrows, by keeping his selfless trust in “heaven” or divine providence.

Notes

- 1) For Gower’s story of “Apollonius of Tyre” in his *Confessio Amantis*, see *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), pp. 386ff. The Quarto of *Pericles* was published in 1609 and was entered in the Stationers’ Register on 15 April 1609. According to the chronology conjectured by E. K. Chambers, *Pericles* was written from 1608 to 1609 while *The Comedy of Errors* from 1592 to 1593. See his *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), pp. 170-171.
- 2) Unless otherwise specified, quotations from the play are from F. D. Hoeniger, ed., *Pericles* [The Arden Shakespeare] (London: Methuen, 1963).
- 3) For the idea and tradition of *memento mori*, see Willard

Farnham, *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1936), pp. 38-42, 425.

In this connection, Louis L. Martz regards meditation on death as a way to self-knowledge. See his *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 135-152.

4) Since the Latin word *anima* means breath and life as well as soul and spirit, there is a close relationship between “life” and “breath”, which Shakespeare may have had in mind.

5) *Pericles 1609* [Shakespeare Quartos in Collotype Facsimile], ed. W.W. Greg (London: The Shakespeare Association, 1940), II.i. Act and scene divisions as well as line-numbering, though not in the Quarto, are given in the margin.

6) Quoted from *King Lear*, ed. R. A. Foakes [The Arden Shakespeare] (Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

7) Boethius, *The Theological Tractates* with an English trans. by H. F. Stewart & E. K. Band / *The Consolation of Philosophy* with the English translation of “I. T.” (1609) rev. by H. F. Stewart (London: William Heinemann, 1943), p. 341. For Boethius’ influence on Shakespeare’s last “romances”, see Richard Harp’s essay, “The Consolation of Romance: Providence in Shakespeare’s Late Plays”, contained in *Shakespeare’s Last Plays: Essays in Literature and Politics*, eds., Stephen W. Smith and Travis Curtright (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002).

8) Ernst Robert Curtius refers to “the idea of the world as a stage upon which men play their parts, their motions directed by God”, and traces it back to Plato. See his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 138. For the development of this idea through the play metaphor and Shakespeare’s dramatic consciousness, see Anne Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), esp. Part Two.

9) See E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1943), pp. 84-87.

10) Peter Milward considers “the folk etymology of Mary’s name, derived by St. Bernard in the twelfth century from the Latin for sea, *mare*, in its neuter plural form, *maria*”, and writes: “From this comes the popular title of Mary as *Stella Maris*, or Star of the Sea, on which St. Bernard dwells in several of his sermons, notably in one for Advent, ...” See his *Shakespeare the Papist* (Naples, Florida: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria Univ., 2005), pp. 249-50.

11) In the above book P. Milward also refers to “the tendency in Florentine Neoplatonism from the late fourteenth century onwards to reinterpret pagan religion in the light of Christian theology”, and points out that “Diana, as goddess of chastity, was seen as foreshadowing the Virgin Mary” (pp. 250-51). Invocations to Diana in place of the Virgin Mary can be

attributed to different factors. In another book, the same author draws attention to “the passing in 1606 of an Act to Restrain Abuses of Players”. See his *Shakespeare's Religious Background* (1973; rpt. Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 213-14.

12) See Saint John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul, A Spiritual Canticle, and The Living Flame of Love*, trans. David Lewis, 2nd ed. (London: Thomas Baker, 1891), pp. 5ff.

13) Among the parallels Hoeniger enumerates the following: “the device of the choric presenter in the person of a poet, the building up of the action out of a large number of loosely related episodes, . . . , the tragi-comic development of the action, the large part taken in it by supernatural powers,” See his introduction to *Pericles*, p. lxxxviii.

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